

AISD Virtual Learning Summer Programs 2020

Lessons Learned and Where We Go From Here





Executive Summary

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) offered virtual learning summer programs from June to August 2020, serving a wide range of students from prekindergarten to grade 12. The purposes of the programs varied and included students' academic enrichment or acceleration, course credit recovery, and grade level transition. AISD offered virtual learning summer programs serving more than 13,000 students during the period of June through August 2020. Below are some successes and challenges realized across the summer programs.

Successes included the following.

- Many teachers reported that their experiences during summer programs helped them work through challenges of providing virtual instruction; many reported feeling more prepared for providing virtual instruction in the upcoming school year.
- Staff and students used various learning platforms and forms of online meeting technology that encouraged and allowed for virtual instruction. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning allowed flexibility for teachers, parents, and students when accessing materials, providing instructional time to check in, and completing assignments.
- Many students benefitted from participating in summer programs, which allowed them opportunities to review key learning objectives, complete assignments and requirements for course credit, and advance their knowledge and preparation for the next school year. In many situations, students were able to receive small-group or one-on-one guidance from teachers, in addition to the whole-group class sessions. Many high school students who responded to a survey said they benefitted from having class assignments and learning materials available asynchronously so they could work at their own pace to complete the work.
- Staff reported making many efforts to communicate with parents and students, to encourage participation, help with enrollment, ensure students were attending and keeping up with the assignments, and check if students had adequate technology to participate. For several key academic programs, staff sent home report cards on students' academic progress and course completion.

Staff also reported some challenges in the summer programs. Challenges included a lack of timely summer program notification and student enrollment, difficulty accessing or implementing technology using multiple platforms (by staff, students, and students' parents), lack of instructional or student supplies, and some communication with students and families.

Staff and student surveys revealed that most were in favor of continuing to offer virtual school programming with synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities during the regular school year and future summer programs.

Thus, the summer programs provided an important learning opportunity after the Spring

2020 school semester, when all-virtual instruction was required for AISD and most schools in the nation, and before the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year. As of the writing of this report, all AISD schools will start the year virtually on September 8, 2020, for at least 4 weeks. Lessons learned from the summer programs can help inform AISD staff, students, and parents about what it will take to begin and continue the school year successfully. Some of the steps district leaders and staff must take, which in some cases they have already begun, include the following:

- ensure all students and staff have access to reliable internet/Wi-Fi and technology equipment (i.e., laptops);
- ensure students, staff, and parents all understand how to access and use the technology (e.g., through ongoing training and support);
- provide all learning materials in multiple formats (e.g., online, hands-on);
- set up and maintain essential multi-way communication between students, school staff, and parents;
- keep students engaged in their virtual learning; and
- seek guidance and input from summer school staff and students, as their experiences will inform and assist others who need to adjust quickly to the district’s virtual learning environment.

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Methods and Data Sources	6
Participating Students	6
Multilingual Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Program for Emergent Bilinguals	8
PK Through 4th-Grade Program	10
Fifth-Grade Transition Program	12
Sixth- and 7th-Grade Program	14
Eighth-Grade Transition Program	16
Fifth- Through 8th-Grade Emergent Bilingual Newcomers Program	18
Fifth and 8th-Grade DL Summer Bridge Program	20
AVID Excel and Algebra Readiness Programs	21
High School DELTA and Scholars Programs	23
International High School Camp	28
Extended School Year Program	29
ACE Austin Summer Camp	31
PrimeTime Summer Camp	33
Other Summer Programs	34
Conclusions and Recommendations	35

List of Tables

Table 1. AISD 2020 Virtual Summer Programs by Level and Numbers of Participating Students

7

Introduction

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) director received a request in May 2020 from the superintendent and several district leaders to provide program evaluation feedback on all the AISD summer programs offered virtually for students to study the following:

- the value of offering virtual learning through summer academic programs to students, and
- the lessons learned from operating summer programs that would inform continuing virtual learning in the next school year.

With this in mind, DRE staff prepared an evaluation plan, outlining the purpose, evaluation tasks, timeline for activities, action steps and outputs for the summer programs evaluation. This report is a summary of each program for which information was requested. The report provides the following for each AISD virtual learning summer program, as information became available: program description and purpose, program schedule, budget allocation, students eligible, students' enrollment and attendance, a summary of any available student program outcomes (e.g., academic performance), and a summary of available teacher information (e.g., survey responses). Due to the variety of the programs' purposes, some data were not available.

Methods and Data Sources

To obtain necessary information for conducting program evaluation, DRE staff contacted summer program leaders, attended summer school staff meetings, determined what each summer program's goals and activities were, and set up data collection protocols (based on data source and availability). In addition, DRE staff planned and conducted data collection and analyses, and provided formative reports and updates to staff, within a relatively brief time for decision-making purposes during the programs.

Data sources and methods used included accessing student data system records or records provided by program staff for program enrollment, attendance, and academic performance, if available. In addition, data summaries of summer students' demographics and teachers' job role information were gathered. Program leaders provided some program information through email communications, file sharing, and virtual meeting discussions. DRE staff accessed records in the district's student intervention monitoring system, eCST, to track support provided by staff to summer school students and their families. For example, parent support specialists reached out to help families with summer program registration, accessing materials and technology, and gaining online access to summer program classes. Summer school teachers and other staff also entered information into eCST to record similar information. DRE staff obtained summer program financial allocations from summer program directors and other staff. DRE staff made available a teacher survey to summer program managers and principals for distribution to teachers prior to the end of each program to get feedback on the program. DRE staff also made available summer student surveys for two programs: a summer high school program survey, and a secondary dual language (DL) bridge program survey. All findings from available data are reported for each program summary.

Participating Students

With more than 13,000 students participating in AISD summer programs, the following is a summary of students' demographics. More than half of participating students were males (53%); almost two-thirds were Hispanic (73%); 11% were White; 9% were Black; 5% were Asian; and the remaining percentages were two or more races (2%), American Indian Alaska Native (<1%), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (<1%). More than two-thirds (78%) were economically disadvantaged, 52% were emergent bilinguals (i.e., English learners), and 20% were receiving special

education services in AISD. Most summer program students (70%) were in elementary grades (early elementary, prekindergarten [PK], kindergarten [KG], and 1st through 5th grades), while 19% were in middle school grades (6th through 8th), and 11% were in high school grades (9th through 12th). See Table 1 for a brief overview of some key programs and students served (some program data were not available at the time of this report).

Table 1. AISD Virtual Learning Summer Programs 2020, by Level and Numbers of Participating Students

Level	Program	Number participating
Elementary	Multilingual PK/KG	860
	PK through 4th grade	6,039
	5th grade transition	1,429
	PrimeTime	369
	Andy Roddick Summer Camp	170
Middle	6th and 7th grade	993
	8th grade transition	1,006
	5th through 8th Emergent Bilingual Newcomer	294
	Secondary DL Bridge	175
	AVID algebra readiness	112
	AVID Excel	63
High	DELTA	959
	Scholars	320
	International High School Camp	18
Multilevel	ACE Austin	768
	Extended School Year	45

Source. AISD virtual learning summer programs 2020 data.

Note. Some programs and student participation data may not have been available at the time of this report. Some student participation totals may contain duplicates if students attended more than one summer session.

Multilingual Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Program for Emergent Bilinguals

Program Overview

The summer multilingual PK and KG program is required by the state to be offered to rising KG and 1st grade emergent bilingual (English learner) students who are participating in bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) programs. However, student participation is optional. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided [guidance](#) to school districts on offering the summer program in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that districts could have flexibility in fulfilling the requirements of this program. AISD’s virtual learning multilingual PK/KG summer program focused on reading and mathematics (math), with synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

AISD staff mailed learning packets to the homes of students, and virtual learning opportunities occurred between bilingual-/ESL-certified teachers and students on a daily basis. The virtual learning platforms included [Seesaw](#) and [ClassDojo](#), and often teachers met with students using online communication tools, such as [Zoom](#). Parent support specialists provided the following services for this program: contacting parents about online program enrollment and virtual attendance, assisting parents in learning how to access the online learning platform, and providing support to some online meetings with parents and school staff. The virtual learning multilingual PK/KG summer program occurred from June 3 through 30, 2020, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The estimated allocation for the program, \$1,135,688, covered curriculum writing, staff salaries, professional learning, and instructional materials.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Based on program records provided by district staff, students eligible to attend the summer program included 4,129 students who attended AISD schools during the 2019-2020 school year. Of these, 17 were in early elementary, 2,051 were in PK, and 2,061 were in KG. The district’s student information system, TEAMS, had student enrollment records showing 860 students enrolled, of whom two were in early elementary, 455 were in PK, and 403 were in KG. Student attendance was 78% for the virtual learning program in June 2020.

Student Outcomes

The district’s eCST system contained service records showing that 566 students’ parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, or parent support specialist about their child’s participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during June 2020.

Teachers completed report cards sent home to parents of students who attended the program. The report cards provided summaries of students’ participation and performance (participated or incomplete) in math (e.g., numeracy, shapes, patterns, organizing, addition and subtraction) and language arts (e.g., print, phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, writing, listening, speaking, comprehension).

Staff Outcomes

Teachers in the virtual learning multilingual summer PK/KG program were sent an email with

Summer Program Descriptions and Terms

Each of the AISD virtual learning summer programs described in this report may have had the following types of information available at the time the report was published:

Program description and purpose, funding, staffing, and summer schedule

Student eligibility, enrollment and attendance

Student academic and survey results

Staff survey results

Other available information

Common terms that appear in this report include:

BLEND = AISD’s virtual learning platform

DL = dual language

eCST = AISD’s electronic Child Study Team data system

Emergent bilingual (English learner)

ESL = English as a second language

KG = kindergarten

PK = prekindergarten

TEAMS = AISD’s student information system

TEA = Texas Education Agency

Title I, Part A = federal grant intended for schools with high concentrations of low-income students

a web-based survey. Based on 78 teachers' responses to the survey, about half taught PK and the other half taught KG (a few had mixed grade-level classes), the majority (83%) taught both language arts and math, and 63% taught in both English and Spanish. Teachers rated whether or not the resources provided for each area were effective in meeting the program goals for the virtual learning environment. Most teachers agreed resources were effective in the following areas: 78% for synchronous learning activities, 82% for asynchronous learning activities, 84% for language arts curriculum, and 78% for math curriculum. Almost all teachers (93%) agreed that the summer school staff development session on curriculum prepared them well for the program. In addition, 96% agreed that the summer program curricula helped prepare students for school success at the beginning of the next school year. Among teachers who used the biology/zoology curriculum, most indicated the materials were engaging and rigorous for students. In addition, almost all teachers responding to the survey agreed that the virtual Tiny Tails animal experience was engaging for students and supported the curriculum. When asked about the revised curriculum materials provided to KG students in the program, almost all respondents agreed that the materials were engaging and rigorous for students.

Sixty-one percent agreed that technology equipment was available to them for the summer program. When asked if having access to student data through the district's eCST system was helpful, 81% agreed. Most agreed that the schedule worked well to promote students' success in the coming school year (84%) and worked well for teachers (89%). Teachers also rated the effectiveness of different virtual learning platforms used during the program, and teachers' agreement for the virtual learning platforms were as follows: 52% Zoom, 50% SeeSaw, 44% home learning calendar, and 39% BLEND or folder provided by the mentor teacher. Only 22% of teachers indicated that the Class DoJo virtual learning platform was useful while the rest indicated it was not applicable, possibly because they did not use it. Some teachers mentioned other software (e.g., Google documents and slides, YouTube) that was useful during the program.

Several teachers offered suggestions for improving the program if offered virtually in the future. For example, several recommended that the Zoom meeting sessions (for synchronous learning) be shorter or the number of daily sessions reduced, citing that these were too draining on the teacher and the children. One teacher suggested that allowing teachers to record their instructional sessions would allow greater flexibility for students and their families to view them at other times. Several suggested that teachers should have received instructional packets, books, and materials, with some citing concerns that not all children may have received their packet. Some reported that the lessons provided could have been better adapted for the virtual learning environment. One person suggested putting all curricula, lesson plans, and suggested activities online in the district's BLEND system so all teachers could access them when needed. Some recommended adding more hands-on activities and ensuring students have the supplies to do these activities. Some recommended the district ensure that all students (and teachers) have full and reliable access to internet/Wi-Fi or computers. Some recommended offering parents technology and software training so they could support their young child's learning.

PK Through 4th-Grade Program

Program Overview

The PK through 4th-grade virtual learning summer program provided each student with 1.5 hours each of reading and math instruction daily for 20 days, with online teacher-directed activities, learning packets sent home to students, and other activities. The PK through 4th-grade program occurred July 13 through August 7, 2020, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The estimated total allocation of \$562,250 covered the salaries of principals, clerks, parent support specialists, mentor teachers, and teachers, as well as the costs of professional learning, curriculum writing, and instructional materials.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Principals were able to recommend students to the summer program who had incomplete grades at the end of the Spring 2020 semester or who were late to begin virtual learning (which began in March 2020). Based on district records of students who had incomplete grades in language arts or math, 5,193 PK through 4th-grade students were eligible for the July summer program (583 in PK, 858 in KG, 876 in 1st, 889 in 2nd, 895 in 3rd, and 1,092 in 4th grade). Based on July 2020 summer school enrollment records, there were 6,039 students, and the grade-level counts were as follows: 819 in PK, 943 in KG, 1,066 in 1st, 1,076 in 2nd, 1,033 in 3rd, and 1,102 in 4th grade. The student attendance rate for the summer program was 99%.

Student Outcomes

The district's eCST system contained service records showing that 52 students' parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, or parent support specialist about their child's participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during July 2020. The parent of every student who participated in the summer school program received communications from summer school staff about class Zoom and log-in information.

Teachers completed report cards sent home to parents of students who attended the program. The report cards provided summaries of students' participation and performance (participated or incomplete) in math (e.g., number and operations, algebraic reasoning) and reading (e.g., phonological awareness, comprehension, response skills, multiple genres).

Staff Outcomes

One hundred teachers were initially hired for the PK through 4th-grade summer program. Examining teachers' survey responses, of which there were 19, most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 15 rated it a 7 (great). When asked about training, 84% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 84% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was paced appropriately, 84% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)-based standards, and 79% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Eighty-four percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Two teachers suggested improving the curriculum by requesting more Spanish supplemental materials and materials of greater interest to students. Of teachers responding, 79% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning.

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 5% of teachers believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 16% indicated they did not know, 26% indicated the same frequency, and 53% indicated greater frequency. All teachers responding indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings

(e.g., using Zoom), 95% agreed students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers, and 61% agreed students used the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 58% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (30%), accessing a computer laptop or device (30%), and accessing software (17%). Examples of technology difficulties included unstable internet, difficulty logging in to systems, and switching back and forth between Zoom and BLEND.

The majority of teachers responding (68%) said they did not need any additional trainings for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Among those who said yes, the most commonly mentioned trainings needed were using the BLEND platform and district data systems (e.g., eCST). All responding teachers agreed that online virtual learning should continue in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year, such as district-created virtual lesson plans, instructional packets sent home to students, the use of Zoom for class meetings or small-group instruction, and online learning for parents. However, teachers suggested some parts of the summer program could change for future summer programs, such as a more streamlined way to document students' participation and performance (not so many systems), having mentor teachers to support those providing instruction, providing more variety and supplemental materials, and ensuring all students have internet access.

Principals met at the end of the summer sessions to discuss successes and challenges. Summer principals noted the benefits of staff collaboration, having wonderful teachers, and students who were engaged in the program. They saw the benefits of regular staff updates and check-in virtual meetings. They also noted that the summer experiences (in both June and July for some staff) helped these leaders and teachers become more comfortable with providing remote instruction, virtual meetings, and working with technology all of which will be critical for the next school year as school begins virtually due to the extended COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these summer leaders will take campus leadership positions in the coming school year. Summer principals agreed that all teachers need to be trained in the district softwares and learning platforms. Summer principals also mentioned the helpfulness of staff from district offices such as special education and instructional technology. One principal commented on the benefit of using a co-teaching model during the virtual program, when feasible. Challenges mentioned by the summer principals included technological issues, such as when district data systems were unavailable on Fridays although summer school was in session and when the data system for students had a school-year rollover. They also noted that not all students had reliable or available technology (e.g., internet/Wi-Fi, laptops, certain software). Some reported they found it challenging to not always be immediately available to teachers when they needed help. One summer principal noted it was not always clear while they were observing virtual classroom activities whether students were engaged. Another summer leader said more needs to be done to help train parents to understand all the virtual learning systems, and to help them with information relevant to their child's learning.

Fifth-Grade Transition Program

Program Overview

The 5th-grade transition program provided 5th-grade students with an enrichment opportunity in language arts and math, specifically for those who did not meet grade-level performance expectations on a middle-of-year test in reading and/or math, or who received an incomplete course grade in language arts or math classes. Principals could recommend students be invited to the program.

The 5th-grade transition program occurred from June 15 through 30, 2020, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The estimated total program allocation of \$130,092 covered staff salaries for principals, mentor teachers, and teachers, as well as the costs of instructional material and supplies. Staff participated in meetings and professional learning during the program.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Student eligibility for this program was based on the most recent data the district had for students' language arts and math performance. Using 2019–2020 middle-of-year 5th-grade test results, 1,688 students did not meet grade-level performance in language arts, 1,138 did not meet grade-level performance in math, and 777 did not meet grade-level performance in both language arts and math. Examining Spring 2020 course grade data, 1,179 fifth-grade students had an incomplete course grade in language arts or math. District system student records showed 1,429 fifth graders enrolled in the June 2020 program, and attendance was 93%.

Student Outcomes

The district's eCST system contained service records showing that 94 students' parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, parent support specialist, or other staff about their child's participation in the program or other support for their child in the program sometime during June 2020. The parent of every student who participated in the summer school program received communications from summer school staff about class Zoom and log-in information.

Using course grades that teachers entered in TEAMS, most students passed their summer reading (94%) and math (96%) courses (based on a passing grade-point average of 70 or more out of 100).

Staff Outcomes

Of 40 teachers hired for the June 2020 program, 19 responded to the teacher survey, and most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 100% rated the program between a 4 and a 7. When asked about training, 89% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 84% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was paced appropriately, 100% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and 89% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Eighty-four percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Two teachers suggested improving the curriculum by requesting more clear guidance and more online opportunities for students to practice skills. Of teachers responding, 84% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning.

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the

frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 32% of teachers believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 26% indicated they did not know, 21% indicated the same frequency, and 21% indicated greater frequency. All teachers responding indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom), 95% agreed students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers, and 100% agreed students used the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 79% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (34%), accessing a computer laptop or device (17%), and accessing software (24%). Examples of technology difficulties included unstable internet and some online software sessions quitting unexpectedly.

The majority of teachers responding (68%) said they did not need any additional trainings for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Among those who said yes, the most commonly mentioned trainings needed were how to support students with disabilities, how to create engaging virtual meeting sessions for students, using the BLEND platform, and creating lessons for virtual learning in BLEND. Eighty-nine percent of responding teachers agreed that online virtual learning should continue in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year, such as virtual lessons, recorded lessons students can access at any time, and online meetings for both staff and parents. However, teachers suggested some parts of the summer program could change for future summer programs, such as more flexibility in the amount of time students have to complete assignments, support for a more efficient way for documentation of program activities, student and parent training on how to use BLEND, and more engaging activities for virtual learning.



Virtual Learning

Sixth- and 7th-Grade Program

Program Overview

The 6th- and 7th-grade summer program provided students a way to make up incomplete course grades from the regular school year in language arts, reading, and math. The program occurred from July 13 through 28, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The estimated total program allocation of \$239,288 covered staff salaries for principals, mentor teachers, and teachers, as well as the costs of instructional material and supplies, and curriculum writing. Staff participated in meetings and professional learning during the program.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Examining Spring 2020 course grades data, 110 sixth-grade students and 260 seventh-grade students had an incomplete course grade in language arts or math. Using district student records, 993 students (495 in 6th grade and 498 in 7th grade) enrolled in the summer program. Using summer July 2020 student attendance records, the attendance rate was 97%.

Student Outcomes

The district's eCST system contained service records showing that 227 students' parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, or parent support specialist about their child's participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during July 2020.

Using course grades entered in TEAMS by teachers, more than half of 6th and 7th graders in the summer programs passed their reading and math classes (with a passing grade point average being 70 or more out of 100). Among 6th graders, 69% passed their reading course and 66% passed their math course. Among 7th graders, 61% passed their reading course and 60% passed their math course.

Staff Outcomes

There were 34 teachers and four special education support staff in the program. Of the 28 teachers who responded to the survey, most gave a positive review of the summer program. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 100% rated the program between a 4 and a 7. When asked about training, 82% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 50% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was paced appropriately, 82% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and 71% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Eighty-nine percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Two teachers suggested improving the program by having opportunities to go through a virtual practice lesson and reducing the amount of documentation required on students. Of teachers responding, 86% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning.

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 14% of teachers believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 14% indicated they did not know, 32% indicated the same frequency, and 39% indicated greater frequency. All teachers responding indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom), 86% agreed students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers, and 96% agreed students used the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 82% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly

encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (36%), accessing a computer laptop or device (30%), and accessing software (20%). Examples of technology difficulties included updating software (e.g., Zoom), some hyperlinks not working, and some students' lack of technology experience.

Half of teachers responding (50%) said they did not need any additional trainings for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Among those who said yes, the most commonly mentioned trainings needed were the use of BLEND and other technology resources (e.g., Google docs) and how to track grades and attendance. Eighty-six percent of responding teachers agreed that online virtual learning should continue in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year, such as BLEND, virtual instruction using Zoom, asynchronous self-paced learning opportunities, and [iReady](#) and [HyperDocs](#). However, teachers suggested some parts of the summer program could change for future summer programs, such as more flexibility in pacing, curriculum written specifically for 6th graders, and a more efficient way to document program activities.

Thinking about next year's summer programs as well as the upcoming regular school year, one of the summer program leaders recommended staff, students, and parents have training in the AISD BLEND learning system so they would be more familiar with it prior to starting school. Another recommendation made was to send out students' class schedules ahead of time to parents and students so they would be more prepared before summer classes start. One challenge faced during the summer program was staff not being able to access district student data systems on Fridays, a district-initiated process, while the summer programs were held every day including Fridays. Thus, staff would like to have access to all student data systems for each day of the summer program. In addition, after the new school year rollover in the student data system (to load new school year data), teachers had some difficulty knowing where to put students' final grades and enter progress monitoring data.



Eighth-Grade Transition Program

Program Overview

The 8th-grade transition program provided 8th-grade students with an enrichment opportunity in language arts and math, specifically for those who did not meet grade-level performance expectations on a middle-of-year test in reading and/or math, or who received an incomplete course grade in language arts or math classes. Principals could recommend students to the program. The 8th-grade transition program occurred from June 15 through 30, 2020, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The estimated total allocation of \$120,210 covered staff salaries for principals, mentor teachers, and teachers, as well as the costs of instructional material and supplies. Staff participated in meetings and professional learning during the program.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Middle-of-year 8th-grade benchmark test results showed 1,561 students did not meet grade-level performance in language arts, 1,189 students did not meet grade-level performance in math, and 841 students did not meet grade-level performance in both language arts and math. Examining Spring 2020 course grades data, 333 eighth-grade students had an incomplete course grade in language arts or math. AISD TEAMS student records showed 1,006 eighth-graders enrolled in the June program, and attendance was 87%.

Student Outcomes

The district's eCST system contained service records showing that 295 students' parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, parent support specialist, or other staff about their child's participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during June 2020.

Using course grades entered in TEAMS by teachers, more than half of 8th graders passed their reading (57%) and math (57%) courses (with passing defined as a grade point average of 70 or more out of 100).

Staff Outcomes

Thirty-four classroom teachers and six special education support teachers were in this summer program. Of the 19 teachers who responded to the teacher survey, most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 100% rated the program between a 4 and a 7. When asked about training, 78% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 63% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced, 94% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and 81% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Of teachers responding, 78% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning. Eighty-four percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. A few teachers suggested additional things that would have been helpful to them during virtual instruction, such as more clear guidance on student attendance and grading, having additional instructional materials and equipment to work with from home, and the ability to use the district's messaging system to conduct mass pre-recorded phone calls to parents of students.

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 34% of teachers believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 13% indicated they did not know, 28% indicated the same frequency, and 25% indicated greater frequency. All teachers responding indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom), 84% agreed students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers,

and 100% agreed students used the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 91% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (34%), accessing a computer laptop or device (31%), and accessing software (18%). Teachers gave some examples of technology problems students had, such as broken computer laptops, lack of training or experience on how to use computers or software, and intermittent internet or network system downtime.

Slightly less than half of teachers responding (47%) said they did not need any additional trainings for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Among those who said yes, the most commonly mentioned trainings needed were for district software platforms (e.g., BLEND), meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom), and other software (e.g., Google and HyperDocs).

Eighty-seven percent of responding teachers agreed online virtual learning should continue in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year, such as synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, student training on how to use software and district learning platforms, more lessons available in BLEND, and additional software platforms (e.g., iReady, [Flowcabulary](#), [Newsela](#), and HyperDocs). In fact, several teachers commented on the overall positive experience they had with the virtual learning summer program, citing support from campus staff and a newfound confidence in providing virtual instruction. However, teachers suggested some parts of the summer program should change, such as simpler or streamlined course syllabi, an easier student grading system and other student documentation tasks, more project-based learning, and more time for instruction and planning.

Summer program leaders made recommendations similar to those made for the 6th- and 7th-grade summer program. For example, in planning for the next school year, one of the summer program leaders recommended staff, students, and parents receive training on how to access and navigate the AISD BLEND learning system so they would be more familiar with it prior to starting school. Another recommendation made was to send out students' class schedules ahead of time to parents and students so they would be more prepared before summer classes start. One challenge faced during the summer program was staff not being able to access district student data systems on Fridays, a district-initiated process, while the summer programs were held every day including Fridays. Thus, staff would like to have access to all student data systems for each day of the summer program. In addition, after the new school year rollover in the student data system (to load new school year data), teachers had some difficulty knowing where to put students' final grades and enter progress monitoring data.

Fifth- Through 8th-Grade Emergent Bilingual Newcomers Program

Program Overview

AISD's Multilingual Education Department sponsored the virtual learning emergent bilingual newcomer student summer program offered to students in grades 5 through 8 who were newly arrived at US schools. The program focus was on language arts and math. The newcomer program occurred from June 3 through 30, 2020, Monday through Thursday, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The program's allocated budget was \$147,807, covering staff salaries, professional learning, curriculum writing, and instructional materials.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Based on data provided by staff in the Multilingual Education Department, 562 newcomer students were eligible to attend the summer program: 222 fifth graders, 199 sixth graders, 191 seventh graders, and 172 eighth graders. AISD data system records showed 294 students enrolled in the summer program, of whom 87 were in 5th grade, 81 were in 6th grade, 62 were in 7th grade, and 64 were in 8th grade. Attendance during the June 2020 program was 100%.

Student Outcomes

The district's eCST system contained service records showing that 291 students' parents were contacted one or more times by staff about their child's participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during June 2020.

Teachers kept records of whether students logged in to the district's BLEND learning platform and completed assignments for each subject area. The average percentages of student assignments completed at each grade level were 69% for 5th grade, 49% for 6th grade, 51% for 7th grade, and 58% for 8th grade.

Staff Outcomes

Twelve staff were in the program. Of the 11 staff who responded to the teacher survey, most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 100% rated the program between a 5 and a 7. When asked about training, 82% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 73% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced, 82% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and 73% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Sixty-four percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Three staff made suggestions to improve the program: provide more resources for math instruction, add a program such as [IXL](#) (rather than [Dreambox](#), which was used in the program), make more efforts to inform parents about the benefit of the program, and provide parents with assistance on internet access to and monitoring of their students on the online learning platform. Of teachers responding, 64% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning.

When asked to consider the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, relative to before the changes in learning environment occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one-third of teachers (36%) believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 36% indicated the same frequency, 18% indicated greater frequency, and 9% indicated they did not know. All teachers responding indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom), and 91% indicated students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers. In addition, all teachers agreed students used the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, all

teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (35%), accessing a computer laptop or device (31%), and accessing software (27%). One teacher expressed concern that the online BLEND modules were confusing for students, and recommended they be streamlined for easier use.

The majority of teachers responding (82%) said they did not need any additional training for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Of those who said yes, the suggested training was as follows: using BLEND, creating more accessible curriculum for students of all language and learning needs, having more creative ways to learn from home, and implementing social emotional learning (SEL) and virtual community building.

Ninety-one percent of responding teachers agreed virtual learning should be offered in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. Teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the next summer program:

- engaging curriculum and online activities for students
- teachers working together to learn from each other
- opportunities for students from different schools to check in and meet virtually with each other

However, teachers also suggested the district should change some parts of future summer programs. They suggested providing more technical support to students and their families, not using Dreambox, having the summer program Monday through Friday, offering more synchronous meetings in each subject area, providing more user-friendly curriculum for students, and having a smaller teacher-student ratio.

Fifth and 8th-Grade DL Summer Bridge Program

Program Overview

The secondary DL middle and high school summer bridge programs were offered to rising 6th- and 9th-grade students who will be entering the DL programs at their respective middle or high schools in school year 2020–2021. The programs offered students a way to preview program components and benefits, meet DL teachers and students, and promote a sense of community and purpose prior to beginning their secondary DL experience. With an allocation of \$9,996 to cover curriculum writing and teacher salaries, the DL summer bridge programs occurred from July 13 through 31, 2020, with the 4-day program schedules varying between teachers. Teachers who were interested in providing the summer program assisted with making calls or sending emails to parents and students to encourage interest and attendance in the program. Twelve schools (four high schools and eight middle schools) offered the summer program.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Students eligible were rising 6th graders and rising 9th graders who had been participating in DL during 2019–2020 and/or who planned to participate in secondary DL in 2020–2021. Using records provided by program staff, there was a list of 830 students whose parents were contacted to invite their student to the program. Parents were informed about the middle or high school DL program their child would be attending. Program staff's contact and attendance records showed that 175 students attended the program.

Student Outcomes

The DL summer bridge program students received a survey for their feedback on the virtual program experience. Of 17 students who responded, about half were entering middle school and half were entering high school in 2020–2021. Although the response rate was low, two-thirds thought the program was very helpful, and the rest thought it was somewhat helpful. When asked how easy it was to use the Zoom online meeting platform or other software during the program, 81% reported it was very easy and the rest reported it was somewhat easy. All respondents agreed they felt a sense of community with teachers and other students in the virtual program. Students responding to the survey identified the following concerns about participating in the DL program next school year: submitting and completing assignments (39%), participating and presenting in class virtually (17%), interacting with teachers online (17%), and interacting with other students online (13%).

Staff Outcomes

Four staff who provided instruction in the virtual DL summer bridge program responded to the staff survey. All gave high ratings overall to the program. All agreed they were provided with adequate professional learning before and/or during the summer program. Only one respondent indicated that additional training in the future on how to create engaging instructional strategies would be helpful. All agreed the summer program curriculum was appropriately paced for students, aligned with TEKS-based standards, and engaging for students. All agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching virtually in the program. Teachers agreed that students participated in most or all Zoom classes or one-on-one virtual meetings. When asked if students experienced any technology problems during the program, staff gave a mix of yes and no responses. For example, the two problems mentioned were accessing the internet and accessing a computer laptop or device. All teachers agreed offering a virtual learning DL summer bridge program in the future would be beneficial, regardless of school closures or COVID-19. When asked what aspects of the program should continue during the regular school year, teachers suggested increased contact with families of students, including outreach programs to check on students' well-being.

AVID Excel and Algebra Readiness Programs

Program Overview

The [AVID](#) Excel and Algebra Readiness Programs offered selected middle school students several summer learning opportunities. For rising 7th graders, the Excel program focused on reading, oral language building, self-determination, and leadership; for rising 8th graders, the algebra program focused on algebra readiness. The AVID Excel and Algebra Readiness Programs were offered during July 2020: Excel July 27 through 30, 2020, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.; algebra readiness July 15 through 30, 2020, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. The budget allocation for AVID Excel was approximately \$5,748, covering teachers' salaries for planning and providing instruction. The budget allocation for AVID algebra readiness was \$8,170, covering teachers' salaries for planning and providing instruction, as well as paying a coordinator to provide professional learning and meet with teachers during the program.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

This was the first year to implement the AVID Excel program. Students eligible for the summer AVID Excel program included emergent bilingual students who had been in U.S. schools for 4 to 6 years and attended one of seven AISD middle schools (i.e., Bedichek, Burnet, Dobie, Martin, Paredes, Sadler Means, Webb). Program staff provided participation and attendance records. The program's capacity was 145 students, and 63 participated in the AVID Excel program, and the attendance rate was 68% for the four-day program.

This was the fourth year AVID algebra readiness was offered, but the first time it was offered virtually. Students eligible for the summer AVID Algebra Readiness program included rising 8th graders at any AISD middle school, based on campus recommendation, to assist students in preparing to take algebra upon entering 8th grade. Program staff provided participation and attendance records. The Algebra Readiness Program's capacity was 140 students, and 112 participated and turned in assignments. The attendance rate was 89% for the 12-day program.

Student Outcomes

Teachers in the AVID Algebra Readiness Program assessed students' performance using quizzes as well as a pre- and post-assessment. Program staff provided the students' performance records, which showed that 79% of participating students made progress from pre- to post-assessments in algebra, and 66% of students made a post-test score of 70% or more out of 100%.

Staff Outcomes

Based on results from the summer teacher survey, there were five AVID Excel respondents and three AVID algebra readiness respondents. Overall, the Excel respondents' average rating of the program on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 7 (great) was a 5, while the algebra readiness respondents' average rating of the program was a 6. When asked whether they were provided with adequate professional learning before and/or during the program, four of five Excel teachers and all three algebra readiness teachers agreed this was so. When asked if adjustments were made concerning virtual learning during the program, almost every teacher agreed this occurred.

When asked if they were provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching in the summer program, all five Excel teachers agreed and two of three algebra readiness teachers agreed. The only challenge mentioned by an algebra readiness teacher was that students often needed to use more than one online platform at the same time. Some students had to use two screens (e.g., using a phone for a Zoom meeting while going over a computer-based activity), but some only had one way to interact virtually. However, both Excel and algebra readiness teachers indicated students participated in both synchronous Zoom class meetings as well as asynchronous BLEND learning. Teachers in both AVID programs were unanimous in saying students experienced obstacles with technology during the

program, such as poor internet access, difficulties with laptops, and challenges with software.

When Excel teachers were asked about the summer curriculum used, two of five agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced for students, all five agreed it was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and all agreed it was engaging for students. Among algebra readiness teachers, two of three agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced for students, and all teachers agreed it was aligned with TEKS-based standards and engaging for students.

When teachers were asked if they needed further training or support with implementing online learning for the summer program or for the regular school year, some said yes. Examples of training or support teachers requested were how to group students or use breakout strategies, best practices in using BLEND with AVID-based instruction, and having an instructional or technology coach to help with implementation in the classroom.

When asked if offering a virtual learning summer school program option for next year would be beneficial for students, three of five Excel teachers agreed it would be helpful, and all three algebra readiness teachers agreed. When asked what parts of the programs should be kept, Excel teachers mentioned word study, community building, use of BLEND, technology tools, and team teaching. Algebra readiness teachers recommended keeping HyperDocs, having teacher office hours, and the curriculum set-up for synchronous learning. Teachers made a few suggestions for improving the program, such as adding more fun activities for students in Excel. Algebra readiness teachers suggested ensuring students are engaging during the synchronous class meetings, considering pairing up students from similar schools, and having the curricula available in Google documents, as well as questions numbered to make it easier for both students and teachers to follow.



High School DELTA and Scholars Programs

DELTA Program Overview

Diversified Education Through Leadership, Technology and Academics (DELTA) is a high school credit recovery program that offered high school students virtual courses for incomplete grades received during the school year. During June 2020, 11th- and 12th-grade students participated. This was a special opportunity for 12th graders to meet any remaining requirements for graduation. In addition, during the session in July 2020, 9th and 10th graders also participated. Campus principals could recommend students for the program. The program offered courses virtually, with opportunities to check in with teachers. Courses offered were Algebra I and II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, English, U.S. History, and other high-school level courses. [Odysseyware](#) was the primary learning platform used by students. The program schedules were from June 8 through 30, 2020 and from July 13 through 31, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:40 p.m.

For the June 2020 DELTA program, the estimated total allocation of \$302,845 covered the salaries of principals, mentor teachers and teachers, as well as the costs of curriculum development and instructional supplies. For the July 2020 DELTA program, the estimated total allocation of \$250,231 covered the salaries of principals, counselors, mentor teachers, teachers, and clerks, as well as the costs of curriculum development and instructional resources.

DELTA Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Using Spring 2020 course data, a total of 928 high school students had “I” for incompletes in any of the following courses: Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, English, and U.S. History. A unique count of these eligible students was 698. The district’s TEAMS system had 218 students enrolled in the DELTA high school program for June 2020, and student attendance for the June session was approximately 59%. The AISD TEAMS system had 741 students enrolled in the high school program for July 2020, and student attendance for the July session was approximately 79%. Note that some students who did not participate or complete coursework in June may have participated in the July session.

DELTA Student Outcomes

The district’s eCST system contained service records showing that 187 students’ parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, parent support specialist, or other staff about their child’s participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during the June 2020 session. For the July 2020 session, eCST records showed that 800 students’ parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, or parent support specialist about their child’s participation in or other support for their child in the program sometime during July 2020.

Based on course grade files provided by the high school program principals, an analysis of the students’ course performance showed that of 173 DELTA students enrolled in the June 2020 session, 77 received course credit by completing at least 70% of the course, with a minimum grade score average of 70 out of 100. Some students took more than one course. The average percentage for course completion among students who received course credit in June was 94%. Some students who did not complete courses during June enrolled in the July DELTA program. During July 2020, 625 DELTA students enrolled for the second session, and 246 received course credit. The average percentage for course completion among students who received course credit in July was 82%. Students who did not complete courses in July were enrolled in the online course so they would have an opportunity to continue working toward course completion during August.

DELTA students in both the June and July sessions were surveyed about their experiences in the summer program. In June 2020, 72 students responded to the online survey, and in July 2020, 41 students responded. Overall, the responses were positive. When asked about the online BLEND access to class materials and assignments, 60% of June student respondents and 74% of July student respondents indicated they were satisfied. When asked about online access to

class materials through Odysseyware software, 78% of June 2020 student respondents and 74% of July 2020 student respondents were satisfied. When asked about virtual class meetings with teachers and students, 74% of June students and 75% of July students responded they were satisfied. When asked about teachers' office hours offered to students, 78% of June student respondents and 82% of July student respondents were satisfied. However, when asked about opportunities to work with other students in the program, more than half (55%) of June 2020 student respondents were undecided while 37% were satisfied. Among July 2020 respondents, 48% were undecided, while 52% were satisfied. When asked about homework assignments and tests during the summer program, 60% of June respondents and 71% of July respondents were satisfied. When asked about content and learning materials of the summer classes they took, 69% of June students and 74% of July students were satisfied.

In open-ended responses, some students provided reasons they liked the summer program, including having the entire course online (making it easy to access and flexible), having self-paced learning and assignments, the online learning platforms, and having responsive teachers who were easy to contact when needed. When asked what they liked least about the summer program, some students found it hard to take a course during the summer months when they would otherwise not be in school. A few had technology problems (e.g., internet connectivity), did not like the Zoom class meetings, or struggled with some of the homework assignments. When asked for recommendations and things about virtual learning to continue during the regular school year, some students suggested continuing online flexibly scheduled learning and having more time to complete assignments. Some students wanted more check-in meetings and fewer assignments, while others did not. A few students suggested providing more communication and reminders about registering for summer school and when summer homework assignments were due.

DELTA Staff Outcomes

During June 2020, 29 teachers provided instruction for DELTA. During July 2020, 44 teachers provided instruction for DELTA. Sixty DELTA teachers responded to the teacher survey, and most rated the program positively (note that it is possible that some teachers responded twice over the two summer sessions). For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 83% rated the program between a 4 and a 7. When asked about training, 72% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 75% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced, 88% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, yet only 53% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Seventy-two percent of teachers responding agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Of teachers responding, 72% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning. Some teachers provided suggestions for what would have made things better, such as more communication to students prior to the beginning of the program, having prepared student rosters prior to the beginning of the program, and additional training on specifics about the program (e.g., entering student grades into the data system, roles and responsibilities of summer staff, technology support).

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 43% of teachers believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 33% indicated the same frequency, 12% said more frequently, and 12% indicated they did not know. Eighty-eight percent of teachers indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom) some of the time or most of the time. In addition, 85% of teachers indicated students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers. When asked about students' use of the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning, only 47% of teachers said students used it. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 72% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (42%), accessing a computer laptop or device (26%), and accessing software (20%).

The majority of teachers responding (73%) said they did not need any additional trainings or support to implement online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Of those who said yes, examples of needed trainings or support included technologies that would support more student collaboration and engagement, easier and efficient documentation for student participation and performance, and ways to support students who are learning English. Ninety-seven percent of responding teachers agreed that online virtual learning should continue to be offered in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year. Recommendations included offering online class meetings, curriculum, and class assignments, as well as 24-hour student access to online learning platforms to increase flexibility and opportunities for students to gain course credits. Teachers also suggested eliminating or changing the following for future summer programs: provide more efficient methods for documenting students' participation and performance, change the frequency and/or schedule of staff meetings and class meetings, have improved support and communication with families and students about participating in the program, offer other courses through technology platforms, and make modifications to the current learning platforms used to improve the content and delivery of instructional materials.

At the end of the high school summer program, summer principals met to discuss the successes and challenges of the program. The primary challenge mentioned by the summer principals was communication. For example, a lack of timely notification by some home campus staff of the recommended lists of students who would need summer school led to delays in summer principals enrolling students. Delayed communications with families and students, according to the summer principals, meant some students were not even aware they were eligible for the summer program. Some students started the program late as a result, and some could not finish. The summer leaders recommended that earlier notification would help with summer school enrollment, teacher hiring, and class scheduling all of which would support student success. Summer leaders wondered if it would be possible for high schools to host their own summer programs in the future, so that teachers and students from those schools would have an easier time getting communications, having students enrolled, and hiring teachers. Summer principals did find successes in their summer program operations, including making virtual classroom visits, sharing and tracking students' academic performance and attendance, and having regular staff/teacher check-in meetings.

Scholars Program Overview

With the support of federal Title I, Part A funds, the Scholars Program offered 11th- and 12th-grade students (from Eastside, LBJ, Navarro, Northeast, and Travis schools) an online learning opportunity to recover course credit for incomplete grades received during the school year. This was a special opportunity for 12th graders to meet any remaining requirements for graduation. In addition, campus principals could recommend students for the program. Courses offered were Algebra I and II, English, Chemistry, Economics (accelerated), Government (accelerated), and U.S. History. The Scholars Program occurred from June 8 through 30, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:40 p.m. The estimated total allocation of \$159,866 (from federal Title I, Part A funds) covered the salaries of principals, a counselor, mentor teachers, teachers, and a clerk, as well as the costs of curriculum development and instructional resources.

Scholars Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Based on Spring 2020 course data, 875 high school students had "I" for an incomplete course grade in any of the following courses: Algebra I and II, English, Chemistry, Economics (accelerated), Government (accelerated), and U.S. History. A unique count of these eligible students was 664. June 2020 student records showed 320 high school students enrolled in the program, and attendance was approximately 64%.

Scholars Student Outcomes

The district's eCST system contained service records showing that 252 students' parents were contacted one or more times by a campus administrator, teacher, parent support specialist, or other staff about their child's participation in or

other support for their child in the program sometime during the June 2020 session.

Based on course grade files provided by the high school program principals, an analysis of the students' course performance showed that of 233 Scholars students enrolled in summer courses, 73 completed courses successfully during June by completing at least 70% of the course, with a minimum grade score average of 70 out of 100. Some students took more than one course. The average percentage for course completion among Scholars students who received course credit in June was 97%. Some students who did not complete courses in June may have enrolled in the July DELTA program the following month in order to complete courses.

Scholars students were surveyed about their experiences in the summer program. In June 2020, 19 students responded to the survey. Overall, the responses were positive. When asked about the online BLEND access to class materials and assignments, 83% of student respondents indicated they were satisfied. When asked about online access to class materials through Odysseyware software, 92% of student respondents were satisfied. When asked about virtual class meetings with teachers and students, 92% of student respondents indicated they were satisfied. When asked about teachers' office hours offered to students, 86% of student respondents were satisfied. However, when asked about opportunities to work with other students in the program, more than half (54%) were satisfied, 36% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 9% indicated they were extremely dissatisfied. When asked about homework assignments and tests during the summer program, 71% of student respondents were satisfied. When asked about content and learning materials of the summer classes they took, 86% of the students responding were satisfied.

In open-ended responses, some students provided reasons they liked the summer program, including having self-paced learning and assignments and having responsive teachers who were easy to contact when needed. When asked what they liked least about the summer program, one student indicated they needed more time to complete the coursework. One student indicated they wished they had received more support in learning. One student did not like going to the virtual class meetings. When asked for recommendations and things about virtual learning to continue during the regular school year, several students suggested continuing the Zoom virtual class meetings, offering courses virtually, and offering self-paced learning. When asked for recommendations to improve the summer program, one student suggested providing more communication and reminders to parents and students about registering for summer school.

Scholars Staff Outcomes

Twenty-three teachers provided instruction for the June 2020 Scholars Program. Of the 21 staff who responded to the teacher survey, most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 76% rated the program between a 4 and a 7. When asked about training, 76% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 76% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced, 95% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, yet only 48% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. Of teachers responding, 76% agreed or strongly agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning. Seventy-one percent of teachers responding agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Several teachers suggested the following improvements: provide online learning platforms that have content appropriate for students who are struggling or who are receiving special education support; improve communication with counselors from the students' home schools to obtain more accurate information and support on students' course credit or enrollment status; improve communication to both students and teachers about the summer program, perhaps additional time for this to occur before the program starts.

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, more than half of teachers (57%) believed students

were completing assignments less frequently, less than 10% indicated either the same frequency or more frequently, and 24% indicated they did not know. More than half of teachers indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom) some of the time (48%) or most of the time (9%), while 43% indicated students did not participate at all in these meetings. However, 81% of teachers indicated students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers. When asked about students' use of the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning, 62% of teachers said students did not use it. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 48% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (41%), accessing a computer laptop or device (23%), and accessing software (14%).

The majority of teachers responding (90%) said they did not need any additional trainings for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Of those who said yes, two teachers suggested the following types of trainings: Google Classroom software and supporting the learning needs of emergent bilingual students. Ninety percent of responding teachers agreed that online virtual learning should continue to be offered in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year, such as self-paced online learning using several learning platforms, including synchronous and asynchronous learning options, and flexibility in the scheduling of virtual class time. Teachers suggested some things to eliminate or change for future summer programs, such as changing the way student attendance is taken (to be more efficient and flexible, given asynchronous learning options); improving communication and support between the summer school team and the home school team; offering online learning platforms more suitable for students receiving special education; and continuing synchronized class meetings with students, with options for meeting at later times in the day.

International High School Camp

Program Overview

The International High School (IHS) math and English language arts (ELA) Camp was open to all newcomer students at IHS and all students returning to IHS during the 2020–2021 school year. The focus of this highly scaffolded math and ELA camp was to equip students with the background and skills needed in math and ELA. The program was online and self-paced to accommodate the students and featured live class opportunities and small-group virtual meetings with teachers. The allocated budget of \$6,200 covered teachers' salaries for instruction and planning. The IHS program occurred from June 8 through 30, 2020, Monday through Friday.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

IHS students who were returning to the school in 2020–2021 were eligible to attend the summer camp. Based on program staff records, 18 students attended the summer program, and the average attendance rate was 89%.

Extended School Year Program

Program Overview

The Extended School Year (ESY) Program offers individualized instruction for students receiving special education services. The need for ESY services must be determined on an individual basis by the school's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. The individualized education program (IEP) developed for ESY must include goals and objectives. TEA has more information on the [ESY](#) program. The AISD program occurred during June and July 2020. The estimated budget allocation for this summer program was \$25,000, covering teachers' and other staff's salaries.

Student Eligibility, Enrollment, and Attendance

Students eligible to participate were already receiving special education services in the district during the 2019–2020 school year. Using the district's student data system, preliminary analyses showed 45 students participated in the 2020 summer virtual learning ESY program. Note that total enrollment counts may not be final until later in the year. The average number of days students participated was 16, with a range of 1 to 36 days.

Student Outcomes

The average number of instructional hours in which students participated in the program was 15, with a maximum of 62 hours. The total number of instructional hours provided to all 45 students in the program totaled 679.

Staff Outcomes

Teacher survey results showed that out of 13 teachers responding, most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 69% gave the program one of the highest ratings (6 or 7). When asked about training, 92% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 100% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced, 85% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and 92% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students.

Of teachers responding, 85% agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning. Ninety-two percent of teachers responding agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. One teacher suggested the addition of two learning tools for students would be helpful: [MyOn](#) and [GoGuardian](#).

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 15% believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 23% indicated they did not know, 23% indicated the same frequency, and 38% indicated greater frequency. All responding teachers indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom), and 92% of teachers indicated students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers. When asked about students' use of the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning, 62% of teachers said students used it. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 38% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (44%), accessing a computer laptop or device (22%), and accessing software (11%).

More than half of teachers responding (54%) said they needed additional trainings for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Of those who said yes, the following types of trainings were suggested: lesson planning and pacing, BLEND, GoGuardian, Google Classroom, and methods for engaging students with special learning

needs. Ninety-two percent of responding teachers agreed that online virtual learning should continue to be offered in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue for students during the regular school year, such as the use of Zoom, tutoring, small-group and one-on-one instruction, and flexibility in the use of curriculum materials to match students' needs. Teachers suggested some things to eliminate or change for future summer programs, such as changes to planning or office hours.



ACE Austin Summer Camp

Program Overview

The Afterschool Centers on Education ([ACE](#)) Austin Summer Camp, funded by the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, is free to participants and includes ongoing family engagement opportunities. Student summer activities offered virtually included supplemental support in reading, math, and other areas. The program had two sessions, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., from June 1 through June 30, 2020, and July 6 through July 24, 2020, with a budget allocation of \$452,984.

Student Participation

Based on student participation records provided by ACE Austin program staff, 455 students participated during June, and 313 participated in July, representing AISD students from 20 different schools.

Staff Outcomes

Thirty-six ACE Austin staff responded to the teacher survey, and most rated the program positively. For example, when asked to rate how they felt about the summer program's remote teaching and learning on a 7-point scale (where 1 is "terrible," 4 is "okay," and 7 is "great"), 89% rated the program a 5 or more. When asked about training, 72% agreed or strongly agreed they had received adequate professional learning opportunities before and/or during the summer program. When asked about the summer program curriculum used with their students, 97% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced, 89% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and 97% agreed or strongly agreed the curriculum was engaging for students.

Of ACE Austin teachers responding, 72% agreed adjustments were made during the summer program when issues arose with online learning. Seventy-five percent of teachers responding agreed or strongly agreed they had been provided with the right tools and resources to be effective while teaching online during the summer program. Several teachers suggested the addition of the following would be helpful: instructional materials, manipulatives, upgraded Zoom account access, technology support for parents, and availability of the internet and laptop for all students.

When asked to consider, due to changes in the learning environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which students in the summer program completed assignments, 42% of ACE Austin teachers responding believed students were completing assignments less frequently, 14% indicated they did not know, 36% indicated the same frequency, and 8% indicated greater frequency. Ninety-seven percent of responding teachers indicated students participated in synchronous whole-class meetings (e.g., using Zoom), and 78% of teachers indicated students participated in small-group or one-on-one meetings with teachers. When asked about students' use of the BLEND learning platform for asynchronous learning, 80% of teachers said students used it. When asked whether students had encountered technology problems during the program, 58% of teachers responded yes. The most commonly encountered technology issues were accessing the internet/Wi-Fi (30%), accessing a computer laptop or device (30%), and accessing software (19%).

Only 19% of ACE Austin teachers responding said they needed additional trainings or support for implementing online learning for the summer or the regular school year. Of those who said yes, teachers mentioned the following issues or needs: sending books to students, ensuring technology (internet and laptops) for AISD's youngest students (PK through 2nd grade), providing district-sent emails to both parents and students to allow for early notice about the program, providing opportunities for summer program orientation before it began (e.g., to ensure all understand how to log on to systems and participate virtually), and having more staff training on the use of all district softwares for virtual learning prior to the start of the program. Ninety-two percent of responding teachers agreed online virtual learning should continue to be offered in future summer programs, regardless of school closures or pandemics. In fact, teachers made

several recommendations about what aspects of the summer program should continue or be added for students during the regular school year, such as structured and engaging student activities, small-group or one-on-one tutoring, online projects to learn how to use online resources, synchronous Zoom sessions and asynchronous learning opportunities, exercise opportunities, SEL opportunities, self-paced assignments for students, tutorials on how to use BLEND, and supplies issued to students. Teachers suggested some things to eliminate or change for future summer programs, such as tutoring, BLEND and making improvements in students' technology access and summer program enrollment procedures.



PrimeTime Summer Camp

Program Overview

AISD's [PrimeTime](#) Summer Camp was offered to current AISD students in KG through 5th grade. Courses offered virtually to students included topics in science, art, technology, and sports. The summer program's schedule was from June 1 through June 30, 2020, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with a budget allocation of \$200,000.

Student Participation

Based on student participation records provided by program staff, 369 students attended the program.

Staff Outcomes

Based on results from 12 teachers who responded to the summer staff survey, most teachers rated the program positively. When asked to rate the overall program on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 7 (great), all PrimeTime responding teachers gave the program a rating between 4 and 7. When asked if teachers were provided with adequate professional learning before and/or during the summer program, 58% agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if they were provided with adequate tools and resources to be effective in providing virtual instruction during the program, 75% agreed. Two teachers suggested the following resources would have helped: ensuring parents are actively monitoring their child's participation to assist when necessary, and providing teachers with equipment and supplies to provide virtual programming. Seventy-five percent of responding teachers agreed adjustments were made during the program when concerns about teachers providing virtual instruction were raised.

When asked about the summer program curriculum for students, 92% agreed the curriculum was appropriately paced for students, 58% agreed the curriculum was aligned with TEKS-based standards, and all agreed the curriculum was engaging for students. When asked if changes to the learning experience due to COVID-19 had an impact on students being able to complete assignments, 75% responded students were completing assignments with the same frequency, 8% said with greater frequency, and the remainder (17%) did not know. When asked about student participation, 100% of teachers responding agreed students participated in Zoom sessions, 67% agreed students participated in small-group or one-on-one sessions, and 33% agreed students did BLEND asynchronous learning. Among teachers responding, 42% reported students having trouble with technology during the program, such as accessing the internet (40%), accessing a laptop (30%), and some issues with software (10%). Only 25% of responding teachers indicated they may need additional training or support for future program sessions; BLEND was one training mentioned. When asked if the program should be offered virtually next year, regardless of COVID-19 or school closures, 83% agreed. Teachers mentioned program components to continue implementing included having multiple teachers and small student groups, and using Zoom with breakout rooms plus breaks between Zoom sessions. One teacher recommended not having all-day classes.

Other Summer Programs

Several other programs occurred during the summer months, but only some data were available at the writing of this report. For example, [Garza Independence High School](#) has a schedule that serves high school students throughout the school year. The Garza online program gives students an opportunity to complete coursework at their own pace during the summer, and they can continue their coursework during the regular school year.

Another summer program offering was made available to some of AISD's Title I schools, using Title I, Part A, funds to offer extended learning opportunities. For example, Houston Elementary School offered a June 2020 virtual learning summer camp to rising 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th graders. Houston Elementary had one administrator, one reading specialist, and seven teachers who led the program. Houston Elementary students participated virtually as follows: 36 rising 1st and 2nd graders in literacy; 20 rising 4th graders in writing; and 20 rising 5th graders in literacy through science. Another virtual summer program was conducted through Andrews Elementary School, called Gators Dedicated to Growth; with six teachers and one clerical staff, this program served 43 students.

The [Andy Roddick Foundation](#) (ARF) supported an 8-week virtual summer program offered to AISD students from certain school communities to participate in academic and physical activities at no cost during the summer. The program's schedule was Monday through Friday, from June 8 through July 31, 2020. With an estimated budget allocation of \$305,000, supporting program expenses and staff salaries (eight teachers and nine teaching assistants), the program served 170 students. As reported by ARF staff, 96% of students continued to participate over the 8-week program, and 72% of students regularly attended ARF classes weekly. Based on pre- and post-surveys of 4th- and 5th-grade student participants' attitudes about the program, significant increases occurred in students' positive attitudes about persistence, problem solving, asking for help from others, science, and reading. In pre- and post-surveys of staff, significant increases occurred in staff's positive perceptions about the program's impact on students' persistence, problem solving, motivation, initiative, and communication. Finally, the program's parent survey showed 95% of parents responding agreed their child enjoyed the program and learned something new, and 89% agreed the summer program helped their child get ready for the next grade level.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of AISD's summer programs was to support students' learning. Some summer programs were offered for academic enrichment and acceleration, while other programs were offered to help students regain course credits or to provide academic support and intervention between school years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing all schools to close in-person instruction, AISD began offering virtual instruction in mid-March 2020 and continued to do so through the remainder of the regular school year. AISD staff began pivoting to offer all summer programming virtually. This meant AISD staff continued to create and make available all instructional materials online, simultaneously figuring out how to provide instruction and maintain student engagement. Staff worked together to understand what worked and what needed to change. Staff had to make considerable efforts to provide technology to students, including both laptops and internet/Wi-Fi service, as the technology became available. Families also adapted and discovered how best to support their children in this virtual learning environment. AISD offered virtual learning summer programs serving more than 13,000 students during the period of June through August 2020.

What have we learned about virtual school instruction from AISD summer programs? What are things we still need to learn? We heard from some students and staff about successes and challenges in the summer programs.

Successes

Teachers reported that their experiences during summer programs often helped them work through the challenges of providing virtual instruction, and in many cases, teachers reported feeling more prepared to provide virtual instruction in the upcoming school year. In addition, staff and students had opportunities during the summer programs to use various learning platforms and forms of online meeting technology to encourage and allow for virtual instruction. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning allowed flexibility for teachers, parents, and students, when accessing materials, providing instructional time to check in, and completing assignments.

Many students benefitted from participating in summer programs that allowed them opportunities to review key learning objectives, complete assignments and requirements for course credit, and advance their knowledge and preparation for the next school year. In many situations, students were able to receive virtual small-group or one-on-one guidance from teachers, in addition to the whole group virtual class sessions. Many high school students who responded to a survey said they benefitted from having class assignments and learning materials available asynchronously so they could work at their own pace to complete the work.

Staff reported making many efforts to communicate with parents and students, encourage students' participation, help with program enrollment, ensure students were attending and keeping up with the assignments, and check if students had adequate technology to participate. For several key academic programs, staff sent home report cards on students' academic progress and course completion.

Challenges

Staff also reported some challenges in the summer programs. Challenges included a lack of timely summer program notification and student enrollment, difficulty accessing or implementing technology using multiple platforms (by staff, students, and students' parents), inefficient or multiple ways of documenting students' participation, lack of instructional or student supplies, and some communications with students and families.

Recommendations

Staff and student surveys revealed that most were in favor of continuing to offer virtual school programming in the regular school year and in future summer programs, with synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.

As AISD begins the 2020–2021 school year virtually, due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, lessons have been learned from the summer programs. These lessons can help inform AISD staff, students, and parents about what it will take to begin and continue the next school year successfully. Some of the steps district leaders and staff must take, which in some cases they have already begun, include:

- ensure all students and staff have access to reliable internet/WiFi and technology equipment (i.e., laptops);
- ensure students, staff, and parents all understand how to access and use the technology (e.g., through ongoing training and support);
- provide all learning materials in multiple formats (e.g., online, hands-on);
- set up and maintain essential multi-way communication between students, school staff, and parents;
- keep students engaged in their virtual learning; and
- seek guidance and input from summer school staff and students, as their experiences will inform and assist others who need to adjust quickly to the district’s virtual learning environment.



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