

Dual Language Program Audit

Audit Plan Code: 22.09.A



Assurance | Insight | Objectivity

Final Report
February 10, 2023

The CL/DL Division verified that teachers assigned to DL education met the certification requirements for the bilingual education and ESL program. When teachers did not meet certification requirements, the CL/DL Division submitted an exception/waiver to the TEA.

However, we found (i) the District has not clearly defined expectations on how to monitor the 50/50 Model, (ii) not all District staff assigned to DL education completed the required professional development hours, and (iii) two campuses did not offer the DL Program in all grades required.



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Abbreviations

ASAP	Analytics, Strategy, Assessment & PEIMS
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CL/DL	Connecting Languages/Dual Language
DL	Dual Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
EPISD	El Paso Independent School District
ELLs	English Language Learners
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
K	Kindergarten
LPAC	Language Proficiency Assessment Committee
PK	Pre-Kindergarten
SBEC	State Board for Educator Certification
TAC	Texas Administrative Code
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TEC	Texas Education Code



Executive Summary

ASSURANCE • INSIGHT • OBJECTIVITY

We have completed the Dual Language Program Audit. The objectives of the Audit were to determine if:

1. The Dual Language Program was offered district-wide in Pre-Kindergarten (PK) through 7, as stated per Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL), and rolled out based on the timelines indicated in the Division of Connecting Languages/Dual Language Manual.
2. District and campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to Dual Language education obtained the required professional development hours per Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL).
3. Teachers assigned to Dual Language education met the certification requirements for the bilingual education and ESL program or if an exception/waiver was submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on or before November 1.
4. The Simultaneous Biliteracy Dual Language Education Model (50/50 Model) was monitored by the Connecting Languages/Dual Language (CL/DL) Division and/or campus administration.

The scope of the Audit was the 2021-2022 school year.

We want to acknowledge and thank Academics, CL/DL Division, School Leadership, and principals that participated in this audit for their time.

What We Found

The CL/DL Division verified that teachers assigned to Dual Language education met the certification requirements for bilingual education and the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. When the teachers did not meet certification requirements, the CL/DL Division submitted an exception/waiver to the TEA. However, we are reporting one (1) observation related to the efficiency of the process for tracking/identifying said teachers.

In addition, we identified:

1. The 2020-2021 Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation did not have all educational performance components and was not presented to the Board of Trustees (BOT) as required by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §89.1265.
2. Forty-three (43) out of 60 (72%) district and campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to DL education did not meet the professional development hours required by Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL).
3. Two (2) out of 62 campuses did not offer the DL Program in grades 6th and/or 7th, as required by Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL) and the Division of CL/DL Manual.
4. The District has not clearly defined expectations for monitoring the Simultaneous Biliteracy Dual Language Education Program (50/50 Model).

What We Recommend

Internal Audit made eight (8) recommendations to address the findings and observation reported. Recommendations include:

- The CL/DL Division should develop procedures to ensure the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation includes all the required educational performance components required by the TAC. In addition, the evaluation should be presented to the BOT before November 1 of each year.
- The CL/DL Division should collaborate with School Leadership and Human Resources (HR) to:
 - Ensure that district and campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to DL education obtain the required DL professional development hours as per Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL).
 - Develop procedures to ensure the DL Program is offered as required by Board Policy and the Division of CL/DL Manual.
- The CL/DL Division should collaborate with the Chief Academic Officer and School Leadership to develop a process to monitor the Simultaneous Biliteracy Dual Language Education Program (50/50 Model).
- The CL/DL Division should work with School Leadership and HR to explore ideas on how to automate the process to track and monitor teachers who do not have a Bilingual and/or ESL certification and (i) are assigned to a DL course or (ii) serve students receiving ESL services.

Management's Response

Management and leadership agreed with the audit findings. District management and leadership submitted a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) outlining 17 activities to be implemented. All the recommendations made by Internal Audit were incorporated into the CAP. The CAP appears to be sufficient to address the findings outlined in this report. Internal Audit will conduct follow-up reviews to validate CAP activities that have been implemented.



Audit Report

ASSURANCE • INSIGHT • OBJECTIVITY

Objective and Scope

The objectives of the Audit were to determine if:

1. The Dual Language Program was offered district-wide in grades PK through 7, as stated per Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL), and rolled out based on the timelines indicated in the Division of Connecting Languages/Dual Language Manual.
2. District and campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to Dual Language education obtained the required professional development hours per Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL).
3. Teachers assigned to Dual Language education met the certification requirements for the bilingual education and ESL program or if an exception/waiver was submitted to the TEA on or before November 1.
4. The Simultaneous Biliteracy Dual Language Education Model (50/50 Model) was monitored by the Connecting Languages/Dual Language (CL/DL) Division and/or campus administration.

The scope of the Audit was the 2021-2022 school year.

Results and Recommendations

The CL/DL Division verified that teachers assigned to DL education met the certification requirements for the bilingual education and ESL program. When the teachers did not meet certification requirements, the CL/DL Division submitted an exception/waiver to the TEA. However, we are reporting one (1) observation related to the inefficiency of the process for tracking/identifying said teachers.

In addition, we identified:

- Two (2) findings related to the monitoring of the DL Program,
- One (1) finding related to District and campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to DL education not obtaining the required professional development hours, and
- One (1) finding related to the DL Program not being offered district-wide in grades PK through 7.

Detailed findings and corresponding recommendations follow.

Finding 1

The 2020-2021 Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation did not have all the required educational performance components and was not presented to the BOT as required by the TAC §89.1265.

The TAC §89.1265 states the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation should report on nine (9) educational performance components. Six (6) of the nine (9) educational performance components were not included in the 2020-2021 Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation. The missing educational performance components were:

- The extent to which English learners are becoming proficient in English.
- The number of students who have been reclassified as English proficient.
- The number of teachers for whom an exception or waiver was/is being filed.
- The number of teachers for whom an exception or waiver was filed in the previous year who successfully obtained certification.
- School districts shall report to parents the progress of their child in acquiring English as a result of participation in the program offered to English learners.
- Each school year, the principal of each school campus, with the assistance of the campus level committee, shall develop, review, and revise, the campus improvement plan described in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.253, for the purpose of improving students' performance for English learners.

If the evaluation does not include the required performance components, the Superintendent and District leadership may not be able to assess the effectiveness of the Bilingual/DL/ESL program. Consequently, they may not be able to take corrective action, if needed, to ensure students' academic success.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) was informed via a memorandum sent by the previous Analytics, Strategy, Assessment & PEIMS (ASAP) Executive Director, not a presentation, that the 2020-2021 Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation was completed on March 21, 2022, 140 days after the November 1, 2021, deadline.

The previous Interim Chief of the CL/DL Division was under the impression that the ASAP Department would present the evaluation to the BOT. Per the ASAP Department staff, they provide support to complete the evaluation, but because they are not the data owners, they do not present it to the BOT.

If the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation is not presented to the BOT, Trustees may not be aware of the effectiveness of the DL Program. In addition, the District did not comply with TAC §89.1265

Recommendation

1.1 The CL/DL Division should develop procedures to:

- Ensure the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation includes all the required educational performance components required by the TAC.
- Establish timelines to ensure the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation is completed on time.
- Ensure the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation is presented to the BOT before November 1 of each year.
- Document who (by position) will be responsible for presenting the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation to the BOT before November 1 of each year.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activities one (1) through three (3).

Persons Responsible: Executive Director of Specialized Learning Services and Director of Connecting Languages

Implementation Dates: August 1, 2023; September 15, 2023; and October 31, 2023

Finding 2

Forty-three (43) out of 60 (72%) District and campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to DL education did not meet the professional development hours required by Board Policy EHBE (LOCAL)

Board Policy EHBE(LOCAL) states, "All new and current teachers, assistant principals, principals, and educational support staff, such as academic leaders and coaches, and school counselors, assigned to Dual Language education shall be required to participate in 12 hours of professional development for the first year in Dual Language education and six hours in every subsequent year."

In addition, supporting documentation was not maintained for some of the training. There were instances when we could not verify the number of professional development hours acquired or if the training attended was DL related.

The CL/DL Division does not have a process to monitor DL professional development hours. Furthermore, they have not defined what is considered DL professional development and what types of supporting documentation must be maintained.

According to the survey sent to principals and the former CL/DL Division Interim Chief and Director:

- Principals do not have a clear understanding of who is responsible for the monitoring of DL professional development hours.
- Both the former Interim Chief and Director stated the CL/DL Division is responsible for monitoring the required professional development hours for staff assigned to DL education. However, they stated a process is not in place to monitor DL professional development hours.
- Currently, only some DL professional development hours are monitored by using sign-in sheets and EPISD's University.

The District has committed to the continuous professional development of DL teachers and campus administrators to successfully implement DL education and provide sustainability. As such, it is important for campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to DL education to acquire the required professional development hours.

Recommendations

The CL/DL Division should:

- 2.1 Collaborate with the School Leadership Department to ensure that District and campus administrators, teachers, and other staff assigned to DL education obtain the required DL professional development hours as per Board Policy EHBE(LOCAL).

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activity four (4).

Person Responsible: Executive Director of Specialized Learning Services

Implementation Date: November 1, 2023

- 2.2 Collaborate with the School Leadership and Leadership and Talent Development departments to develop a method to track and monitor DL professional development hours.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activity five (5).

Person Responsible: Director of Connecting Languages

Implementation Date: June 30, 2023

2.3 Once a method is developed to track and monitor the DL professional development hours, written procedures should be created. At a minimum, procedures should document:

- How the DL professional development hours will be tracked and monitored.
- Who will be responsible for tracking and monitoring the required DL professional development hours.
- The acceptable types of supporting documentation (e.g., CPE certificates, agendas, registration confirmations, sign-in sheets, etc.) that must be maintained, the retention period, and where it will be stored.
- The type of training that will count towards the required DL professional development hours.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activity six (6).

Persons Responsible: Director of Connecting Languages and Director of Leadership and Talent Development

Implementation Date: December 31, 2023

Finding 3

Two (2) out of 62 campuses did not offer the DL Program in grades 6th and 7th as required by Board Policy EHBE(LOCAL) and the Division of CL/DL Manual

The two campuses that did not offer the DL Program in the school year 2021-2022 were the following:

1. Canyon Hills Middle School did not offer the DL Program in the 6th and 7th grades. The principal indicated that the DL Program has never been offered at the campus due to:
 - Staffing limitations
 - Parents/students have not requested to be enrolled in the DL Program for the past two years
2. Charles Middle School did not offer the DL Program in the 7th grade. The principal indicated that the DL Program was not offered in the 7th grade because of staffing limitations.

Per the former CL/DL Division Director, when campus administrators express that they will not be offering the DL Program, the CL/DL Division offers support so that campuses may implement the program. However, according to the former CL/DL Division Interim Chief and Director, the CL/DL Division does not have the authority to force campus administrators to implement the program. When asked about their role in the DL program, Assistant Superintendents stated that they are responsible for the implementation of the DL program at campuses.

If the DL is not offered at all campuses PK through 7th grade per the district-wide initiative, campus administrators are (i) not complying with Board Policy and (ii) not providing students across the District access to DL services.

Recommendation

3.1 The CL/DL Division, in collaboration with School Leadership and HR, should develop procedures to ensure the DL Program is offered as required by Board Policy and the Division of CL/DL Manual. At a minimum, these procedures should address:

- Who is responsible for verifying that the DL Program is offered at every campus.

- The actual process that will be used to monitor the DL Program.
- The process to ensure that campuses have the number of staff needed to offer the DL Program.
- The process for reviewing exceptions (when not offering the DL Program), the required supporting documentation, and approval(s) needed.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activities seven (7) through 12.

Persons Responsible: Executive Director of Specialized Learning Services, Director of Connecting Languages, and Executive Director Talent Acquisition and Personnel Administration

Implementation Dates: June 30, 2023; August 1, 2023; and November 1, 2023.

Finding 4

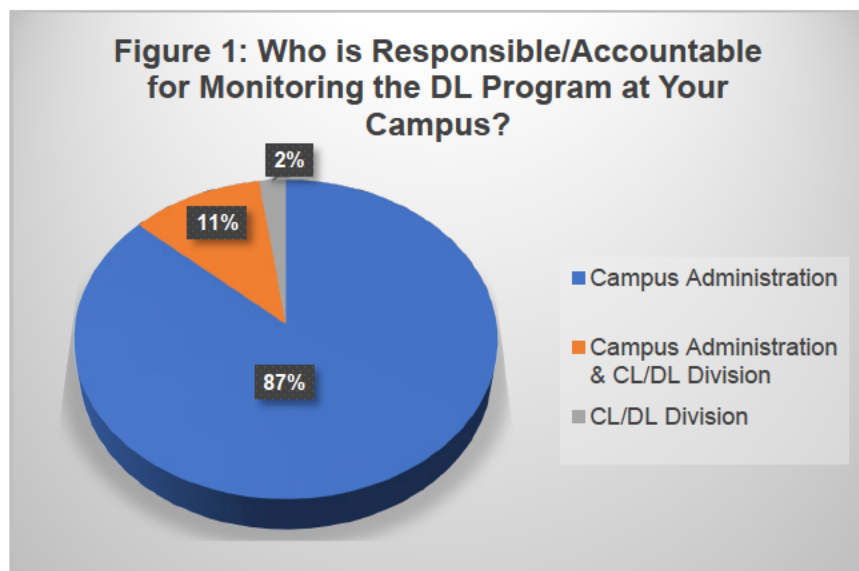
The District has not clearly defined expectations to monitor the Simultaneous Biliteracy Dual Language Education Program (50/50 Model)

The District does not have procedures that outline (i) who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the simultaneous DL educational (50/50) model, (ii) how often monitoring should occur, (iii) how monitoring should be documented and communicated, and (iv) whether follow up plans should be developed. Without a clear understanding of who is responsible for monitoring the 50/50 Model may result in an inconsistent implementation and performance of the DL Program.

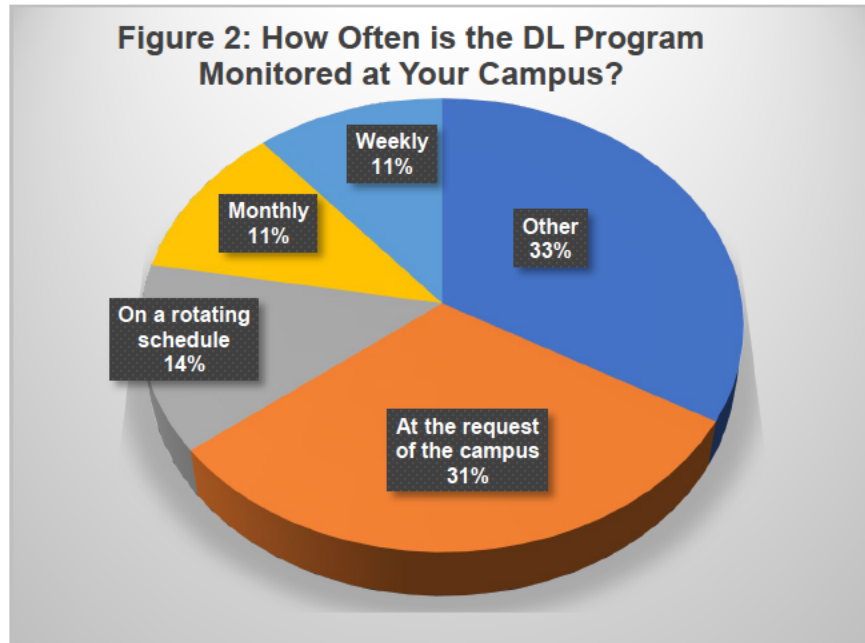
A review of documentation provided by eight (8) CL/DL Facilitators as evidence of monitoring mainly consisted of emails providing support to campuses for the DL Program. Examples of support included requests for assistance with displays, requests for additional textbooks, setting up parent meetings, DL schedule questions, and summer school planning, etc.

Responses to our survey from forty-five principals indicate:

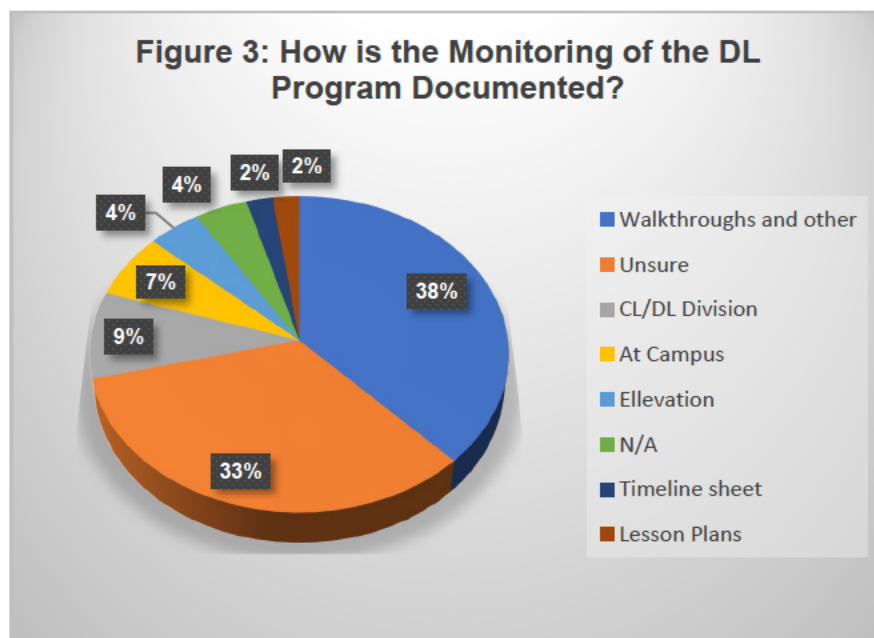
1. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of principals agree they are responsible and accountable for monitoring the DL Program. See **Figure 1**.



2. However, the frequency the DL program is monitored varies across the District. See **Figure 2**.

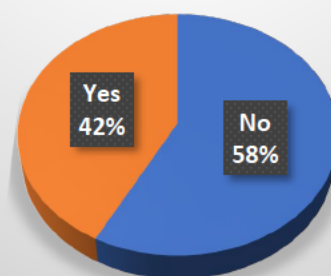


3. A third of the principals who responded indicated they are “unsure” how the monitoring of the DL Program is documented. The other responses varied from walkthroughs (38%) to lesson plans (2%). See **Figure 3**.



4. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the principals who responded stated they do not develop follow up plans when corrective is needed. See **Figure 4**.

Figure 4: Are DL Follow Up Plans Developed and Monitored if Corrective Action is Needed?



The former Interim Chief and Director of the CL/DL Division provided the following responses to the same survey:

- Principals and Assistant Superintendents are responsible/accountable for monitoring the implementation of the DL Program. In addition, the DL program is being monitored via campus visits by the CL/DL Division Facilitators.
- The CL/DL Division monitors the DL Program at the request of the campuses.
- The CL/DL Division documents the monitoring of the DL Program through logs, staff meeting debriefs, calendars of campus visits, emails, and sign-in sheets. Also, CL/DL Facilitators document their visits and support of campuses in their calendars and sign-in logs at campuses.
- The CL/DL Division develops, and monitors follow up plans when corrective action is needed.

According to the Assistant Superintendents overseeing the schools in our scope, there is “minimal monitoring”, and it is unclear who “owns” the DL Program.

Recommendation

- 4.1 The CL/DL Division should collaborate with the Chief Academic Officer and School Leadership to develop a process and corresponding procedures to:
 - Identify those responsible and accountable for monitoring the implementation of the DL 50/50 Model at campuses.
 - Outline what the monitoring should entail.
 - Specify the frequency of the monitoring.
 - Define how the monitoring will be documented.
 - Outline when and how instructional intervention plans will be developed (if needed based on the monitoring results).
 - Provide training to those responsible for monitoring the implementation of the DL Program.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activities eight (8), and 13 through 16.

Persons Responsible: Executive Director of Specialized Learning Services, Director of Connecting Languages, and Executive Director of Talent Acquisition and Personnel Administration

Observation and Recommendations

While conducting this Audit, we made an observation that does not violate local, state, or federal guidelines and, as such, was not included as a finding in the Audit Report. However, we felt the observation was worthy of informing you as the data owner/expert to determine how it should be addressed.

Observation 1

The CL/DL Division uses a cumbersome and time-consuming manual process to track teachers who do not have a Bilingual and/or ESL certification and either (i) are assigned to a DL course or (ii) serve students receiving ESL services. The process is as follows:

- In October, the TEA provides the Bilingual Education Exception/ESL Waiver Application for the District to be completed by November 1. The application requires the total number of teachers who teach a DL course or serve students receiving ESL services who do not have a Bilingual and/or ESL certification.
- The CL/DL Division requests campuses to provide the names of teachers who meet these criteria.
- The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) Clerks then populate the teacher information provided by the principals into a spreadsheet.
- The four (4) CL/DL Division staff assigned to this task update and work on this spreadsheet daily from the beginning of the school year until the TEA deadline of November 1.
- The CL/DL Division uses this spreadsheet to summarize the number of teachers that are not certified and to report to TEA on or before November 1.

Manual processes, such as this one, carry a higher risk of human error and lead to inefficient use of staff time.

Recommendations

The CL/DL Division should:

- 1.1 Work with School Leadership and HR to explore ideas on how to automate the process to track and monitor teachers who do not have a Bilingual and/or ESL certification and (i) are assigned to a DL course or (ii) serve students receiving ESL services. An automated process will help minimize manual data entry and reduce the risk of errors.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activity 17.

Person Responsible: Director of Connecting Languages

Implementation Date: December 31, 2023

- 1.2 Develop written procedures to complement the automated tracking and monitoring process.

Management and Leadership Response: Agreed with the recommendation and incorporated into the CAP as activity 17.

Person Responsible: Director of Connecting Languages

Implementation Date: December 31, 2023



Appendix A: Background and Methodology

ASSURANCE • INSIGHT • OBJECTIVITY

Background

On February 25, 2014, the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) adopted a district-wide 50/50 Dual Language (DL) Model as its designated program for English language learners (ELLs), PK – 12th grade as outlined in the TEC Chapter 89, Subchapter BB. Initiated in August 2014 in PK and Kindergarten (K) classrooms, the model will grow by adding a new grade level each year.

"Grounded on DL education research and based on state and district data, EPISD adopted the district-wide 50/50 Dual Language Model. Dual language is the district curriculum delivered and learned in two languages. The following is the EPISD Dual Language 50/50 Model:

All students in the Dual Language Model will develop the following:

- Students will achieve bilingualism & biliteracy
- Students will have high academic achievement in both languages
- Students will develop sociocultural competency"¹

Per Texas Administrative Code §89.1265. Evaluation, "All school districts are required to conduct a bilingual education or English as a second language (ESL) annual evaluation in accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC), §29.053, collecting a full range of data to determine program effectiveness to ensure student academic success. The annual evaluation report shall be presented to the board of trustees before November 1 of each year, and the report shall be retained at the school district level in accordance with TEC, § 29.062."

The Dual Language Program Audit was approved by the Board of Trustees as part of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Internal Audit Plans.

Methodology

To achieve our audit objective(s), we:

1. Researched relevant federal/state laws and regulations, Board policies, and the department manual/guidelines.
2. Used internal control questionnaires and interviewed relevant EPISD employees to understand the DL Program.
3. Performed a risk assessment based on our understanding of the DL Program and the controls in place.
4. Verified if the DL Program was offered district-wide in grades PK through 7 (46 Elementaries, 14 Middle Schools, and two PK-8) as stated per EHBE (LOCAL) and rolled out based on the timelines indicated in the Division of CL/DL Manual.
5. A sample of 60 campus administrators, teachers, and staff assigned to DL education was selected to determine if they met the required DL professional development hours per policy EHBE (LOCAL).

¹ EPISD Division of Connecting Languages/Dual Language Manual

6. A sample of 60 teachers with a Bilingual or ESL certification that taught a DL course for school year 2021-2022 was selected and verified their certification on the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) website.
7. A sample of 10 teachers that did not have a Bilingual or ESL certification that taught a DL course for school year 2021-2022 was selected to determine if an exception/waiver was submitted to the TEA on or before November 1.
8. Obtained the Bilingual/DL/ESL Evaluation and inquired about documentation related to the Board presentation required by the TEC.
9. Sent a survey to 57 campus principals and to the former Interim Chief and Director of the CL/DL Division to determine:
 - Who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 50/50 Model,
 - How often monitoring occurs,
 - How monitoring is documented and communicated and,
 - If follow-up plans are developed.

Because of the inherent limitations in a system of internal controls, there is a risk that errors or irregularities occurred and were not detected. Due professional care requires the internal auditor to conduct examinations and verifications to a reasonable extent. Accordingly, an auditor can obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that procedures and internal controls are followed and adhered to in accordance with the federal, state, local policies and guidelines.



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1014 N. Stanton | El Paso, TX 79902

Phone: 915-230-2743

audit@episd.org

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline:

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