

Qatar Foundation International

Arabic Dual Language Immersion Programs in the US



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Fall 2023

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This study is designed to learn more about the dynamics of Arabic Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs across four major public and public charter school programs in the US.



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Section 1: Introduction

In 2019, the American Councils Research Center (ARC) at the American Councils for International Education in partnership with Qatar Foundation International (QFI) embarked on a study designed to advance our understanding of the characteristics and demographics that define Arabic Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs in the US. The study is designed to learn more about the dynamics of Arabic DLI across four major public and public charter school programs in the US.

The fastest growing language in the US, and the fifth most spoken language in the world, there has been no significant growth in dual language programs involving Arabic. This is particularly evident in view of the significant growth in the number of DLI programs across the country, particularly in Spanish but also in Chinese and French. At present, there are only four public school Arabic DLI programs in the US.

The first program, at PS/IS 30 in Brooklyn, NY began in 2013. This has been followed by three further programs: Baltimore International Academy (BIA) in Baltimore, Maryland; Arabic Immersion Magnet School in Houston, Texas (AIMS); and the Elizabeth Learning Center in Los Angeles, CA (ELC). QFI has assisted in the development, implementation and support of these four major programs. External involvement in the development and proliferation of dual language programs, like that of QFI, is not unusual. For example, the French embassy in collaboration with the FACE Foundation has for years actively promoted and funded numerous French DLI efforts across the US., particularly in Louisiana, New York and Utah. QFI commissioned this specific study to understand more about the characteristics of the four Arabic DLI programs and how they are situated within the greater DLI programs across the United States.

This study represents a first effort at a systematic descriptive analysis and overview of these four programs. It involved:

1. Developing an extensive set of data on student demographics and assessments from the 2018–19 school year.
2. A survey of teachers to identify strategies used for DLI implementation as well as teacher characteristics.
3. A survey of parents to understand what motivates them to enroll their children in Arabic DLI.
4. A survey of program administrators to add their perspectives. The research was supplemented by conversations with parents of children enrolled in the programs.

This white paper outlines the findings as they pertain to number 1 above examining only the quantitative data. For an in-depth look at questions 2-4 and the qualitative data please see the following publication: *Allaf, C., Jaumont, F., & Talha Jebriil, S. (Eds.). (Forthcoming). Mosaic of Tongues: Multilingual learning for the Arabic-speaking world. CALEC-TBR Books.*

It is important to note two important limitations in this research. First, almost all DLI studies have been case study specific, involving detailed analyses of a particular program or set of programs in a single school or school district. Comparative analyses across programs in different districts is complicated by a lack of comparable data. Assessments and standardized tests vary across districts. Definitions of concepts such as 'English language learner (ELL)' and even 'absenteeism' are not consistent across districts. Circumstances also vary by district, and the local conditions that support the development of programs like Arabic are often idiosyncratic. Consequently, this effort attempts, in so far as possible, to find opportunities to explore similarities and differences across the four programs and assemble a comprehensive review of Arabic DLI across the four existing public/charter programs. This is where the contribution to understanding Arabic DLI is most important as the schools each do an outstanding job of implementing their respective programs. It is the commonalities and differences across programs that provide the Arabic field with a better sense of how to sustain and expand programs to inform future programs and contribute to the increase in the number of Arabic DLI programs.

Second, the arrival of COVID in early 2020 was an unanticipated and significant handicap. Planned research strategies had to be dramatically altered. Direct and personal contact with school officials and parents became impossible over a protracted period, particularly impacting data collection and planned focus groups and surveys. Data collection was delayed and thwarted.

It was only because of the extraordinary commitment of each school's leadership teams and the help of each district that we were able to carry out this research during incredibly challenging times. As a result, the research also took much longer to complete.

Section 2: Arabic dual language programs

The growth of Arabic in US. K-12 education has been particularly limited in the DLI environment. Explanations for this lack of growth vary. There is significant growth in the number of Arabic speakers in the US. We know that Arabic is the second most spoken home language for English learners in US. schools, ranking only behind Spanish. About half of these speakers are concentrated in four states that have the highest populations of Arab Americans: Michigan, Illinois, New York and Virginia. Yet the four Arabic DLI programs are in California (Greater Los Angeles), Maryland (Baltimore), New York (New York City) and Texas (Houston).¹

This study focuses on the four public and public charter school Arabic DLI programs in the US. Table 1 offers a quick glance at each school (as of April 2023) and a brief description of each Arabic DLI program follows.

PS/IS 30	AIMS	ELC	BIA
Brooklyn, NY	Houston, TX	Los Angeles, CA	Baltimore, MD
K-8 public Arabic DLI K-5 LOTE in 6th to 8th grade Established 2013	PreK-8 magnet Arabic DLI K-8 Established 2015	K-12 public Arabic DLI K-5 Established 2016	K-8 charter Arabic DLI KG-7 Established 2013
Side-by-side model (first to fifth grade) Stand-alone in KG and 6th to 8th	PreK-second grade: 60/40; side-by-side immersion model Third to fifth grade: 40/60 three teachers Sixth to eighth grade: 30/70 Arabic LOTE; Additional conversational Arabic is an elective	Two-way 50/50 immersion model; Stand-alone Teacher Model	Total language immersion model at the early grades K to 5 Arabic; Stand-alone Teacher Model until 2nd grade where English LA class is introduced with a separate teacher 1-hour a day
Priority given to ELLs Majority of the students come from Arab homes	In 2019, roughly 20% of the school reported coming from an Arabic-speaking background no priority; magnet school	Most students speak Spanish at home, some heritage students no priority	Over 95% only speak English at home/Title I targeted assistance no priority
Math, science and Arabic LA in Arabic	Arabic LA, science, and math are offered in Arabic	All core subjects are in both languages including math, science, social studies and PE	KG/first grade: all core subjects (LA, math, science, social studies) are in Arabic only English introduced as students go up 2nd grade onwards

¹ OELA [Office of English Language Acquisition]. (2019). Fast facts: The top languages spoken by English Learners (ELs) in the United States. Retrieved from: https://ncela.ed.gov/files/fast_facts/olea-toplanguages-fact-sheet-20191021-508.pdf

PS/IS 30 Brooklyn, New York (PS/IS 30)

PS/IS 30 was the first Arabic DLI program. PS/IS 30 is a public New York City school that enrolls students from its neighborhood catchment. It officially began in 2013 with one kindergarten class. Like most DLI programs across the country, each subsequent year, they advanced to the next grade level. The PS/IS 30 program is a two-way immersion program as it strives to ensure that half of each classroom is composed of Arabic speakers and half of English speakers. PS/IS 30 uses a side-by-side model in which students have one teacher for the Arabic portions of the day (math, science and Arabic language arts) and another teacher for the English portion of the day, except for kindergarten where it is one teacher that teaches in both languages.

Arabic Immersion Magnet School, Houston, Texas (AIMS)

AIMS began its program in fall 2015. It is an all-school Arabic program, the only one of its kind in the country. It has recently entered middle school with plans to continue through eighth grade. It is not a 50/50 program, with a limited number of students who report speaking Arabic at home. AIMS uses a side-by-side teacher model with Arabic instruction in language arts, science and math and another teacher instructing in English (language arts). As a magnet school, students from throughout the Houston Independent School District can apply to enroll.

Baltimore International Academy, Baltimore, Maryland (BIA)

BIA is a charter school that offers immersion programs in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian and French (SCARF). Arabic is the most recent addition in 2013. As a school that draws on an almost entirely African American population, 95% of students speak English at home. The BIA model only offers intensive partner language (Arabic) instruction for kindergarten and first grade. English is then introduced from the second grade for an hour a day, with its usage gradually increased as the students enter higher grade levels, currently offering up to 8th grade.

Elizabeth Learning Center, Los Angeles, California (ELC)

ELC began its Arabic DLI in fall 2016 with one kindergarten class. It now extends through fifth grade. ELC follows the PS/IS 30 approach where priority for enrollment is given to students who live within the school's attendance boundaries. ELC draws on an almost entirely non-Arabic-speaking student population. Instead, its students are from Spanish-speaking homes. Because of this, the program is a one-way model beginning with a 70/30 split between Arabic and English in kindergarten and moving toward 50/50 in third grade and above.

Data collected & limitations

The effort to identify and analyze the demographics and characteristics of students enrolled in Arabic DLI focuses on the 2018–19 school year. The project team, following IRB guidelines, initiated a request in November 2019 from each school district for data from the 2018–19 school year. All data collected was anonymized. The below information was collected from each school:

- Grade level;
- Ethnicity/race;
- Gender;
- Home language;
- Number of days absent;
- English language learning status/Limited English Proficiency (LEP) designation;
- Standardized assessment for language arts;
- Standardized assessment for math and science.

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) provided the requested data within 30 days. Baltimore International Academy (BIA), as a charter school, was able to directly respond to the request and provided the data in January 2020. Unfortunately, the New York City Board of Education's IRB process was much more cumbersome and severely impacted by the COVID pandemic. Unlike other districts, requests for student data, even the very basic data that defined our request, requires that parents provide active consent. The difference between active and passive consent is significant as active consent requires communication with each parent or guardian to explain the nature of the study and each parent or guardian to signify in writing their permission for the release of the data (passive consent assumes the parent has consented unless they take some action). The normal active consent process would involve sending a letter about the study and a request home to parents in the child's backpack with the form brought back to school the next day. Because schools moved to virtual learning in March 2020 due to COVID, information and forms were sent directly to each parent via email. The email process inevitably produces a much lower response rate than traditional backpack mail, which could not be used. We received 78 positive responses from parents (only about 50% of the total sent out). NYCDOE was unable to 'match' all the positive responses with students. Our analysis is therefore based only on data for 48 students received from NYCDOE in June 2020.

Some other caveats are worth noting. Both HISD and LAUSD provided full data sets for all the requested categories. HISD provided student ethnicities only by grade level; all other data was by student. BIA did not separate English language learning from limited English proficiency but otherwise the data set was complete. This underscores the complications in developing comparable data sets across school districts.

It should also be noted that there is no standard for data collection in DLI programs for any language. Each school and school district establishes its own standards. Much of the research on DLI has been case-study oriented because of the difficulties in identifying cross-school data that can be compared. Our analysis takes note of this.

Finally, it is important to note that our data is drawn from only one school year (2018–2019) and, as such, we cannot identify trends or changes over time.

Cross-school comparisons

We already know a good deal about each of the four programs individually. What we do not know is how these programs look in a cross-comparison. How do the demographics look across schools? What languages do students across Arabic DLI programs bring to the classroom in terms of the languages they speak at home and their level of English proficiency? How do teachers apply strategies in the classroom? What motivates parents to enroll their children in Arabic DLI and how does that vary across programs? How does the district support Arabic DLI and how might that support differ from that for other immersion programs? Answers to these questions provide important insights into the long-term prognostications for these programs as well as indicators of how Arabic immersion might be expanded and improved across the country. This section attempts to explore these by looking at each school, and then also exploring Kindergarten through third grade specifically, because they are the grade levels represented across all four schools. AIMS is the only program with pre-kindergarten students enrolled, BIA is the only program with sixth-grade students, while fourth grade is represented solely by AIMS and BIA, and fifth grade by BIA and PS/IS 30.

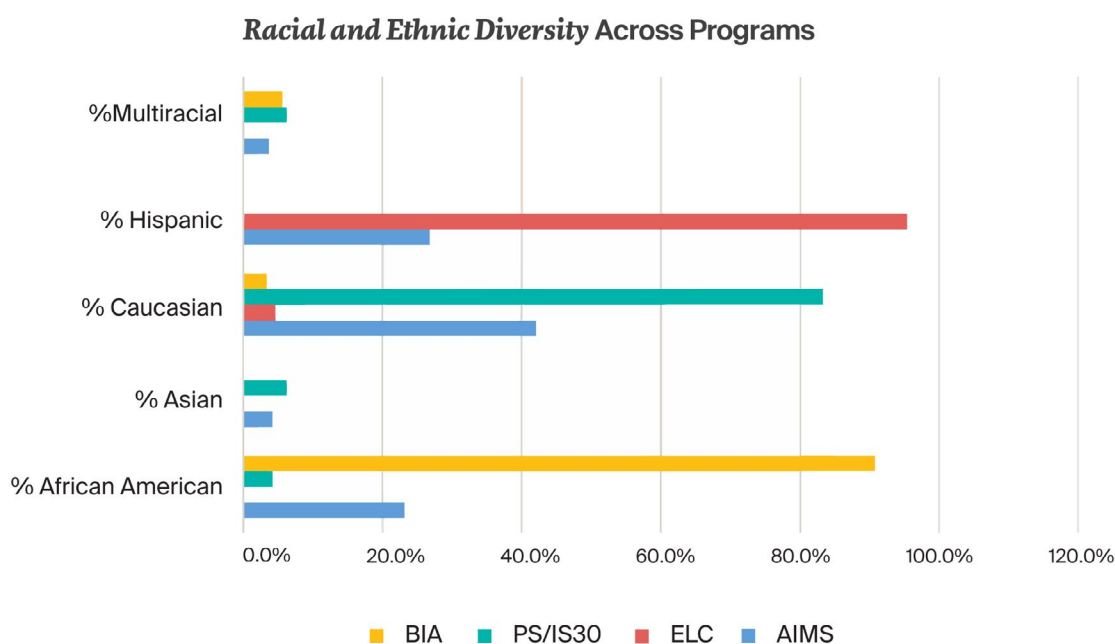
For the sake of more robust comparison, we focused on comparisons within the grade levels that are represented by all the programs – KG to 3rd grade. Additionally, as we do not have grade-level breakdowns for the data representative of the full PS/IS 30 student population, the comparisons below are based on the 48-student subset.

Section 3: Demographics

Students enrolled in Arabic DLI, 2018-2019

School Name	Students Enrolled
AIMS	406
PS/IS 30	170 ²
BIA	120
ELC	65

Racial and ethnic diversity



The racial/ethnic diversity of the programs varies considerably. One general issue to flag is that ‘Middle Eastern’ is not an official category in the US Census and is therefore not usually a stand-alone option on forms. As a result, those with Middle Eastern ethnicity are categorized as Caucasian. Ideally, each school would track how many of the enrolled students in Arabic DLI identify as ‘Middle Eastern’ (perhaps using a clear definition such as at least one parent has origins from the Arab world). Collecting such information would be insightful for developing other Arabic DLI programs and provide a better understanding of student make-up and motivation, which may clarify student and parent motivation for enrolling in Arabic DLI.

² Due to New York City DoE consent rules, we only have complete data for 48 students at PS/IS 30.

From the data collected, AIMS seemingly has the most diverse student enrollments across the designations. The other programs exhibit more single-race/ethnic dominance, particularly BIA and ELC where the programs are majority African American and Hispanic, respectively.

Because we do not have a full data set for PS/IS 30 the results can be misleading. If we look at the total enrollment for the school, it is clear that Caucasian students are likely significantly over-represented in the 48-student sample.

Ethnicity across schools

Looking at ethnicities by grade levels (for the four programs combined) the groups represented between kindergarten and third grade are African American, White/Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian and multiracial. The distribution of different racial groups is uniform within each grade level, with a slight majority of Caucasian students, followed by significant African American and Hispanic student populations, and minimal Asian and multiracial student representation.

Grade Level	African American	White/Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian	Multiracial
K	31	42	31	2	6
1	36	47	33	3	5
2	37	40	44	0	6
3	34	34	36	2	0
TOTAL	138	163	144	7	17

Home language

In most DLI programs, the home language of students can provide important information as to the composition of the class and how well it is meeting its goals. We have not included PS/IS 30 in this chart as the 48-student sample limits our capacity to generalize. Among the four programs, only AIMS exhibits home language diversity. In the case of AIMS, less than half of the students speak English at home, unlike at BIA and ELC where English is the dominant language. It is likely from what we know about the composition of the PS/IS 30 student population that there are a significant number of non-native English speakers enrolled in the program. It is worth noting that at ELC, where Spanish speakers are reported to make up the largest percentage of the class, most of the students live in English, not Spanish speaking, homes. Thus, while it may seem like the students at ELC are simultaneously learning three languages, the data would suggest that they are predominantly English-speaking studying both Arabic and English at school. As for PS/IS 30, what we do know is there is a great deal of diversity in terms of home language in the school at large. That is not surprising given the diversity of languages in NYC.

% of students who speak each language at home (no data collected for PS/IS30)

Language	AIMS	ELC	BIA
English	44.33	80	97.5
Spanish	10.34	18.46	0
Arabic	20.69	1.54	1.67
Farsi	0.74	0	0
French	0.49	0	0.83
Gujarati	0.25	0	0
Indonesian	0.25	0	0
N/A	18.47	0	0
Somali	0.25	0	0
Turkish	1.97	0	0
Urdu	1.48	0	0
Yoruba	0.74	0	0

Gender

All four programs have relatively even gender splits among their student populations. AIMS and ELC lean slightly in favor of female students. Observing the limited PS/IS 30 data, we note that they follow this trend but, like at BIA, the total student population includes slightly more male than female students.

	AIMS	ELC	BIA	PS/IS 30	PS/IS 30 Total
% Male	49.3	41.5	53.3	43.8	54
% Female	50.7	58.5	46.7	56.3	46

Some totals may be greater than 100 due to rounding.

Looking at the gender breakdown across grade levels for all four programs combined, first through third grade do not show significant differences in the percentages of male and female students. Interestingly, across kindergarten students there is a much higher percentage of female students enrolled. Only 39.3% of the students in kindergarten across all four programs in 2018–2019 were male.

Grade Level	Mail	Female	SUM	%M	%F
K	44	68	112	39.3	60.7
1	70	54	124	56.5	43.5
2	67	60	127	52.8	47.2
3	50	56	106	47.2	52.8

English proficiency

Across the schools, various terms were used to indicate a student's proficiency in English. In the data collected, the terms Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Learner (EL), English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English Language Development (ELD) were all used to describe students' proficiency levels. In general, a student's English proficiency is an important indicator of challenges faced by dual language programs as they work with students to gain English language proficiency while also providing a second language, in this case, Arabic instruction. AIMS has the largest percentage (28.33%) of students marked as having LEP compared to the other schools. NYC, where we do not have home language data and do not have a specific list of students designated as LEP, marked 22.9% of students as EL. This may suggest that, while we do not know their home languages, there are a significant number of students who speak a language other than English at home enrolled in their program. Also, NYC DoE's policy is to have bilingual education available (and an option could be a dual language program) if there are a certain number of students from that home language.³ Just under 14% of students in the ELC program are classified as LEP. BIA, like PS/IS 30, did not include English proficiency data, but did mark one of its students as EL. This puts its program at less than 1% of students with limited English proficiency. This is not surprising since it had the least home language diversity, with over 97% of its students speaking English at home.

ELC assessed 14 students on their ELD level as part of the California mandated assessment. California categorizes three stages of ELD called 'Emerging', 'Expanding' and 'Bridging.' Emerging is the beginner level, associated with rapid improvement as students use English more and more. Expanding is more advanced, with grade-level English usage and only moderate language support needed. Bridging is the most advanced, with students showing high-level English skills and needing very little language support. Among the 14 students that were assessed using the ELD, six (42.9%) were assessed as Emerging, six were assessed as Expanding, and two (14.3%) were assessed as Bridging.

³ See #4 here: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/multilingual-learners/bill-of-rights-for-parents-of-english-language-learners>

The other schools did not provide a similar measure, leaving the English ability of their students to be gauged purely by the LEP/ELL designations.

ELD Level	Students at ELC
Emerging	6 (42.9%)
Expanding	6 (42.9%)
Bridging	2 (14.3%)

Since all the schools provided data on English proficiency (using their specific designations), we calculated percentages of ELL/EFL students by grade. As expected, higher rates of younger students who have not spent as much time in school qualified as ELL/EFL, with decreases seen between kindergarten and first grade, and then again from first grade to second grade. Interestingly there is an increase in the percentage of ELL/EFL students between second and third grade across all four schools, which may be worth investigating further.

Grade Level	% ELL/EFL
K	25.89
1	20.97
2	11.81
3	17.92

Free and reduced lunch status

We can use the Free & Reduced Lunch status data, as provided for AIMS, ELC and PS/IS 30, to approximate the percentage of students from low-income households. BIA did not provide this data, but other sources enable us to determine that across the BIA student population, 63% are eligible for free lunch, which is considerably higher than the Maryland state average (40%). At AIMS, 54.2% of students qualified for free lunch, which was the lowest percentage among the programs. At PS/IS 30 72.9% of students qualified, and at ELC an overwhelming majority at 96.9% of students qualified for free lunch. The numbers are consistent with many DLI programs across the country as low-income parents seek public school options that they see as offering quality educational opportunities.

School	% Free & Reduced Lunch Status
BIA	63%
AIMS	54.2%
PS/IS 30	72.9%
ELC	96.9%

Years in Arabic DLI

There is an expectation in many DLI programs that students who enter the program at the beginning (kindergarten) will remain at least through the elementary school years. Attrition is well documented once the program transitions to middle school. Unfortunately, there has not been a lot of systematic analysis of student retention across DLI programs. All early education programs, in particular, benefit from consistency in enrollment from grade to grade. It is even more important for DLI programs as best practice suggests that immersion learners who leave programs are difficult to replace in later years.⁴ Our data by grade for the 2018 academic year does provide a ‘window’ into enrollment numbers by grade. It is unlikely that many new students enter the program in later years because of the requirement to know enough Arabic to succeed.

In ELC, 12 students have spent one year in the program, 16 two years, 21 three years, and 16 four years. Interestingly, this doesn’t line up with the number of students in each grade. There are 12 students in grade K, 12 in grade one, 25 in grade two and 16 in grade three.

At AIMS it seems that all students enter at the lowest grade level and then stay on, so the assumption is that the oldest students have spent the most time in the program.

PS/IS 30 data shows that only one fifth grader has spent five years in the program, with nine students admitted four years ago, seven three years ago, 18 two years ago and 13 in the 2018–2019 school year—one of whom joined in the second semester as a third grader. While most students seem to join the program in kindergarten or first grade, each year there are a few students who join as second or third graders.

BIA did not provide any indication of the number of years students have been enrolled.

School	1 Year in DLI	2 Years in DLI	3 Years in DLI	4 Years in DLI	5 Years in DLI
PS/IS 30	12	16	21	16	0
ELC	13	18	7	9	1

Academic performance

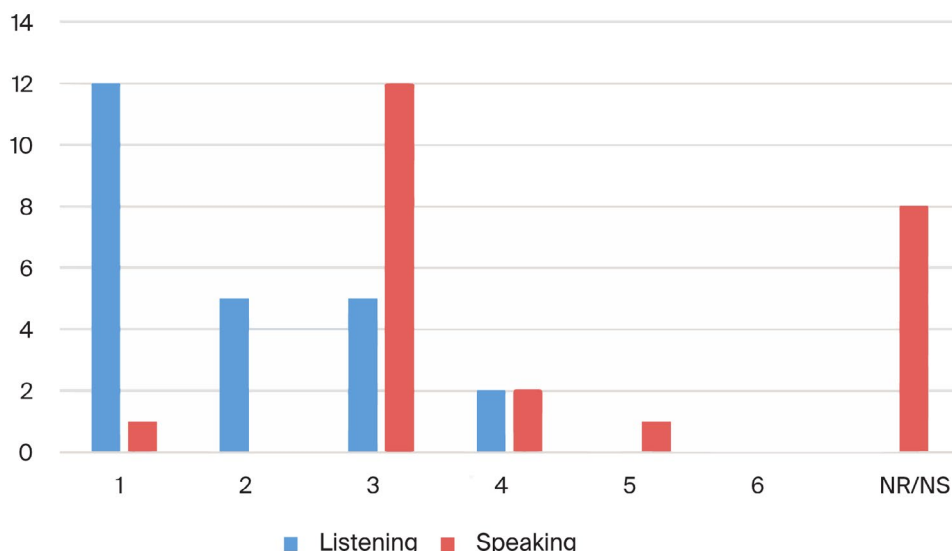
Arabic proficiency

We were not able to obtain Arabic proficiency data on students in the 2018–2019 school year. However, we do have access to additional data since then that could be helpful to explore. PS/IS 30 and AIMS both participated in the STAMP 4Se proficiency assessment created by AVANT to gauge students’ proficiency in the four modalities. Below are the results of the PS/IS 30 students during the pre-COVID school period of February/March 2020. First graders at PS/IS 30 were only tested in the communicative modalities (listening and speaking). AIMS students were tested in June 2021; first and second graders at AIMS were also only tested in the communicative modalities (listening and speaking).

⁴ See https://carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol8/May2005_research_attrition.html

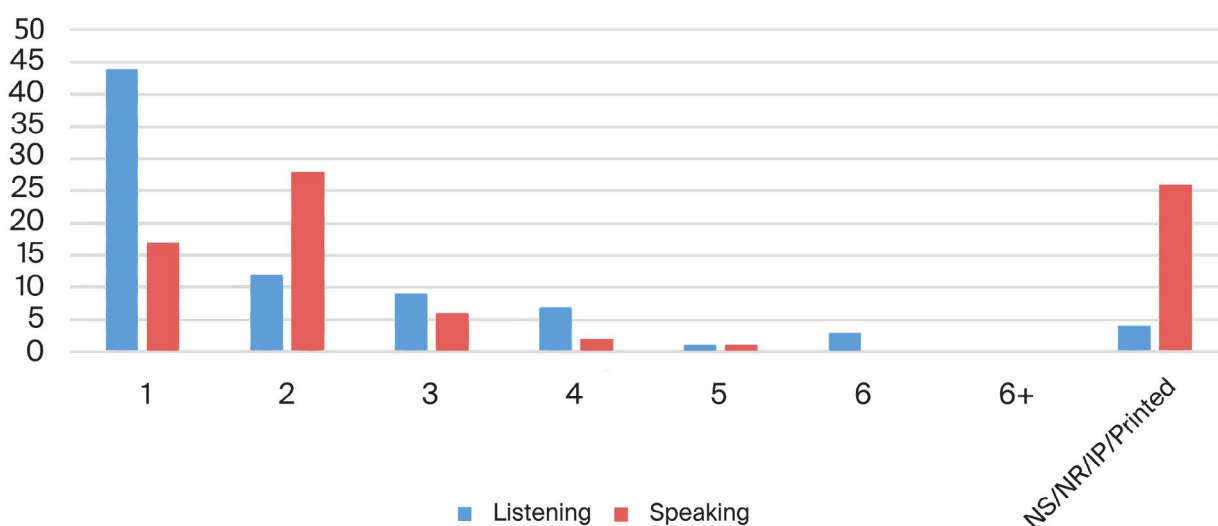
Below are the results for the first, third and fourth-grade classes at both PS/IS 30 and AIMS. Please see the appendix for the results for the second and fifth grades at both PS/IS 30 and AIMS.

PSIS 30 Grade 1 Listening and Speaking Scores



Listening proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the first grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Low for 24 students. Speaking proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the first grade ranged from No Response (students unable to speak or receiving a 0) to Intermediate Mid. This still shows students in the first grade surpassing their expected target proficiency of Novice Mid in communicative modalities.

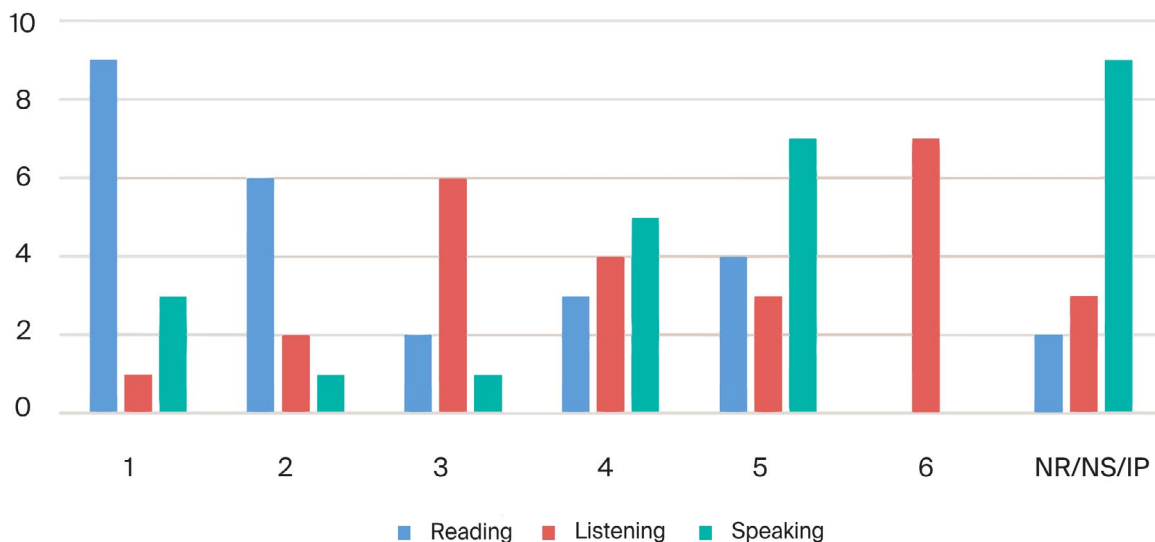
AIMS Grade 1 STAMP 4Se Listening and Speaking



Listening proficiency levels at AIMS for the first grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High for the 80 students that took the STAMP 4Se. Speaking proficiency levels at AIMS for the first grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid. Very few tested in the Intermediate range for speaking but it is important to note that a large number of students at AIMS were unable to test due to COVID measures.

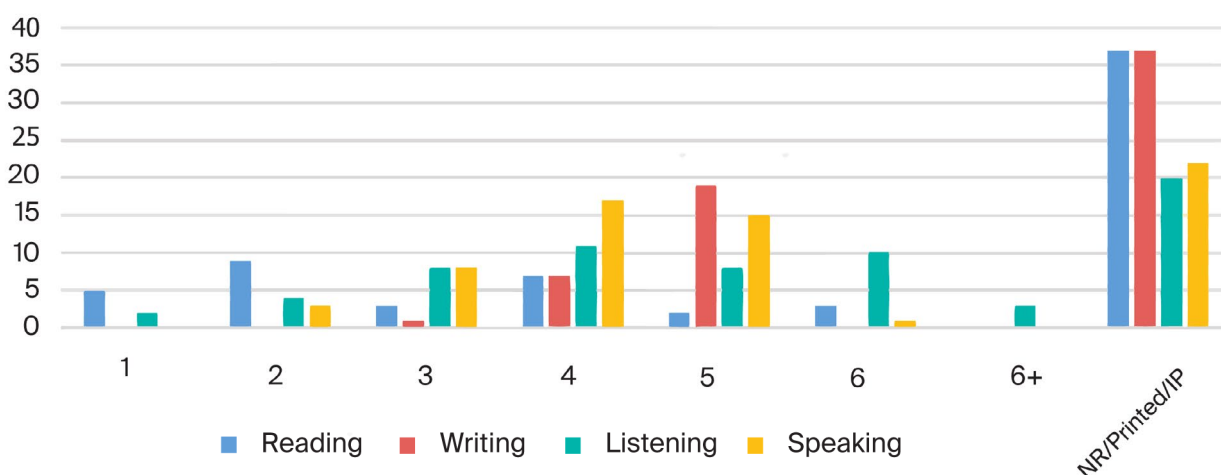
This is the first time a student has received a proficiency score that is on the border of Intermediate and Advanced in a modality (which is a score of 6+). Speaking proficiency levels at AIMS for third grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High. A significant number (50 or higher for all modalities) were unable to be scored due to NR, illegible handwriting or the section not being completed—likely due to COVID.

PSIS 30 Grade 4 STAMP 4Se Reading, Listening and Speaking



Reading proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the fourth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid for 26 students. Listening proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the fourth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High. Speaking proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the fourth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid. Although none of the 26 students scored in the Intermediate level for reading in the third grade, reading scores returned to Intermediate proficiency levels in the fourth grade.

AIMS Grade 4 STAMP 4Se Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking



A variety of COVID challenges resulted in different numbers of students in the fourth grade at AIMS taking each modality assessment. Reading proficiency levels at AIMS for the fourth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High for 66 students in the class. Writing proficiency levels at AIMS for the fourth grade ranged from Novice High to Intermediate Mid (for 64 students).

This is the second consecutive time that all students achieved writing proficiency scores of Novice High or above (although over 35 writing assessments were not scored). Listening proficiency levels at AIMS for the fourth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High/Advanced Low for all 66 students. This also shows some students in the fourth grade performing at a much higher proficiency than expected (students completing their fourth grade should be at Intermediate Low). Lastly, speaking proficiency levels at AIMS for the fourth grade ranged from Novice Mid to Intermediate High for 76 students who took this portion of the assessment. No students scored a Novice Low proficiency in writing and speaking.

Students at both PS/IS 30 and AIMS submitted handwritten writing assessments, which may have resulted in overall lower scores due to the evaluators struggling to decipher handwriting.

English language arts

It is important to understand how students enrolled in the Arabic programs are progressing in English language arts as that remains a key benchmark of achievement since schooling is traditionally conducted in English. We obtained English standardized assessments from each of the four schools. We were also able to compare the results for each of the four schools with district-wide data to give us a better sense of how the students are performing. Unfortunately, each school/district uses different metrics to assess English language arts, so it is difficult to compare results across programs.

Performance Level	ELC	AIMS	BIA	PS/IS 30
Exceeding grade level	7.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A
At grade level	35.4%	87.9%	37.9%	91.3%
Progressing toward grade level expectations	49.2%	N/A	34.5%	N/A
Minimal progress toward grade level expectations	7.7%	12.1%	27.6%	8.7%
<i>Comparable school district proficiency rate</i>	43.9%	66%	18%	49%

ELC provided multiple scores on different English language arts assessments, so for the sake of direct comparison to other programs, an analysis of the students composite scores was used.

Students in Arabic DLI fell into four categories:

1. Minimal progress toward grade level expectations (7.7%).
2. Progressing toward grade level expectations (49.2%).
3. At grade level (35.4%).
4. Exceeding grade level (7.7%).

Across LAUSD elementary grade schools in 2018–2019 43.9% of students met or exceeded grade level expectations in English language arts. Clearly, at least for the snapshot we have of ELC, when compared with LAUSD, the ELC students are dramatically outperforming their peers in Arabic language arts.

AIMS' assessment is measured as pass/fail and only includes its fourth-grade students. 87.9% of AIMS fourth graders passed their reading assessment, while 12.1% failed. Comparing this to overall passing rates for grade schools in HISD where only 66% of students passed their English language arts assessments in 2018,⁵ AIMS students are also outperforming their counterparts in the fourth grade at the district level.

BIA provided two different standardized test results for the 2018–2019 school year, iReady and PARCC. We chose to evaluate the iReady test scores because PARCC has since been retired. It evaluates its scores similar to LAUSD by assessing whether students are at or below grade level. It did not indicate any students exceeding grade level. We only received test results for the third and fourth graders in the 2018–2019 school year. We also only received results for 29 students, giving us a smaller pool than from the other two schools. Of these students, 37.9% were performing at grade level, 34.5% just below grade level and 27.6% significantly below grade level. While iReady indicates a similar percentage of students performing at grade level, the percentage of students struggling is much higher than at AIMS and ELC despite most students' home language being English. The overall proficiency rate for state assessments from the third to fifth grade level—the range closest to the students in the program we focused on—was only 18%, which indicates that students in Arabic DLI, although performing below grade level, are still outperforming their peers in Baltimore City Schools.⁶

PS/IS 30 provided assessment scores with pass/fail, like AIMS. There were 46 scores from the Arabic DLI classes provided for English language arts. Out of that group, 91.3% of students passed and 8.7% failed. This is comparable to AIMS and ELC students' English language arts performance. Looking at the full population in New York City public schools, in the 2018–2019 school year only 49% of students passed their English language arts assessments, so yet again, students in Arabic DLI outperformed their peers in English language arts.⁷

The conclusion we can draw based on the small sample from the 2018–19 analysis is that students in all four Arabic DLI programs outperformed their peers across other schools and classes in ELA assessments.

5 <https://www.houstonisd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=48525&dataid=244567&FileName=2018-19-FactsFigures.pdf>

6 <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/district-overview>

7 <https://data.nysed.gov/assessment38.php?subject=ELA&year=2019&state=yes>

Mathematics

All four programs used the same assessments and scales for mathematics standardized assessments as they did for English language arts.

Performance Level	ELC	AIMS	BIA	PS/IS 30
Exceeding grade level	9.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A
At grade level	46.2%	87.9%	51.7%	97.7%
Progressing toward grade level expectations	33.8%	N/A	44.8%	N/A
Minimal progress toward grade level expectations	10.8%	10.6%	3.4%	2.3%
<i>Comparable school district proficiency rate</i>	33.5%	72%	17%	56%

At ELC, 10.8% of students are making minimal progress toward grade level expectations, 33.8% are progressing toward grade level expectations, 46.2% are at grade level and 9.2% exceed grade level. In 2018–2019, 33.5% of grade school students in LAUSD met or exceeded grade level expectations on the mathematics assessments, showing higher than average mathematics ability in those students enrolled in Arabic DLI.⁸

Among AIM’s fourth grade students, 89.4% passed the mathematics assessment while 10.6% failed it. Again, comparing their failing metric to ELC’s ‘minimal progress’, ELC and AIMS students are performing on a very similar level in mathematics. In HISD, only 72% of students across grades three to eight passed their mathematics assessments.⁹

At BIA, among the 29 mathematics scores provided for grades three and four, 51.7% of students are performing at grade level, 44.8% are just below grade level and only 3.4% are struggling and performing two or more levels below grade level. In contrast, on the city-wide level only 17% of students between third and fifth grade were assessed as proficient in mathematics.¹⁰

At PS/IS 30, there were 44 scores of students (grades three to five) in the Arabic DLI program provided for mathematics, with 97.7% passing their assessment and 2.3% failing. This is drastically different to the results seen for the full NYC student population.

⁸ From LAUSD Office of Data and Accountability: <https://www.laschoolreport.com/lausds-test-scores-reveal-large-drops-for-latino-female-students/>

⁹ https://www.houstonisd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=48525&dataid=244567&FileName=2018-19-FactsFigures_.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/district-overview>

In the 2018–2019 school year, only 56% of students passed their mathematics assessments. Across New York City, third graders in 2018 and 2019 passed mathematics at rates of 54% and 55%, which are much lower than the rates in the small group of specific student data, but on par with the school-wide rates.¹¹

Across the board, students performed better in mathematics assessments than in English language arts, with the most drastic difference in performance between subjects seen in BIA’s program. In general, the data also shows that students in all four Arabic DLI programs outperformed their peers in their districts in both English language arts and mathematics standardized tests.

Absenteeism

Looking simply at the means, AIMS’s program shows the highest attendance with each student missing on average less than a day of instruction. ELC, BIA and PS/IS30 all reported higher absences (of students in Arabic DLI) at 5.1, 7.6, and nine missed days of instruction, respectively. More can be gleaned from looking beyond the mean, however, as PS/IS30’s median number of absences drops its figure from nine missed days to seven. While many students had perfect attendance, there were several students with over 20 absences, including up to as many as 27 missed days within a 178-day period, equating to a full 15% of instruction days missed. Among their full population, PS/IS 30’s program has a 94% attendance rate. This does not necessarily negate the absenteeism seen in the 48 Arabic DLI students; many of the students we do not have data on could have perfect attendance and thus elevate the overall attendance rate. A truer picture of BIA’s absenteeism can also be seen by looking at the median instead of the mean—the median number of full days of absence per student is only 2.5. The mean was skewed much higher by a few outliers, including one student who was absent for 54 days. The ELC metric is also somewhat inflated as its 5.1 average number of absences represents the mean of partial absences. When student numbers for daily attendance—counting all of the days that students showed up for at least part of the school day—are compared to the number of days enrolled, the ELC program shows a perfect attendance rate.

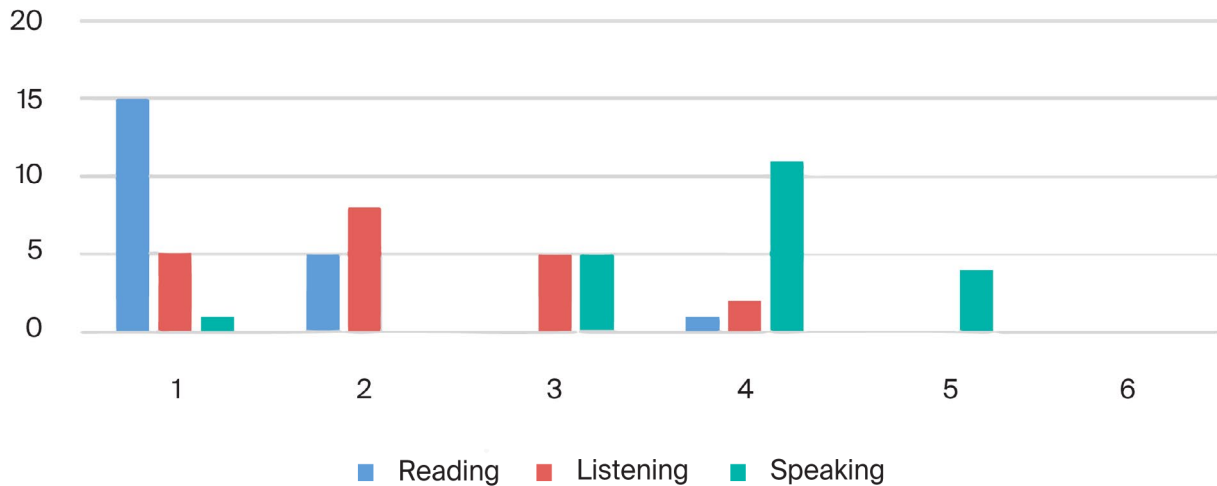
With this more nuanced analysis, absenteeism is most prevalent in New York City’s program overall, with a handful of BIA’s students showing the most extreme absence figures. Looking at the rates of absenteeism by grade level across all the schools for KG to third grade, there is no significant difference between the averages. Due to the information available, we also calculated the median and mean numbers of absences at each grade level. As seen in the table below, both values reflect relatively low numbers of absences in each grade across all four programs.

Grade Level	Absences (Median)	Absences (Mean)
K	1	3.8
1	1	2.7
2	1	3.4
3	0	3.1

¹¹ <https://data.nysed.gov/assessment38.php?subject=Mathematics&year=2019&state=yes>

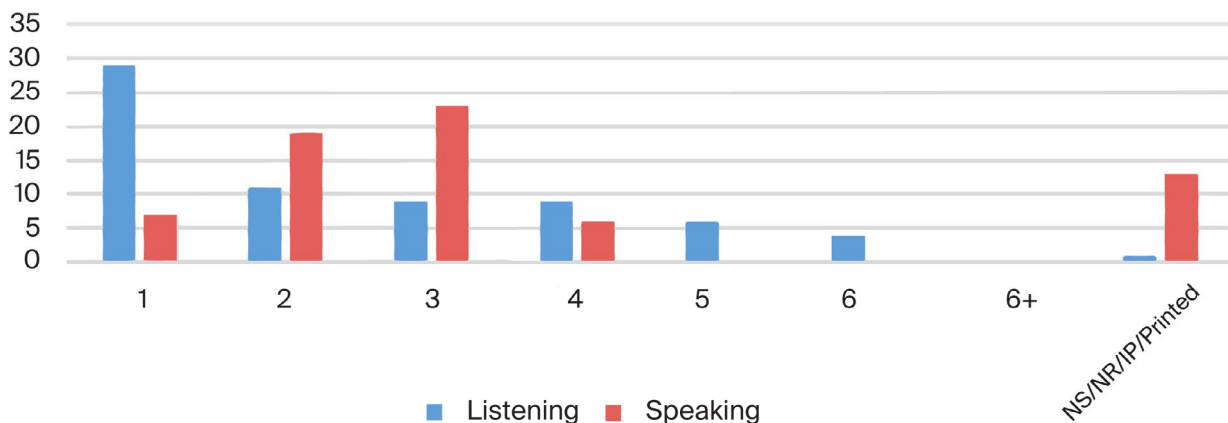
Appendix: Second and Fifth Grade Immersion STAMP Assessment Results

PSIS 30 Grade 2 STAMP 4Se Reading, Listening and Speaking



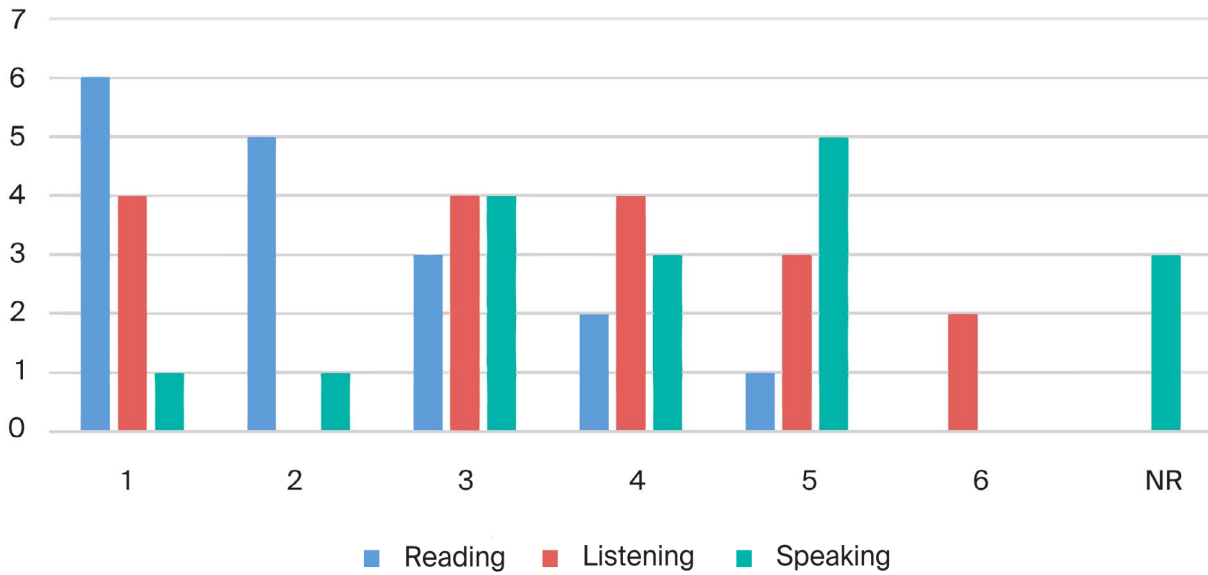
Reading proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the second grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Low for a total of 21 students. Listening proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the second grade range from Novice Low to Intermediate Low for 20 students (one did not test). Speaking proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the second grade range from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid for 21 students. These second-grade students did not take the writing portion of the assessment.

AIMS Grade 2 STAMP 4Se Listening and Speaking



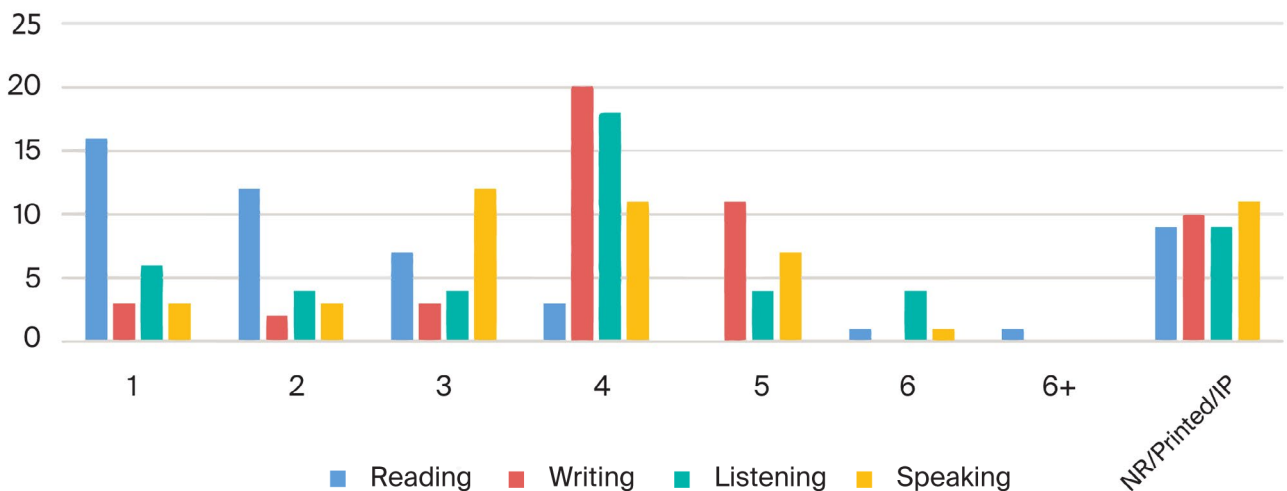
Listening proficiency levels at AIMS for the second grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High for 67 students. Speaking proficiency levels at AIMS for the second grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Low for 68 students (one student was unable to take the listening test due to COVID disruptions). Please note that second-grade AIMS students only tested in the communicative modalities and did not take a reading assessment like second-grade students at PS/IS 30.

PSIS 30 Grade 5 STAMP 4Se Reading, Listening and Speaking



Reading proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid for 17 students. Listening proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High for the same set of students. Speaking proficiency levels at PS/IS 30 for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid for all 17 students. Three students were unable to record their speaking portions due to COVID.

AIMS Grade 5 STAMP 4Se Listening and Speaking



Reading proficiency levels at AIMS for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High/Advanced Low for 49 students. Writing proficiency levels at AIMS for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate Mid for the 50 students in the class. The majority of students who submitted their writing assessment are on par with expected proficiency for writing (Intermediate Low). Listening proficiency levels at AIMS for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High for 49 students. Lastly, speaking proficiency levels at AIMS for the fifth grade ranged from Novice Low to Intermediate High for 48 students. Several students missed assessments in specific modalities due to COVID disruptions during the school year.



