

Refugee School Impact Grant 2010-12 State Evaluation Report

January 2013



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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Executive Summary

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's Refugee Resettlement Program, provides funding to school districts educating refugee students in their schools and communities. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and PDE coordinate available resources and expertise for program implementation, technical assistance, and monitoring sites for compliance. The Department of Public Welfare's Refugee Resettlement Program contracts with PDE's Bureau of Teaching and Learning to administer the Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG) program.

Students are identified as refugee when they come from a nation identified on the Office of Refugee Resettlement's annual list or fit other criteria. Eligible individuals must not be United States citizens. Refugee status expires when the student obtains citizenship.¹

For more information on refugee eligibility and resettlement, contact the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/>.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine program implementation and student outcomes for those students identified as refugee in grantee school districts in order to fulfill reporting requirements and make informed programming decisions. Pennsylvania is required to evaluate this program by the terms of its contract with the Department of Public Welfare, wherein Pennsylvania was required to describe how the project and its results would be evaluated. An external evaluation conducted by Allegheny Intermediate Unit was included in that description.

PENNSYLVANIA'S RSIG PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The goal of Pennsylvania's RSIG program is to assist youth identified as refugee in meeting state standards for core academic subjects by providing students with supplemental academic opportunities. Additional program goals include helping students overcome language and cultural barriers, providing students and their families with connections to the community, and coordinating appropriate refugee services in a timely manner.

As a supplemental program, RSIG funds are typically braided with local funds and other funding streams to provide services. Additionally, districts have the freedom to implement RSIG-funded services or programs as they identified and outlined in their approved applications for funds, and as such, not all refugee students may be eligible to participate in all RSIG-funded programming.

For this funding cycle, grant funds covered the 2010-11 and 2011-12 academic years. Five school districts received RSIG funding to offer supplemental academic and/or support services to students identified as refugee. These school districts are the Allentown School District, the

¹ School districts are prohibited from using immigration records or asking students for their citizenship status as a condition of enrollment.

School District of the City of Erie, the School District of Lancaster, the Penn Hills School District, and the Upper Darby School District.

A total of 1,412 students identified as refugee were enrolled in the five grantee school districts in the grade levels where RSIG funds were used; 988 refugee students were enrolled in 2010-12 and 1,166 were enrolled in 2011-12, of which 731 students were enrolled in both years.

Both years, Erie had the greatest percentage of refugee students involved in RSIG-funded grade levels and Penn Hills had the smallest number. Erie, Lancaster, and Upper Darby all increased their numbers of refugee students enrolled in 2011-12 over the prior year while Allentown and Penn Hills had a decrease in their enrollment of refugee students.

Three districts used RSIG funds for services to students identified as refugee in Kindergarten through 12th grade and two districts used RSIG funds in ninth through 12th grades only. This evaluation focuses on those students identified as refugee and enrolled in grade levels where districts used RSIG funds. Students in grades 9-12 comprise the largest portion of students included in this evaluation: 58 percent in 2010-11 and 57 percent in 2011-12.

Grantees reported having refugee students from 61 countries of origin. Countries making up 4 percent or more of the refugee student population were Nepal (23 percent), Bhutan (18 percent), Iraq (6 percent), Liberia (6 percent), Somalia (4 percent), Thailand (4 percent), Burundi (4 percent), and Myanmar/Burma (4 percent).

Refugee students spoke at least 76 different native languages or dialects with 57 languages making up less than 1 percent of all students each. Native languages having the largest percentages were Nepali (37 percent), Arabic (8 percent), Spanish (7 percent), Somali (5 percent), Swahili (4 percent), and English² (4 percent).

Over the course of the two-year grant cycle, grantees provided programmatic information required for federal reporting through semi-annual reports. School district grantees provided evidence of implementation in the following areas:

- Supplemental English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction;
- Intensive summer language programs and extended school year programs;
- Afterschool tutorials focusing on helping students understand and complete assignments;
- Afterschool programs to foster engagement in constructive activities that are alternatives to potential negative behavior such as gang membership and dropping out (examples: mentoring, shadowing, community service activities);
- Programs that encourage high school completion and full participation in school activities;
- Programs for children with limited formal schooling and cognitive enrichment programs to bridge the gap between the refugee student's experience and the elements of school and curriculum that are culture-based;
- Parental outreach programs that involve refugee parents in their child's education and help them understand their child's social life;

² Students identified as English came from counties outside of the United States.

- Classroom, afterschool, and/or summer clubs and activities that foster understanding among youth of diverse cultures and cross-cultural activities that enrich the lives of students, the school, and the community;
- Bilingual/bicultural counselors;
- Additional teachers and aides to work exclusively with refugee students; and/or
- Supplemental materials, resources, and staff development.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Academic Outcomes

In 2010-11 and 2011-12, more than 75 percent of K-12 students in RSIG grades scored in the lowest three (of six) English proficiency categories provided within the ACCESS for ELLs³ assessment at mid-year when the assessment is typically administered. For the 481 students who had two years of assessment data, almost 90 percent improved from 2011 to 2012.

In the 2010-11 school year, 13 percent of students scored proficient or advanced on the Reading PSSA and 17 percent of students scored in these performance levels in 2011-12. For students with two years of Reading PSSA data, 41 percent improved by half a performance level or more and 2 percent of students scored at the advanced level both years. On the Math PSSA in the 2010-11 school year, 28 percent of students scored proficient or advanced. Twenty-five percent of students scored in these levels in 2011-12. For those students having two years of Math PSSA data, 34 percent of students improved by half a performance level or more and 8 percent of students scored at the advanced level both years. Seven percent of students scored proficient or advanced on the Science PSSA in 2010-11 and 6 percent scored in these levels in 2011-12.⁴

Report card grades were collected for the first time in 2011-12. In math, 73 percent of students earned a final report card grade of ‘C’ or better. In science, 78 percent of students earned a final report card grade of ‘C’ or better. In social studies, 80 percent of students earned a final report card grade of ‘C’ or better.

The 2010-12 grant cycle included two graduating classes and a combined total of 89 percent of students in 12th grade graduated. Additionally, districts reported that no refugee students dropped out.

Social Adjustment Outcomes

Evaluators collected school attendance data, tardiness data, and discipline data for the first time in 2011-12. For school attendance, 85 percent of students attended 90 percent or more of the days they were enrolled during the 2011-12 school year. Days absent per student ranged from

³ The ACCESS for ELLs assessment measures English language fluency. While ACCESS for ELLs stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners, the acronym is the formal name of the assessment. More information on the assessment can be found on the following website: <http://www.wida.us/assessment/access/background.aspx>

⁴ Improvement cannot be determined for science as the assessment is not administered in consecutive years/grades.

zero to 141.5 days with a median⁵ of six days absent. For students with two years of attendance information (2010-11 and 2011-12), 53 percent of students missed more days of school than they did the prior year, 38 percent of students missed fewer days of school, 8 percent missed the same number of days in both years, and 1 percent of students did not miss any days of school either year.

For school tardiness, 60 percent of students had less than 10 percent of days enrolled as tardy during the 2011-12 school year. Tardy days per student ranged from zero to 104 days tardy with a median of one day tardy. For students with two years of data, 45 percent of students increased their number of days tardy, 27 percent were tardy fewer days, 9 percent were tardy the same number of days, and 19 percent of students did not have any days tardy in either year.

Most students (71 percent) had no discipline incidents. For those students having one or more incidents, counts of discipline incidents per student ranged from one to 114. Of those students having one or more incidents in either year (307 students): 35 percent had fewer disciplinary incidents in 2011-12 than they had in 2010-11; 9 percent of students had the same number of discipline incidents; and 56 percent had more discipline incidents in 2011-12 than in 2010-11.

Participation in extracurricular activities was another indicator of social adjustment. However, this information was not consistently tracked in each district and districts indicated few students participating in such activities. In communicating with evaluators, grantees shared that refugee students were fearful of staying after school if no transportation was provided or that they have other family obligations that prevented them from participating.

CONCLUSIONS

Grantee RSIG programs varied. New elements collected for the first time in 2011-12 provided more information about social adjustment and revealed information that may still needed. Data elements such as length of time in the district and being a new arrival to the country or district may be contributing factors to student academic and social adjustment outcomes and may need to be collected in subsequent funding cycles.

Most students improved their English fluency as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and many students improved or performed at proficient or advanced levels in reading and/or math based on PSSA results. A majority of students earned grades of 'C' or better based on math, science, and/or social studies grades. These results indicate that many students are succeeding or improving academically and linguistically. However, results indicate many students have social adjustment needs as shown by attendance, tardy, and participation findings.

Evaluators continue to work with PDE staff to refine data elements to meet federal reporting and support school district grantees to use data to identify the types of services students may need. Evaluators will also continue to support the state team in identifying supports for grantees.

⁵ A median, like mean and mode, is a measure of central tendency. Median is used because it lessens the influence of outliers on results and presents a more accurate representation of student outcomes.

Introduction

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The goal of Pennsylvania's Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG) is to assist youth identified as refugee in meeting state standards for core academic subjects by providing students with supplemental academic opportunities. Additional program goals include helping students overcome barriers both linguistically and culturally, providing students and their families with connections to the community, and coordinating appropriate refugee services in a timely manner.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's Refugee Resettlement Program, provides funding to school districts educating refugee students in their schools and communities. The Department of Public Welfare and PDE coordinate available resources and expertise for program implementation, technical assistance, and monitoring sites for compliance. The Department of Public Welfare's Refugee Resettlement Program contracts with PDE's Bureau of Teaching and Learning to administer the program.

In addition to academics, school districts are allowed to offer students other services, supports, and activities, including character education, service learning, career education, drug and violence prevention programming, international education, and cultural and recreational activities that promote social adjustment. Program offerings may take place in school or during out-of-school hours: before school, afterschool, holidays, weekends, or summer. Parents and families may also receive services. Grantee districts are encouraged to establish partnerships or collaborations with local agencies or refugee service providers. Allowable activities include: English as a Second Language instruction; academic tutoring; afterschool or summer programs for academics or school readiness; parent involvement programs; interpreter services for parent/teacher meetings and conferences; and bilingual/bicultural counselors and aides.

For the 2010-12 program years, five school districts received RSIG funding to offer supplemental academic services or to support students identified as refugee. These school districts are the Allentown School District, the School District of the City of Erie, the School District of Lancaster, the Penn Hills School District, and the Upper Darby School District.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine program implementation and student outcomes for those students identified as refugee in order to fulfill reporting requirements and make informed programming decisions. Pennsylvania is required to evaluate this program by the terms of its contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, wherein Pennsylvania was required to describe how the project and its results would be evaluated. An external evaluation conducted by Allegheny Intermediate Unit was included in that description.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

A student is identified as a refugee when they come from a nation identified on the Office of Refugee Resettlement's annual list or fit other criteria. Eligible individuals must not be United States citizens. Refugee status expires when the student obtains citizenship.⁶

For more information on refugee eligibility and refugee resettlement, contact the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/>.

For the purpose of this report, school district grantees identified students as refugee based upon internal data and criteria from the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Districts provided a list of these students to evaluators.

EVALUATION DESIGN

To look at program implementation, evaluators examined grantee reports outlining program implementation and outcomes, student demographics, and student results from state assessments. State assessment data included Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) for reading, math, and science and the ACCESS for ELLs⁷ assessment. The PSSA is administered each spring to all Pennsylvania public school students in third through eighth and 11th grades. The ACCESS for ELLs assessment is administered each winter to all students identified by the district as being English language learners.

Student report card grades replaced local district assessments collected in prior years. Given the change in school district grantees for the 2010-12 grant cycle and the changes in local assessments administered at the district level, local assessment outcomes are no longer representative of the identified population.

Additional student outcomes elements included school attendance and school discipline to explore if these areas were concerns for refugee students and also as a measurement of social adjustment.

Allegheny Intermediate Unit prepared this report based on analysis it conducted to provide information to stakeholders as well as to fulfill reporting requirements. Stakeholders can use this information to make considerations for programmatic and process changes, refinement of the evaluation plan, and, as appropriate, future data collection.

⁶ School districts are prohibited from using immigration records or asking students for their citizenship status as a condition of enrollment.

⁷ The ACCESS for ELLs assessment measures English language fluency. While ACCESS for ELLs stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners, the acronym is the formal name of the assessment. More information on the assessment can be found on the following website: <http://www.wida.us/assessment/access/background.aspx>

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

This evaluation of RSIG for 2010-12 focused on program implementation and refugee students' academic and social adjustment outcomes. Not all grantee districts track individual student participation in programming or services funded through RSIG, so evaluators could only examine data available for grade levels where grant funds were used, not for individual students served by RSIG programming. Students included in analysis are those identified as refugee and enrolled in the grade levels served by the grant.

To make this report easier to read and navigate evaluators included graphical representations of results as well as data tables. Pertinent percentages and counts are provided in the charts and/or narrative explanations. Where a blank cell appears in a data table, the category included zero students.

Throughout this report, percentages may be rounded and as such, may not total 100 percent.

The findings provided within this report should be used to guide program management and assist the state program team with providing technical assistance to programs in order to improve implementation and outcomes. This report should also be used to highlight positive and successful implementation, outcomes, and programs as models. Care should be taken to avoid making comparisons among counts of students by grantee, as each grantee has different populations and student counts.

It is important to remember that because of the structure of RSIG and other resources available to districts and students, it is not possible to attribute student outcomes solely to this program's efforts.

Findings

The 2010-12 Pennsylvania Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG) involved five grantee school districts – Allentown School District in Lehigh County; the School District of the City of Erie in Erie County; the School District of Lancaster in Lancaster County; Penn Hills School District in Allegheny County; and Upper Darby School District in Delaware County. These school districts applied for and received grants through the RSIG application and award process. This evaluation includes information about and from the five grantees that received funds through RSIG, though other Pennsylvania school districts and schools enroll students who are refugees.

To provide additional context to evaluation findings, it may be useful to understand some general characteristics of the school district grantees.⁸ Three of the school districts (Allentown, Erie, and Penn Hills) designated RSIG funds be used for programming for refugee students in kindergarten through 12th grade, while two districts (Upper Darby and Lancaster) designated RSIG funds be used in ninth through 12th grades only. The information in the following table shows some district demographics for the most current academic year, 2011-12.

	Allentown	Erie	Lancaster	Penn Hills	Upper Darby
Geographic location in Pennsylvania	southeast	northwest	southeast	southwest	southeast
Free/reduced lunch rate in RSIG targeted grades	80.8	73.1	80.8	49.6	53.3
Student enrollment in RSIG targeted grades	17,560	12,324	3,063	3,987	3,705
Percent of enrolled students identified as refugee in RSIG grades	0.3 percent	5.5 percent	6.6 percent	0.2 percent	5.9 percent

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE READER

In the process of reviewing and considering the findings contained within this report, it may be helpful for readers to take into consideration certain circumstances that may influence results that are unique to this population. According to Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS),⁹ a national technical assistance provider for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, students who are identified as refugee often arrive in the United States with limited or interrupted formal schooling; limited or no English language skills; separation from family; difficulty adjusting to the culture of their new surroundings; and trauma, among other challenges related to their emigration from conditions of persecution. While the RSIG program attempts to mitigate some of these challenges and provide services to support student success academically and socially, it will likely take more than the two-year period of this grant to see considerable benefits for participants.

⁸ Evaluators gathered district enrollment and lunch status data from:
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/national_school_lunch/7487.

⁹ <http://www.brycs.org>

Additionally, like any program operating in schools, many factors contribute to student outcomes. RSIG is not the only source of intervention or support (in or out of school) that students received.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The RSIG funds provided to each of the five grantees ranged from approximately \$11,500 to \$99,000 annually and funded supplemental materials or supports to already-existing programs, regular school day provisions, or other activities designed to support students identified as refugee and their families. Other district funding sources contributed in varying degrees for each grantee. The grant period for this program was Aug. 15, 2010 through Aug. 14, 2012, though grant awards were not made until Nov. 24, 2010. While grantees had more than a year and a half to implement programs, it is possible that not having a full two years of implementation may have influenced program results.

Some grantees targeted specific grade levels or groups. This evaluation focuses on those students identified as refugee and enrolled in grade levels supported with programming or supports funded through RSIG funds.

RSIG funds typically supported programming and resources such as:

- Para-educators, aides, or instructional staff to provide one-on-one and small-group support to refugee students;
- Translation services and/or translated materials so families could participate more easily in school events, meetings, and telephone calls, and understand school mailings;
- Supplemental English language learning materials, software, or resources;
- Supplemental instruction;
- Professional development for instructional staff in areas such as cultural awareness, positive behavior interventions, and using new models and materials purchased for use with refugee students;
- Parent involvement opportunities; and
- Educational trips or visits for students.

As a supplemental program, RSIG funds are typically braided with other funding sources to provide services. Additionally, districts have the freedom to implement RSIG-funded services or programs as they identified and outlined in their applications for funds, and as such, not all refugee students may be eligible to participate in all RSIG-funded programming, even if they are in a grade level supported with RSIG funds.

Student Receipt of RSIG Services

Evaluators asked school districts to indicate which students enrolled during the program year received services that were directly funded through RSIG. While grantees were asked to provide this information in both years, information was more complete in 2011-12 than in the prior year. In 2010-11 two of the five grantee districts were able to report this information and in 2011-12 four of the five grantees were able to do so. Grantees reported for the 2010-11 program year that

they did not know the service delivery status of 81 percent of refugee students. In 2011-12, grantee reports indicated that 82 percent of refugee students received services that were directly funded through RSIG, 13 percent did not receive services funded by RSIG, and 6 percent were unknown.

Program Report Highlights

Over the course of the two-year grant cycle, school district grantees provided programmatic information through semi-annual reports submitted to PDE and/or evaluators to provide information required for federal reporting.

To close out the grant cycle, school district grantees completed the *Final Year-End Performance Report*, which was to be a compilation of information previously submitted in semi-annual reports and covered programming from Nov. 24, 2010 to Aug. 14, 2012. Evaluators created a reporting form in order to collect the information consistently from grantees. Evaluators compiled all school district grantee responses for PDE's final report submission to Office of Refugee Resettlement due in November 2012.

School district grantees provided several examples of programming in the following areas:

- Supplemental English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction;
- Intensive summer language programs and extended school year programs;
- Afterschool tutorials focusing on helping students understand and complete assignments;
- Afterschool programs to foster engagement in constructive activities that are alternatives to potential negative behavior such as gang membership and dropping out (examples: mentoring, shadowing, community service activities);
- Programs that encourage high school completion and full participation in school activities;
- Programs for children with limited formal schooling and cognitive enrichment programs to bridge the gap between the refugee student's experience and the elements of school and curriculum that are culture-based;
- Parental outreach programs that involve refugee parents in their child's education and that help them understand their child's social life;
- Classroom, afterschool, and/or summer clubs and activities that foster understanding among youth of diverse cultures and cross-cultural activities that enrich the lives of students, the school, and the community;
- Bilingual/bicultural counselors;
- Additional teachers and aides to work exclusively with refugee students; and/or
- Supplemental materials, resources, and staff development.

Specific highlights included:

- A newcomer academy, focusing on the needs of newly arriving students including refugees;
- English as a Second Language classes for adults and/or students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade;
- *Welcome to the U.S.A.* orientation;

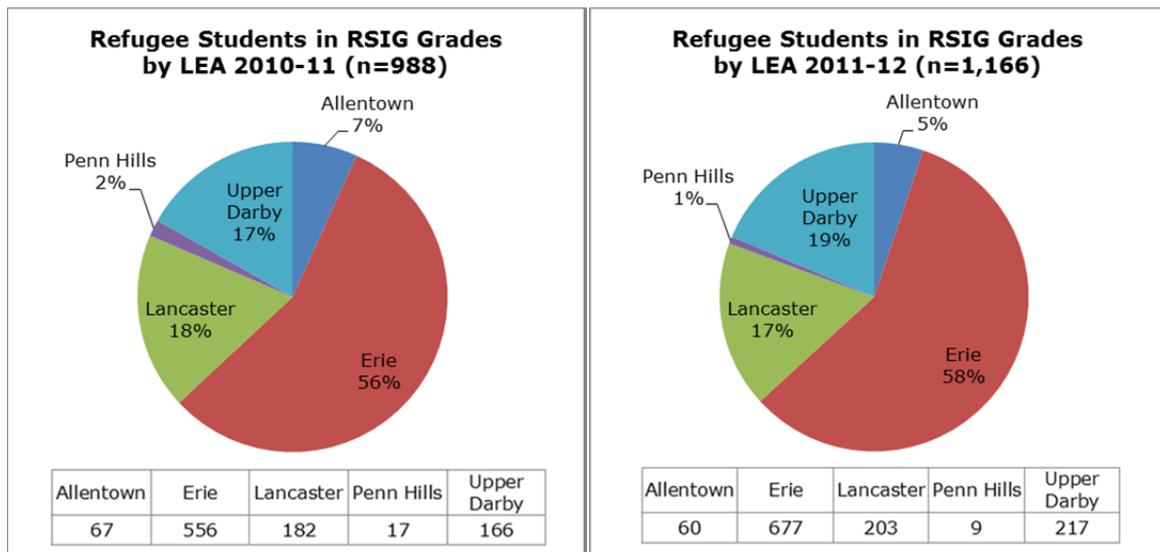
- English as a Second Language enrichment during summers to students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade including project-based learning and field trips;
- A summer program at the Boys and Girls Club, which offered refugee children an opportunity to participate with native English-speaking peers in extracurricular activities such as teambuilding activities, art, and swimming as well as provide additional educational opportunities;
- An international school’s “buddy program” paired a newly arrived English language learner with an established English Language Learner(s);
- A peer tutoring program for English language learners; and
- Everyday English Plus, an intensive mastery-based language arts intervention that targets the needs of non-readers, struggling readers, and English learners.

Student Demographics

In addition to examining implementation and outcomes, it is important to look at the demographics of the population included in analysis in order to contextualize findings and describe those involved. Grantee school districts reported several demographic elements. It is important to remember that this section outlines the demographics of refugee students enrolled in the five grantee districts in the grade levels where RSIG funds were designated to be used and may not be representative of all refugee students in the grantee districts or in Pennsylvania.

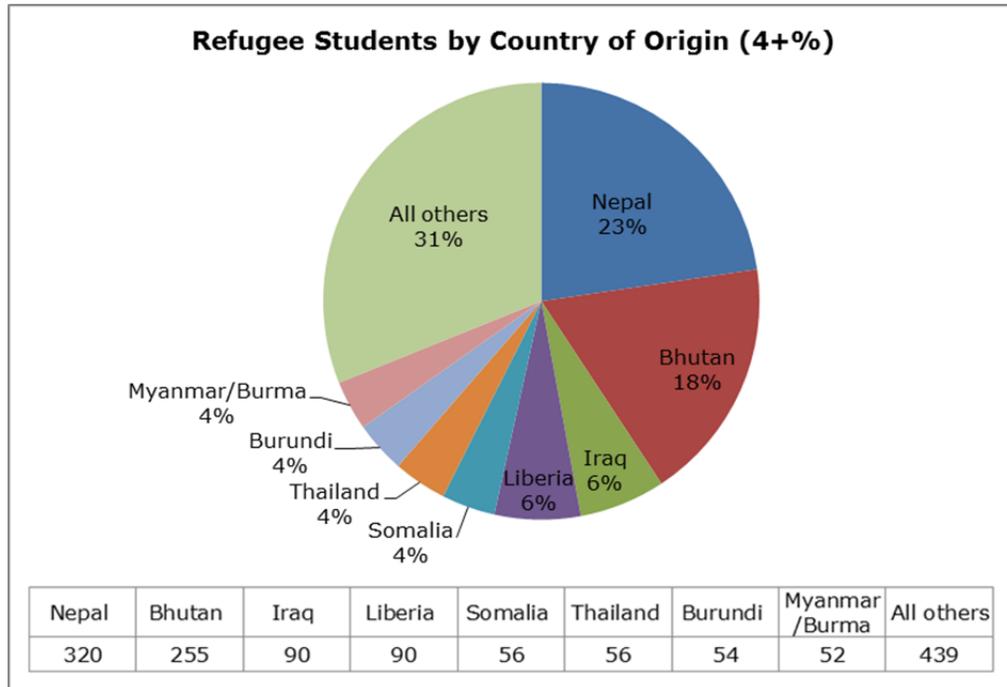
A unique count of 1,412 refugee students were enrolled in either 2010-11 or 2011-12, of which 988 students were enrolled in 2010-11 and 1,166 students were enrolled in 2011-12. There were 731 students who were enrolled both years. The counts of refugee students enrolled in each grantee school district in each program year are provided the graphs that follow.

Of refugee students included in this evaluation, Erie had the greatest number of refugee students and Penn Hills had the smallest number. Erie, Lancaster, and Upper Darby had more refugee students reported for evaluation in 2011-12 than they had the prior year while Allentown and Penn Hills reported fewer students. These distributions provide context for other findings.



Country of Origin

During the 2010-12 grant cycle grantees reported having refugee students from 61 countries of origin (1,412 students are included in analysis). Countries making up 4 percent or more of the population included: Nepal (23 percent); Bhutan (18 percent); Iraq (6 percent); Liberia (6 percent); Somalia (4 percent); Thailand (4 percent); Burundi (4 percent); and Myanmar/Burma (4 percent). The remaining students originated from 53 different countries of origin, which individually made up less than 4 percent of students and combined were 31 percent of students included in analysis.



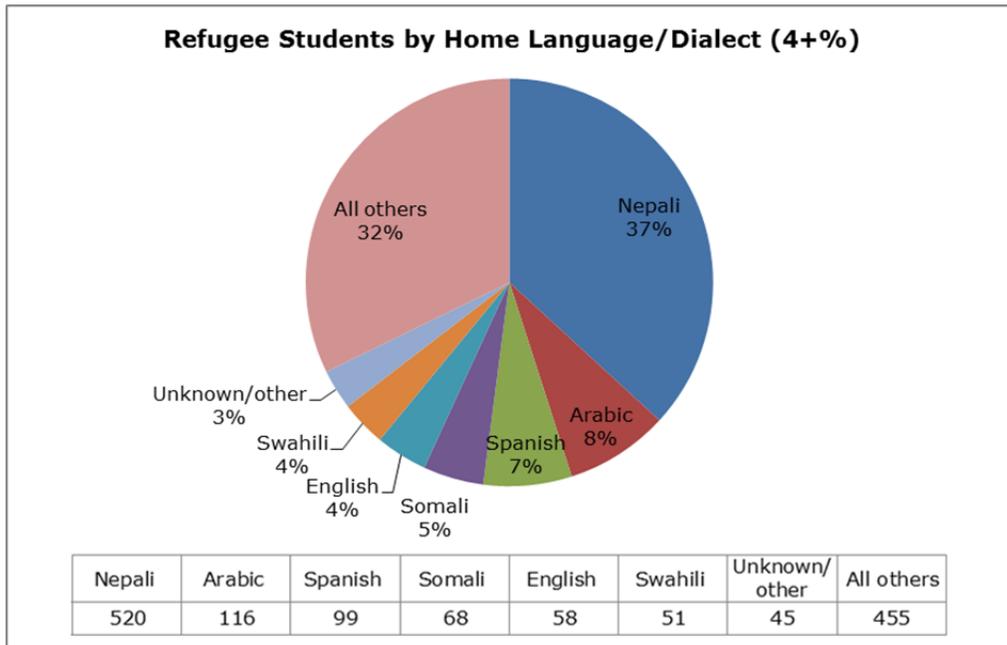
While the previous graph shows the student population in schools and grades that were part of RSIG, there are notable differences within each district that may provide additional context. Allentown had notable percentages of students coming from Myanmar and Thailand. Erie had notable percentages of students from Bhutan, Iraq, Burundi, and Somalia. Many Lancaster students came from Bhutan, Cuba, and Nepal. Penn Hills' students came primarily from Bhutan. Upper Darby had notable percentages of students from Bangladesh, Liberia, and Vietnam.

As a reminder, there are opportunities for an individual or family to qualify for refugee status regardless of their country of origin if they meet certain criteria. Some countries are explicitly listed as eligible as outlined in the annual *Proposed Refugee Admissions* report to Congress for 2010 and prior years (see Student Eligibility section).

Home Language

During the 2010-12 grant cycle grantees reported students speaking at least 76 different native languages or dialects with 57 languages representing less than 1 percent of all students each (1,412 students included in analysis).

The native languages having the largest percentages (4 percent or more of students) were: Nepali (37 percent); Arabic (8 percent); Spanish (7 percent); Somali (5 percent); Swahili (4 percent); and English¹⁰ (4 percent). Home language was unknown or the district coded students ‘other’ for 3 percent of students. The remaining languages combined were 32 percent of all students (455), demonstrating the diversity in native languages.



Readers should note that the languages indicated in these findings are those reported by the grantee district. It is possible that some of these may be dialects of other languages included in analysis. For accuracy, evaluators treated each different value as a separate language for analysis purposes because of the variance in how districts account for dialects and languages. However, most districts now use the language options used in the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), which is PDE’s statewide longitudinal data system.

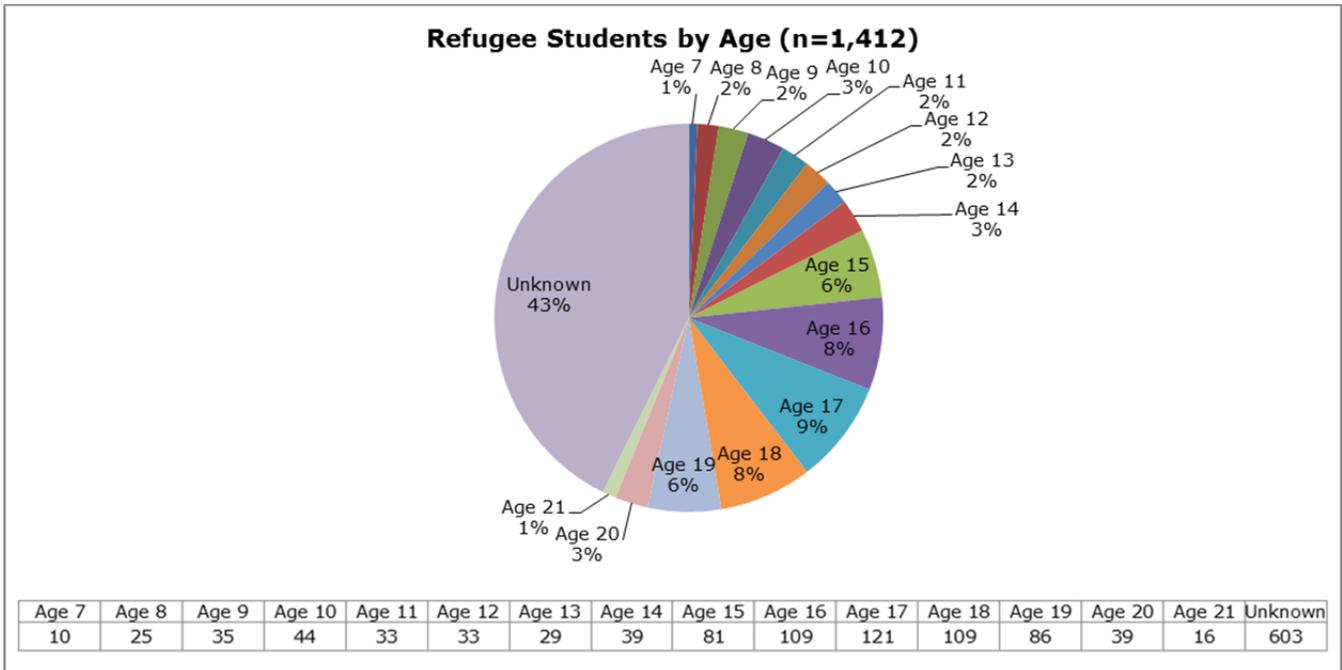
Gender

Of the 1,412 unique students in the targeted grade levels 48 percent were male and 50 percent were female. Grantee school districts did not report gender for 2 percent of students.

¹⁰ Students were identified as English (Barbados) or came from counties outside of the United States.
 Pennsylvania Refugee School Impact Grant
 State Evaluation Report 2010-12
 Originated January 7, 2013

Age

Student age is a federal reporting category for Office of Refugee Resettlement. Evaluators calculated student age as of the end of the 2011-12 academic year (June 30, 2012) using each student’s date of birth. If a student was only included in 2010-11, evaluators calculated age based on the end of that academic year (June 30, 2011). Date of birth was unknown for 43 percent of students, so age could not be calculated. Most notable is that 250 students (18 percent) were 18 years of age or older.



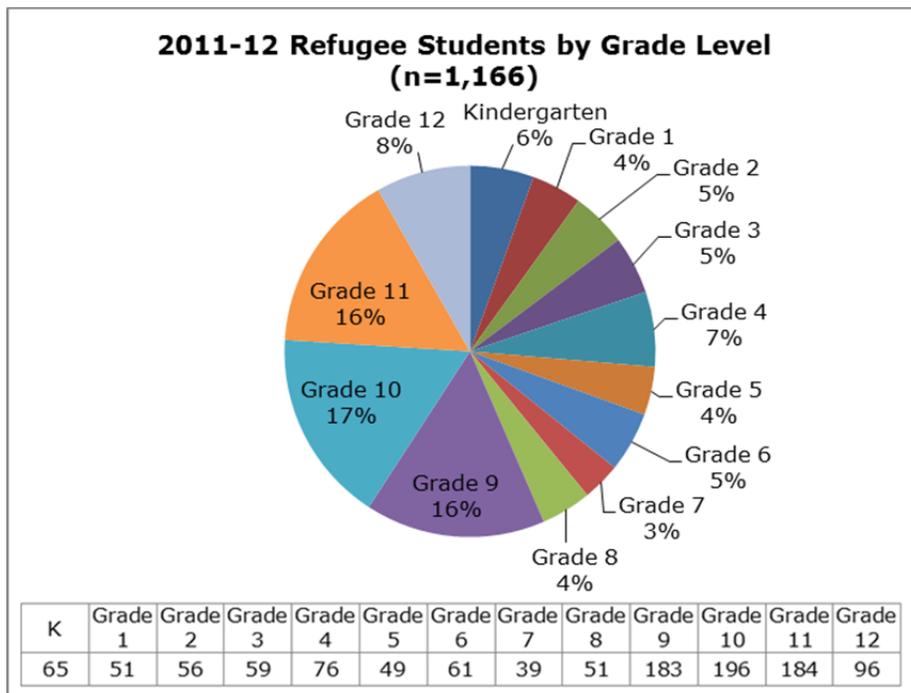
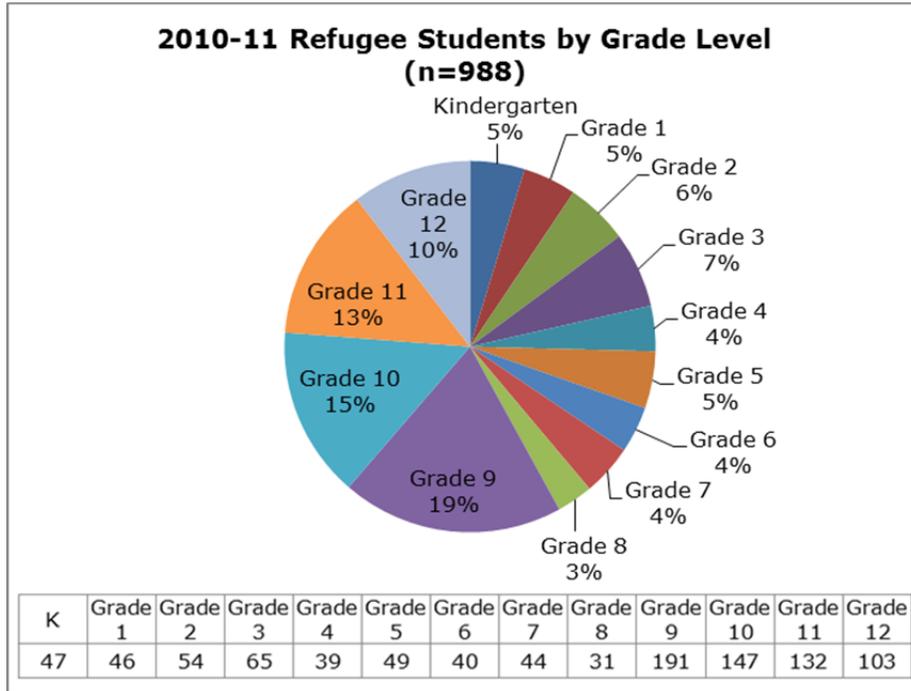
Grade Level

Grade level is reported by program year, unlike gender, country of origin, or home language/dialect. Findings from 2010-11 are for the 988 students identified as refugee in 2010-11 and 2011-12 includes the 1,166 students identified in 2011-12.

As stated previously, three of the districts (Allentown, Erie, and Penn Hills) designated RSIG funds be used for refugee-related services in kindergarten through 12th grade, while two districts (Upper Darby and Lancaster) designated RSIG funds be used for refugee services in ninth through 12th grade only. This results in high school grades having greater percentages of students included in this evaluation than other grade levels.

Readers should be aware that several students were designated as being in the same grade both years of the grant. This occurred in kindergarten and grades nine through 12. There are a number of reasons that members of this population may be in the same grade for two years, such as arrival in the United States and/or enrollment in school late in the school year, lack of formal

schooling, placement based on age and not skill level, and insufficient credits to be promoted to the next grade.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

For the 2010-12 grant cycle PDE identified social adjustment and academic outcomes for refugee students as areas of focus. Academic outcomes included academic performance, English language acquisition, and school completion. Social adjustment outcomes included school adjustment, quality and timely submission of homework assignments, school attendance, school participation, and self-initiative and leadership among refugee students.

Results provided in this section are for all refugee students who had adequate data for analysis and were enrolled in grades where RSIG funds were used in grantee school districts. For each data element, the numbers of students included in analysis are provided, as these counts differ for each data element because of differences in assessment administration (some assessments are not administered in all grades or not meant for all students), student enrollment (students may not be present or enrolled the full year), and grantees not reporting data. Percentages provided are calculated based on the number of students included in analysis.

English Fluency

The ACCESS for ELLs assessment is a large-scale language proficiency test for students in kindergarten through 12th grade and is one component of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium's comprehensive, standards-driven system designed to improve the teaching and learning of English language learners. Pennsylvania is a part of the WIDA Consortium.

The goal of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment is to monitor non-fluent students' progress in English language proficiency on a yearly basis and to serve as a criterion to aid in determining when students have attained full language proficiency. The test was designed to represent the social and academic language demands within a school setting as outlined in WIDA's *English Language Proficiency Standards, Kindergarten through Grade 12* (2004). Pennsylvania administers the assessment between mid-January and mid-February. Students identified as fluent do not take the assessment.

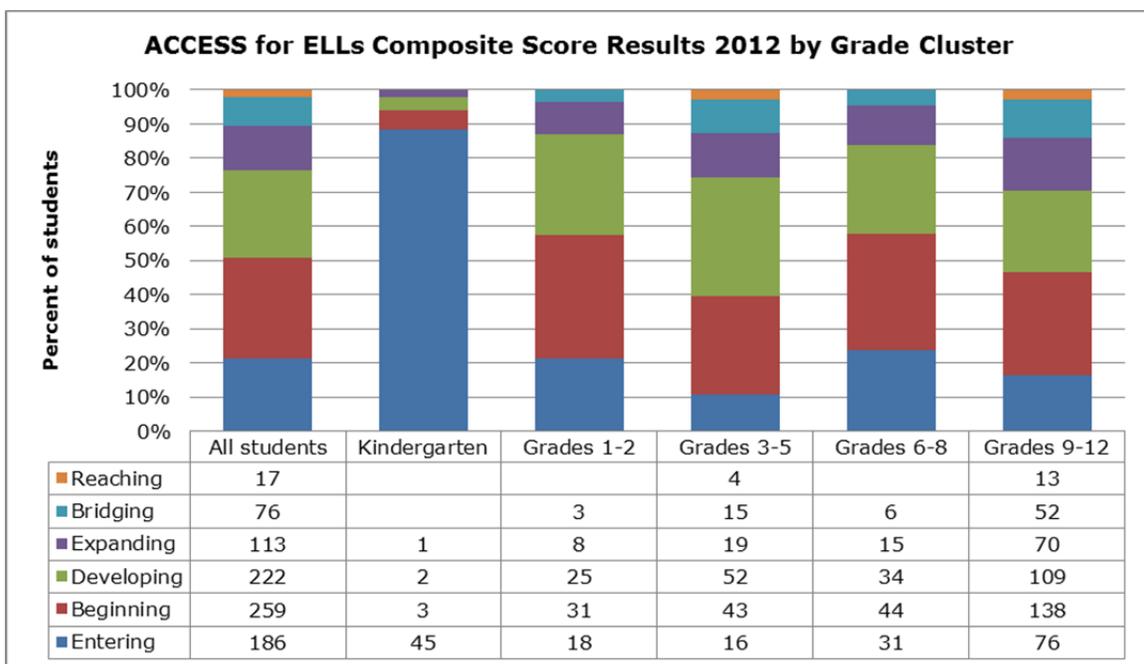
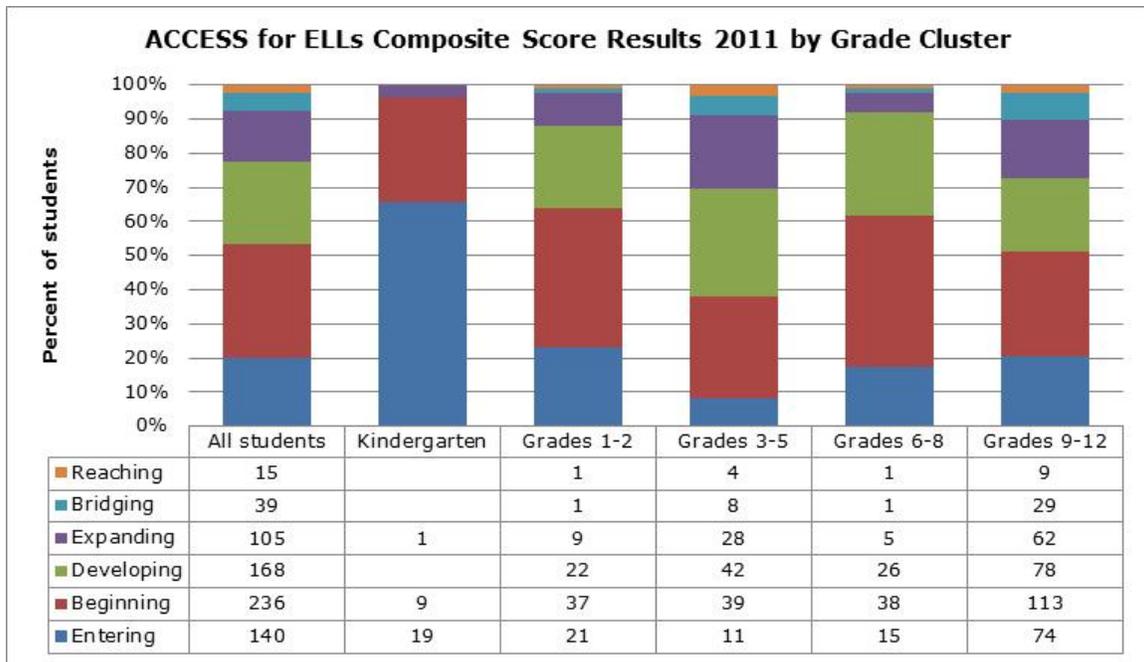
ACCESS for ELLs assessment data was available for 703 students (72 percent of all students in RSIG grades) in 2011 and 873 students (75 percent of all students in RSIG grades) in 2012. Evaluators collected these data at the state level, so all students who took the assessment in RSIG districts and grades are included in these results.¹¹

The six proficiency levels that ACCESS for ELLs¹² uses, from least proficient to most proficient, are Entering, Beginning, Developing, Expanding, Bridging, and Reaching. Results are determined using the composite score, which is used to determine instruction and to exit a student from English as a Second Language services. In 2011, 78 percent of nonfluent refugee students scored in the lowest three (of six) English proficiency categories provided within the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. In 2012, 76 percent of students scored in these categories. The Beginning category had the greatest portion of students in both years.

¹¹ Allegheny Intermediate Unit completed the necessary confidentiality protocols to collect data at the state level.

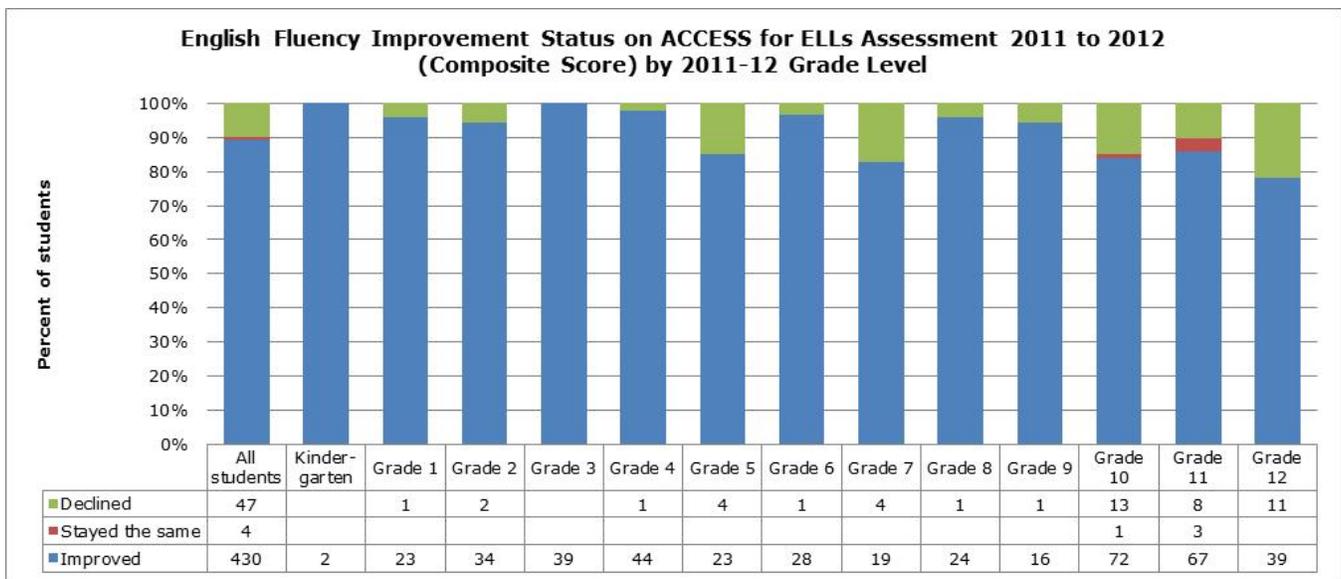
¹² The *ACCESS for ELLs Interpretative Guide* can be found at <http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/index.aspx>
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Originated January 7, 2013

As might be expected given their age and possible length of time in the United States, the majority of kindergarten students scored at the Entering level (66 percent of students assessed in 2011 and 88 percent in 2012). For the other grades, students were most likely to score at the Beginning or Developing levels. These results show where students scored at mid-year, providing a snapshot of their language skills at that time. Additional information, such as length of time in the United States, number of years enrolled in the district, or number of years of formal schooling may provide some insight into these results, as these factors likely influence English language acquisition and fluency.



Evaluators were also able to calculate improvement for those students with two years of ACCESS for ELLs assessment data. Change was calculated using scale scores as these scores can be examined across grade band and tier categories. Within each grade level cluster (except kindergarten), ACCESS for ELLs includes three forms: Tier A (beginning), Tier B (intermediate), and Tier C (advanced). This keeps the test shorter and more appropriately targets each student’s range of language skills. Teachers determine which tier a student takes. Evaluator analysis of tier and score data indicated that in general, teachers are appropriately matching student skill levels to tiers, which increases the validity of these results.

Overall, nearly 90 percent of students improved their English language skills from 2011 to 2012, based on ACCESS for ELLs results. In kindergarten¹³ and third grade, all students improved. One percent of students scored in the same category and 10 percent of students declined. Since only nonfluent students take the assessment, there is not a ‘did not need to improve’ category.



Reading, Math and Science PSSA

The reading and math PSSAs are administered in March or April each year to all students in grades 3-8 and 11 who attend public school districts or charter schools in Pennsylvania.¹⁴ The Science PSSA is administered in grades 4, 8, and 11. Evaluators collected and analyzed 2011 and 2012 PSSA data for refugee students at the state level, so all students taking the assessment(s) in these districts in the target grade levels are included in results.

¹³ In cases where kindergarten students had both 2012 and 2011 data, these students were either retained in kindergarten or their first grade teacher determined that they should take the kindergarten assessment.

¹⁴ PSSA also includes a writing assessment, but this assessment is not currently included in the PSSA analysis for this program.

Note: Adequate Yearly Progress¹⁵ targets for 2011 were 72 percent of students proficient or advanced in reading and 67 percent of students proficient or advanced in math. Adequate Yearly Progress targets for 2012 increased to 81 percent proficient or advanced in reading and 78 percent proficient or advanced in math.

Based on PDE's *Accommodations Guidelines* for PSSA, nonfluent students who have been enrolled in school in the United States for less than 12 months have the option to participate in the Reading PSSA. However, all nonfluent students must participate in the math and science PSSA, regardless of the length of time they have been in the United States. Nonfluent students in their first 12 months of United States school enrollment are included in Adequate Yearly Progress calculations for participation, but not for performance. The possible reading PSSA exemption may contribute to a lower percentage of students being included in analysis. Since the date of initial enrollment in school was not collected for this evaluation, it is not possible to determine the extent to which students may have chosen to not participate in the reading PSSA.

Evaluators examined PSSA scaled scores¹⁶ to determine a student's performance level (below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced) and then further to determine if a student scored in the upper half or lower half of a performance level for the bottom two levels (basic and below basic). The proficient and advanced levels are not split. These levels are determined based upon the scaled score numerical mid-points of the below basic and basic performance levels. This analysis method is used for other state-level projects as well. Evaluators looked at PSSA results overall and by grade.

Evaluators also examined improvement status from 2011 to 2012 for those students with two consecutive years of PSSA data. Movement from one half performance level to a higher level is a commonly-used indicator of academic improvement in Pennsylvania.

PSSA results from 2011 include all refugee students identified in the 2010-11 program year who took the assessment(s) in the grantee school districts in the grades where RSIG funds were used. Likewise, PSSA results from 2012 include all refugee students identified in the 2011-12 program year who took the assessment(s) in the grantee school districts in RSIG grades. PSSA improvement findings include those students who had PSSA data for both 2011 and 2012.

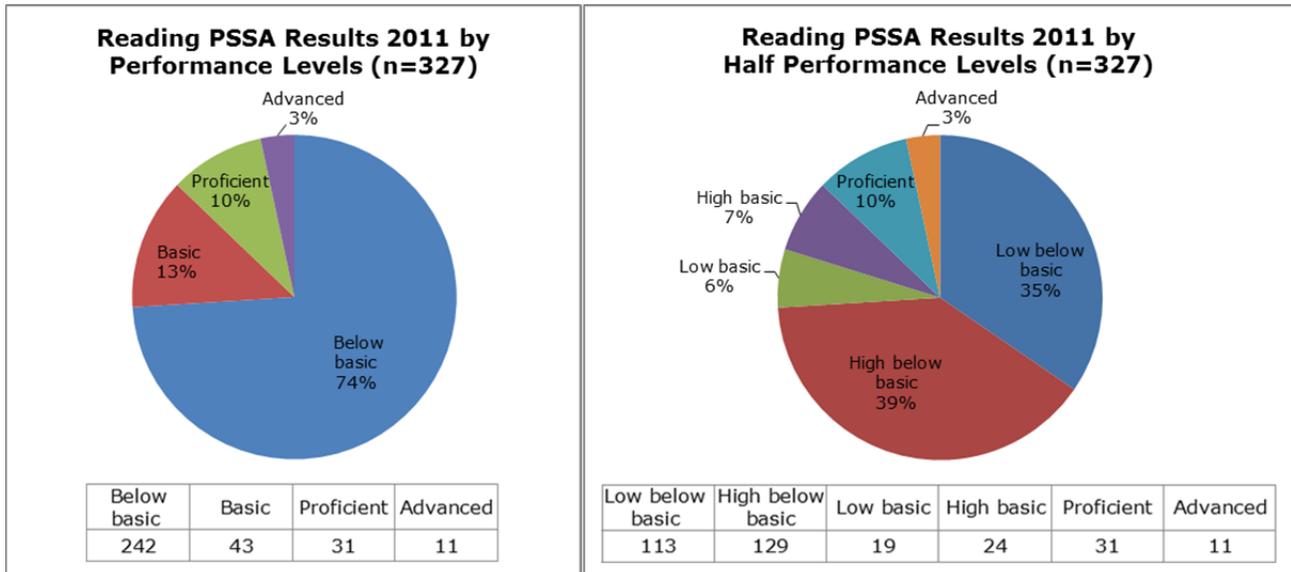
For 2011, 82 percent (327 of 400) of refugee students enrolled in grades eligible to take the PSSA (grades 3-8 and 11) had Reading PSSA data. Of those students having data, 74 percent of the students scored in the below basic category. Furthermore, 13 percent scored in the basic category, 10 percent scored proficient, and 3 percent scored advanced. Given these results, refugee students included in analysis did not reach the 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress target of 72 percent of students being proficient or advanced, as 13 percent of refugee students enrolled in RSIG grades at grantee districts and having data scored at these levels.

¹⁵ Adequate Yearly Progress targets are academic and school performance measures established for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

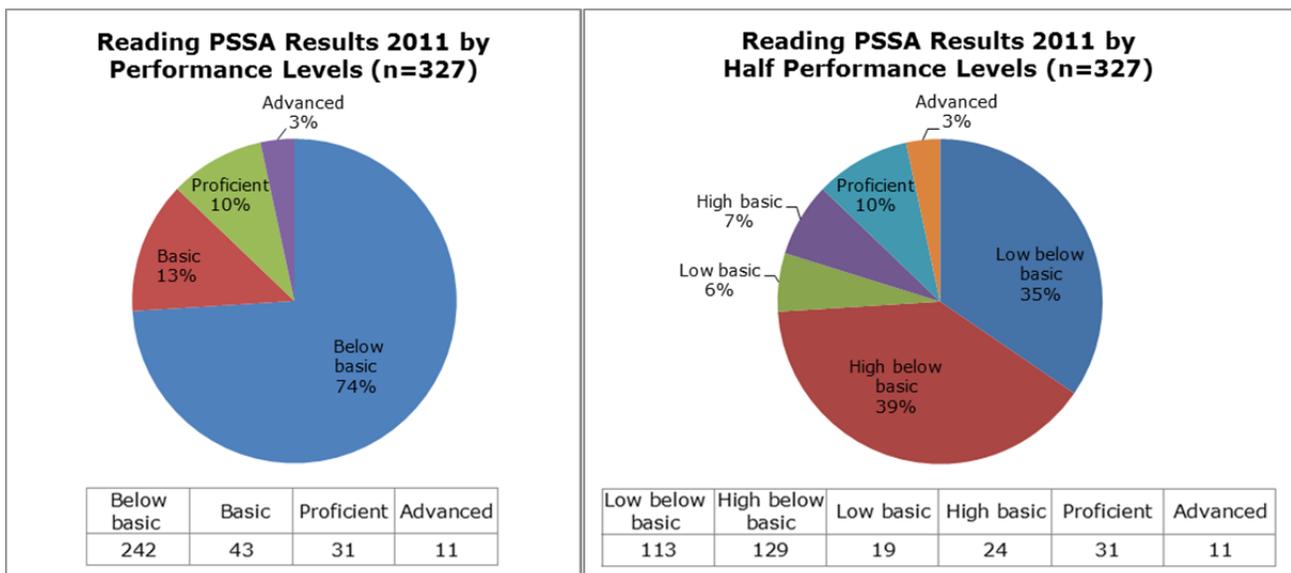
¹⁶ The PSSA scoring rubric is available on PDE's website:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_assessment_system/20965/p/1329706

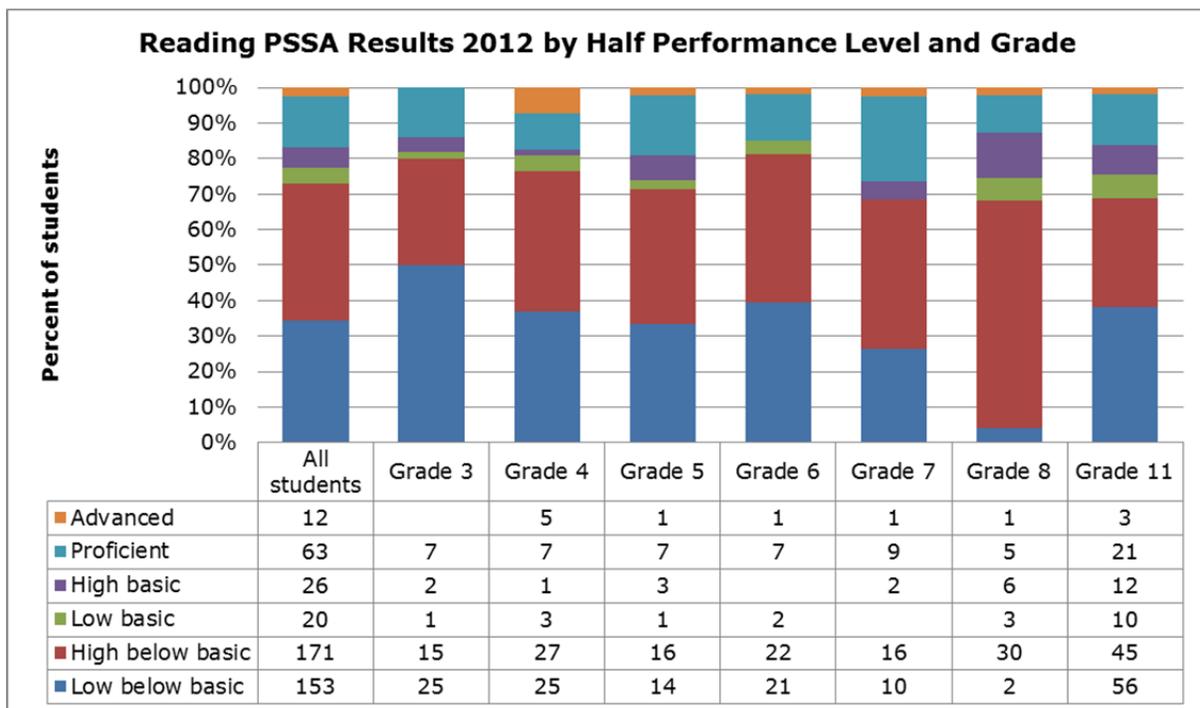
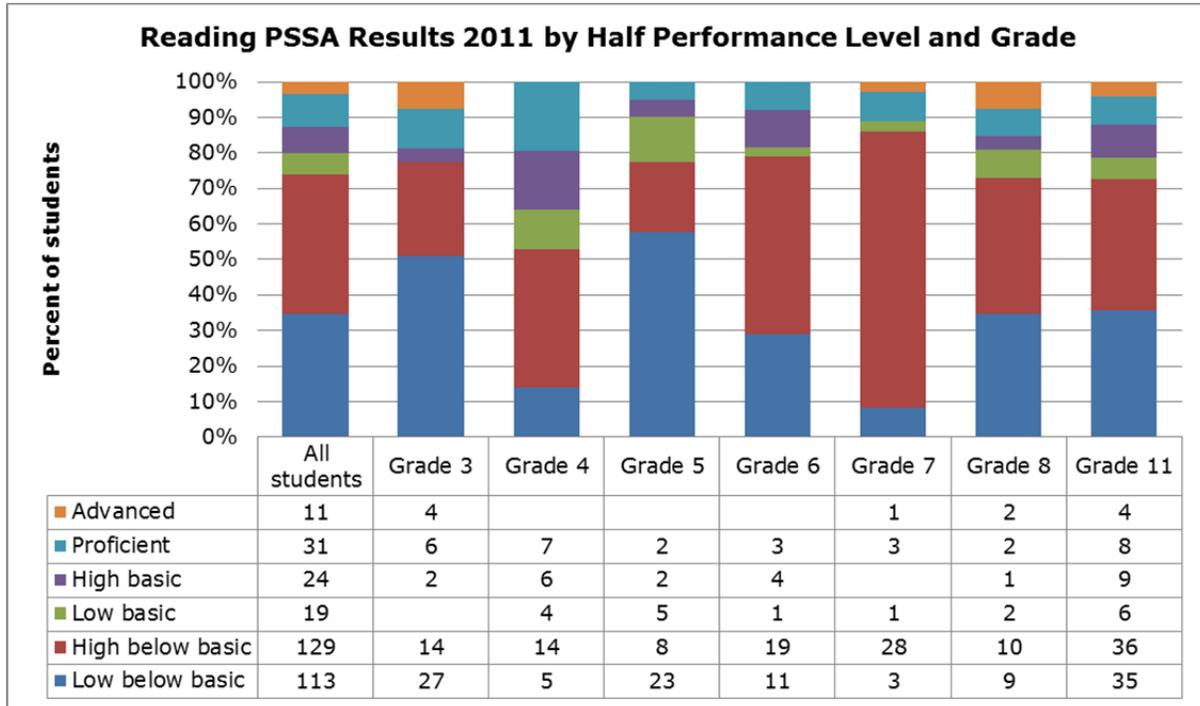
Of students scoring in the below basic category, students were split fairly evenly between the low below basic and high below basic categories. The basic category was also split with nearly equal percentages in the high and low portions.



For 2012, 86 percent (445 of 519) of refugee students enrolled in grades eligible to take the PSSA (grades 3-8 and 11) in the grantee school districts had Reading PSSA data. Results are similar to 2011 with the exception of a shift between the basic and proficient categories. In 2011, 13 percent of students scored in the basic performance level and 10 percent of the students scored proficient. In 2012, 10 percent of students scored basic and 14 percent of students scored proficient. Even with a greater portion of students scoring proficient in 2012, students did not reach the 2012 Adequate Yearly Progress target of 81 percent of students scoring in the proficient or advanced levels.

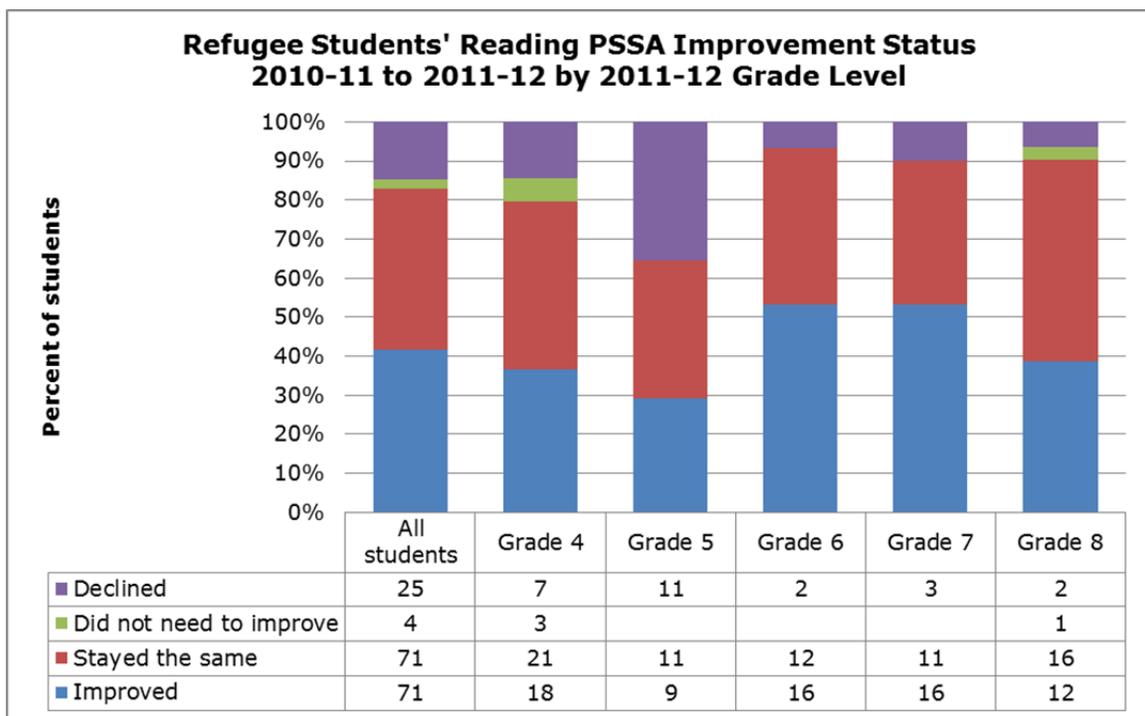


Evaluators further disaggregated PSSA results for reading by grade level. Based on 2011 Reading PSSA analysis, fourth grade had the highest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced. In 2012, seventh grade had the highest percentage of students who scored in the proficient or advanced levels.



Evaluators also examined student improvement from 2011 to 2012 for the 171 refugee students with two years of Reading PSSA data. Improvement status can be determined for those students in grades 4-8 in 2012, students who would have been in grades 3-7 or retained in grades 4-8 in 2011. ‘Did not need to improve’ indicates that a student scored at the advanced level in 2011 and maintained that level for 2012.

The graph below shows the improvement status of the 171 students with two years of Reading PSSA data. A positive movement of one half or whole performance level (based on the grade level rubric for the applicable assessment) is considered improvement. The converse is considered a decline. Students who scored in the same half performance level (low or high below basic or basic) or whole performance level (proficient) both years are indicated as ‘stayed the same.’ Students who scored in the advanced level in both years according to the applicable grade level rubric are considered ‘did not need to improve.’ Grade levels indicate the grade of the student in 2012. Overall, 41 percent of students improved, 42 percent scored in the same performance level or half performance level, 2 percent scored at the advanced level on both years’ assessment, and 15 percent declined. Grades six and seven had the highest percentages of students improving. Fifth grade students had the greatest portion declining.



Information was also available to allow evaluators to compare refugee students’ results to statewide PSSA results.¹⁷ Since refugee students are not a reportable subgroup for PSSA, it is not possible to examine grantee refugee students with refugee students across Pennsylvania. Given that refugee students are more similar to the English language learner subgroup of students than to all students, evaluators compared the results for refugee students’ from RSIG

¹⁷ <http://www.pde.state.pa.us>

districts and grades to state English language learner subgroup results. However, based on native language and ACCESS for ELLs assessment data, in most cases refugee students are included in the English language learner PSSA subgroup as well. Evaluators liken this to comparing one grade level of a school district to the overall school district; the study group is also part of the comparison group.

In 2011, state Reading PSSA results for the English language learner subgroup showed that 24 percent of English language learners scored in the proficient or advanced categories. PSSA results for RSIG students showed that 13 percent of RSIG students scored in the proficient or advanced categories.

In 2012, state Reading PSSA results for the English language learner subgroup showed that 18 percent of English language learners scored in the proficient or advanced categories. PSSA results for RSIG students for reading showed that 17 percent of RSIG students scored in the proficient or advanced categories.

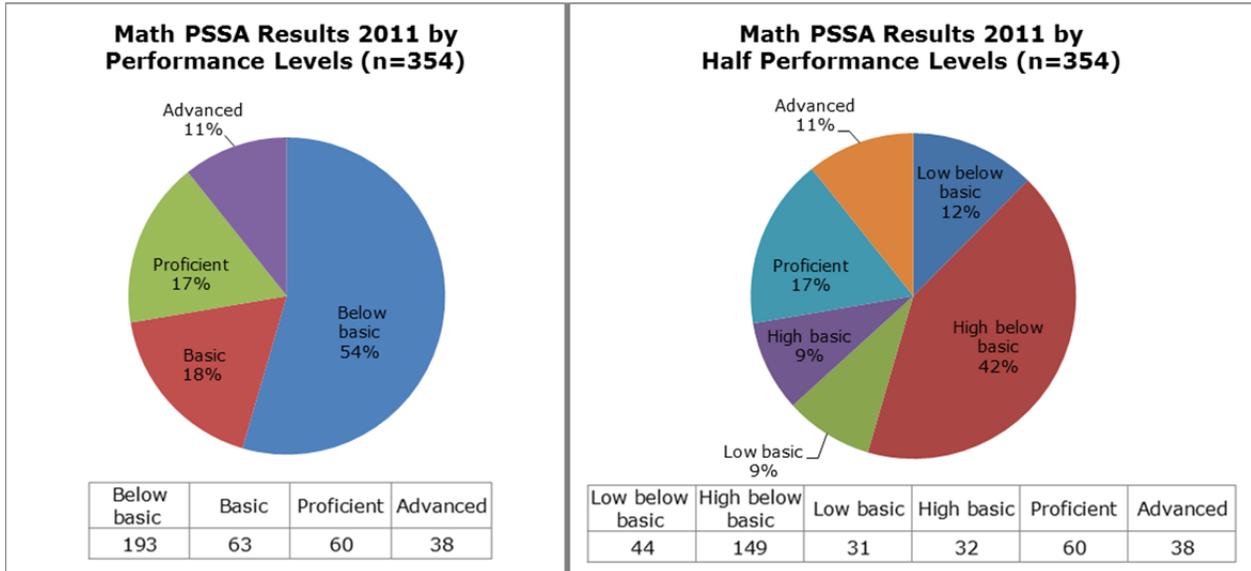
While state English language learners and RSIG students performed below the Adequate Yearly Progress targets for 2011 (72 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced) and 2012 (81 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced), the percentage of RSIG students who scored at proficient or advanced levels is higher in 2012 than 2011, which is the opposite of the state ELL subgroup, where the percentage of English language learners who scored proficient or advanced was higher in 2011. Additionally, the percentage of RSIG students who scored proficient or advanced was closer to the English language learner subgroup results in 2012 than in 2011.

While a comparison is being made here to state English language learner results for context and reference, the reader should be aware that English language learners who have been enrolled in a United States school for less than 12 months are not included in performance Adequate Yearly Progress calculations. However, data is not available related to the extent that this may influence these results.

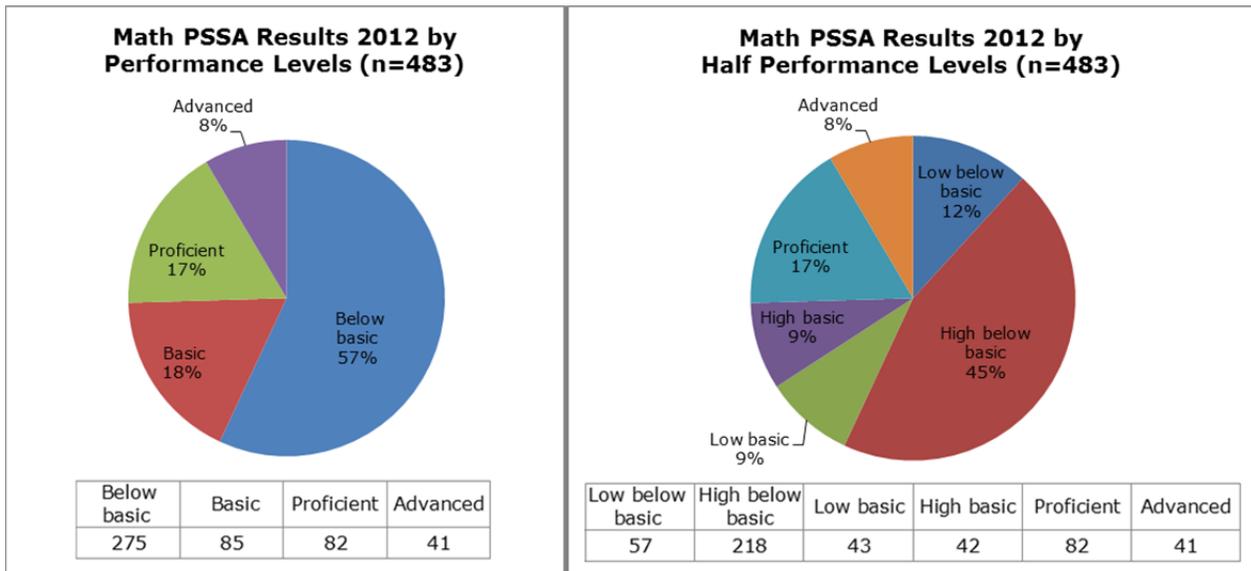
For 2011 Math PSSA results, 89 percent (354 of 400 students) of refugee students enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the PSSA (grades 3-8 and 11) in RSIG districts had data. For those students having data, slightly more than half of the students (54 percent) scored in the below basic performance category when they took the assessment in spring 2011. Furthermore, 18 percent scored in the basic category, 17 percent scored proficient, and 11 percent scored at the advanced level. Given these results, refugee students included in RSIG districts in grade levels eligible to take the PSSA did not reach the 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress target of 67 percent of students being proficient or advanced, as only 28 percent of refugee students included in analysis from the grantee districts scored at these levels.

Evaluators further break down the below-proficient performance levels in half (by scaled score numerical mid-point as explained previously). The basic sub-categories of high basic and low basic were each 9 percent of students. The below basic category was different. In these sub-categories students were more likely to score in the high below basic category (42 percent of

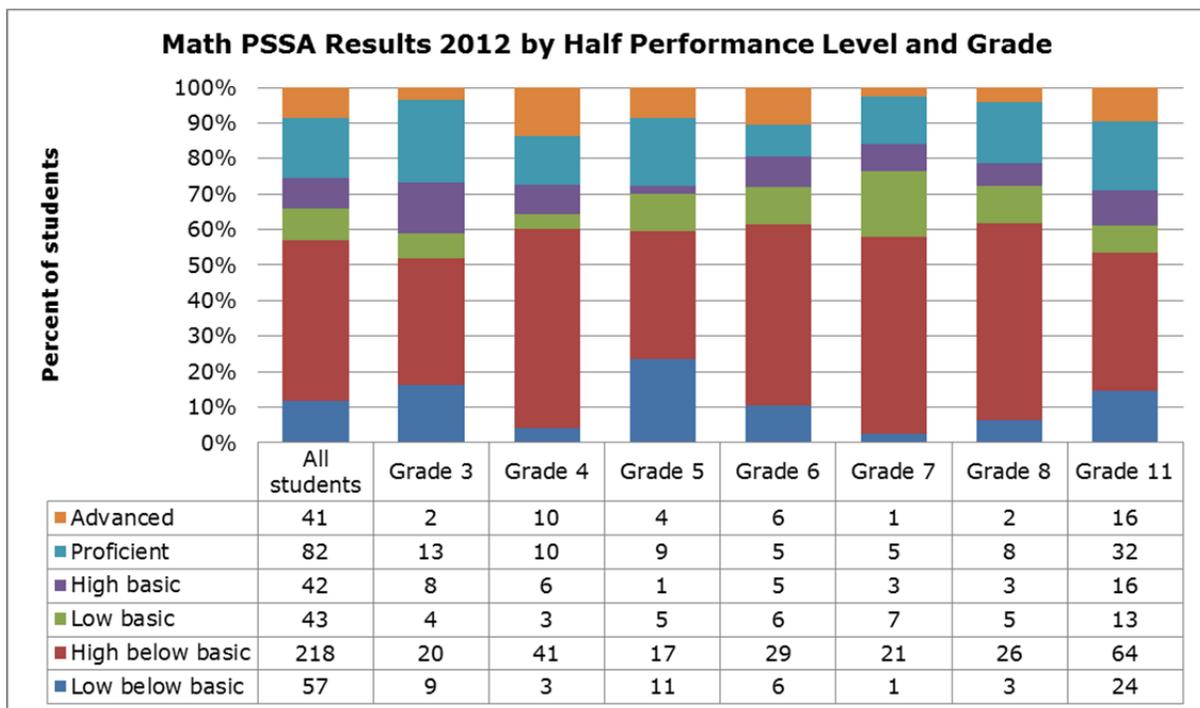
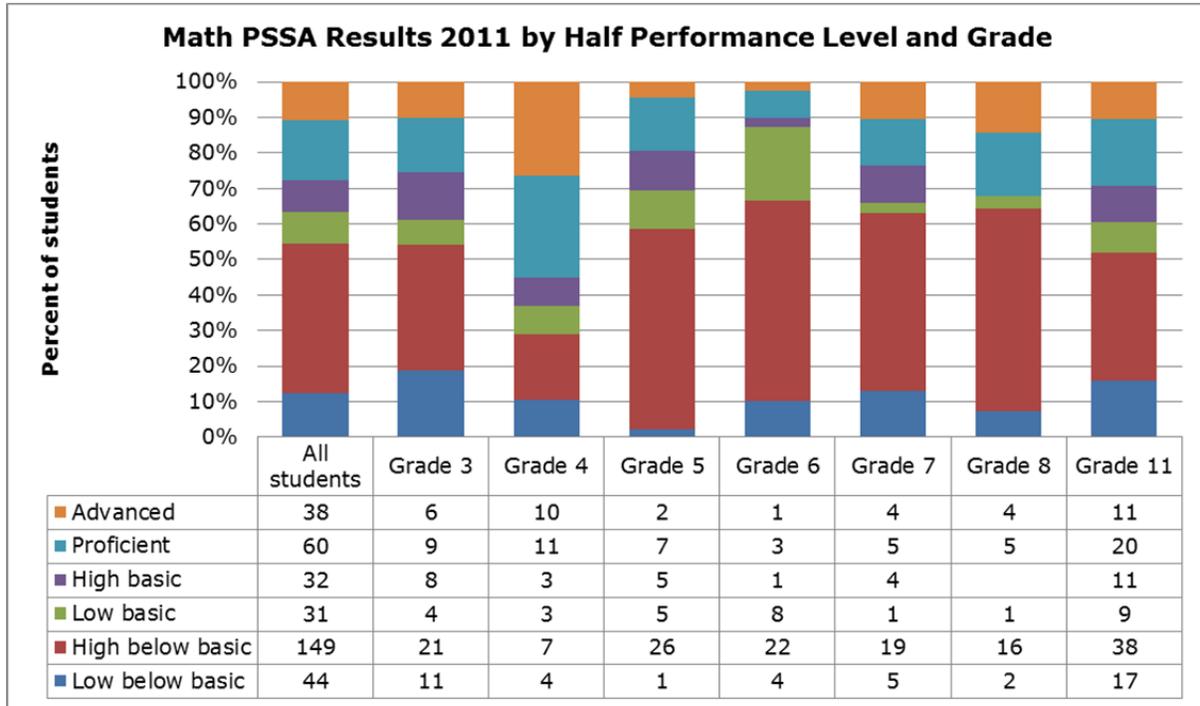
students of all students included in analysis) compared to the low below basic sub-category (12 percent of all students included in analysis).



For 2012 Math PSSA results, 93 percent (483 of 519 students) of refugee students enrolled in grades eligible to take the PSSA (grades 3-8 and 11) in grantee districts had data. Results for 2012 are similar to 2011. Refugee students included in analysis did not reach the 2012 Adequate Yearly Progress target of 78 percent of students being proficient or advanced, as only 25 percent of refugee students included in analysis scored at these levels.

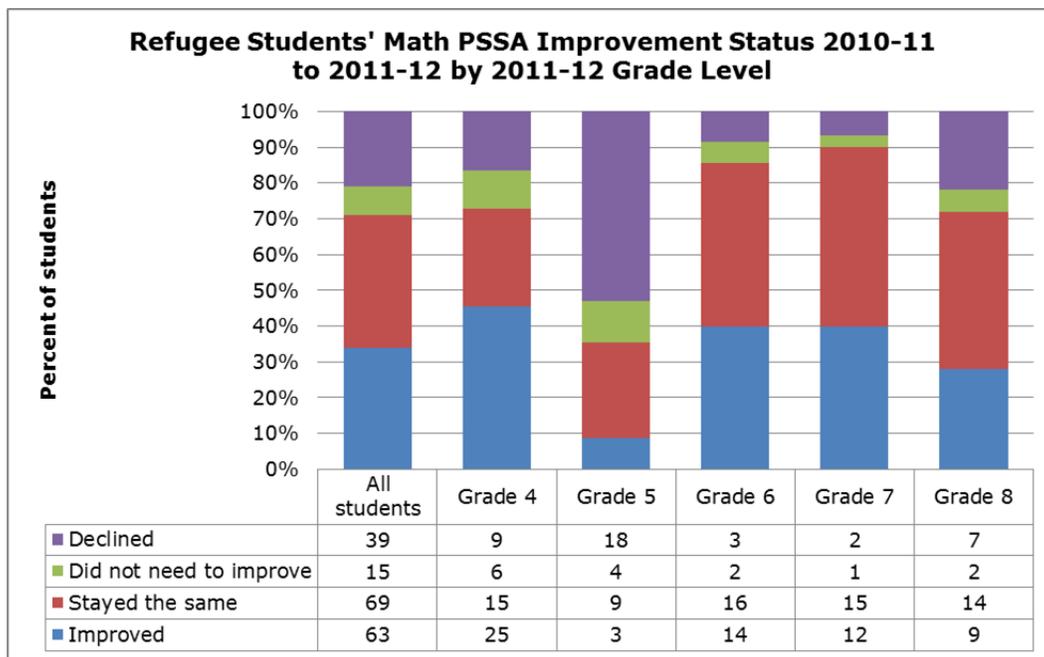


Evaluators further disaggregated PSSA results for math by grade level. Based on 2011 PSSA analysis, third grade had the highest percentage of students performing at the proficient or advanced levels. In 2012, 11th grade had the highest percentage of students performing at the proficient or advanced levels.



Evaluators also examined improvement status from 2011 to 2012 for the 186 students with two years of Math PSSA data. Positive movement from one half performance level to a higher level was considered improvement and the converse indicated a decline. Improvement status can be determined for those students in grades four through eight in 2012, students who would have been in grades 3-7 or retained in grades 4-8 in the prior year. ‘Did not need to improve’ indicates that a student scored at the advanced level in 2011 and maintained that level in 2012.

The figure below shows the improvement status of students having two consecutive years of Math PSSA data. Grade levels indicate the grade of the student in 2012. Overall, 34 percent of students having two years of data improved according to Math PSSA results, 37 percent scored in the same performance level or half performance level. Sixth and seventh grades had the highest percentages of students improving (40 percent). Fifth grade students showed the greatest percentage declining.



Like reading, evaluators compared RSIG refugee students’ math results on the PSSA to English language learner subgroup results.

On the 2011 Math PSSA, state results for the English language learner subgroup showed that 42 percent of English language learners scored in the proficient or advanced levels. RSIG results for this same year showed that 28 percent of RSIG students scored in the proficient or advanced levels.

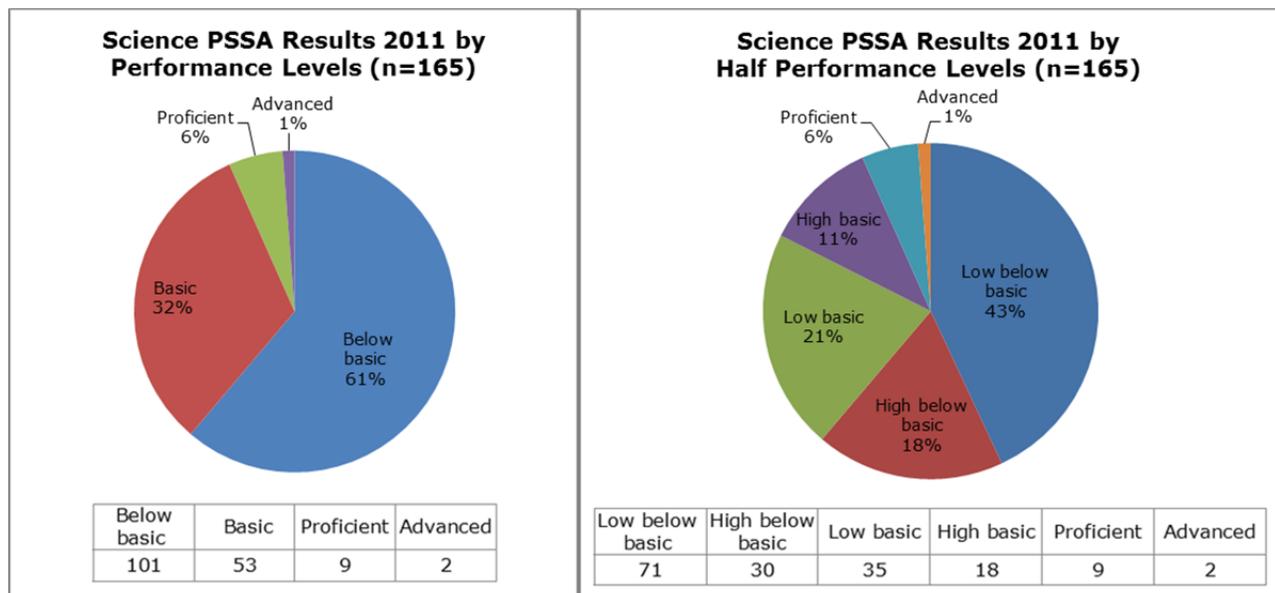
On the 2012 Math PSSA, state results for the English language learner subgroup showed that 35 percent of English language learners scored in the proficient or advanced levels. RSIG results for 2012 showed that 25 percent of RSIG students scored in the proficient or advanced levels.

While English language learners and RSIG students are below the Adequate Yearly Progress targets for 2011 (67 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced) and 2012 (78 percent of students proficient or advanced), RSIG students scored better in 2012 than 2011 while the opposite was true for the English language learner subgroup. Additionally, RSIG students scored closer to the English language learner state subgroup in 2012 than in 2011.

As stated in the reading PSSA section, while a comparison is being made here to state English language learner results for context and reference, the reader should be aware that English language learners who have been enrolled in a United States school for less than 12 months are not included in performance Adequate Yearly Progress calculations. However, data was not available related to the extent that this may influence these results.

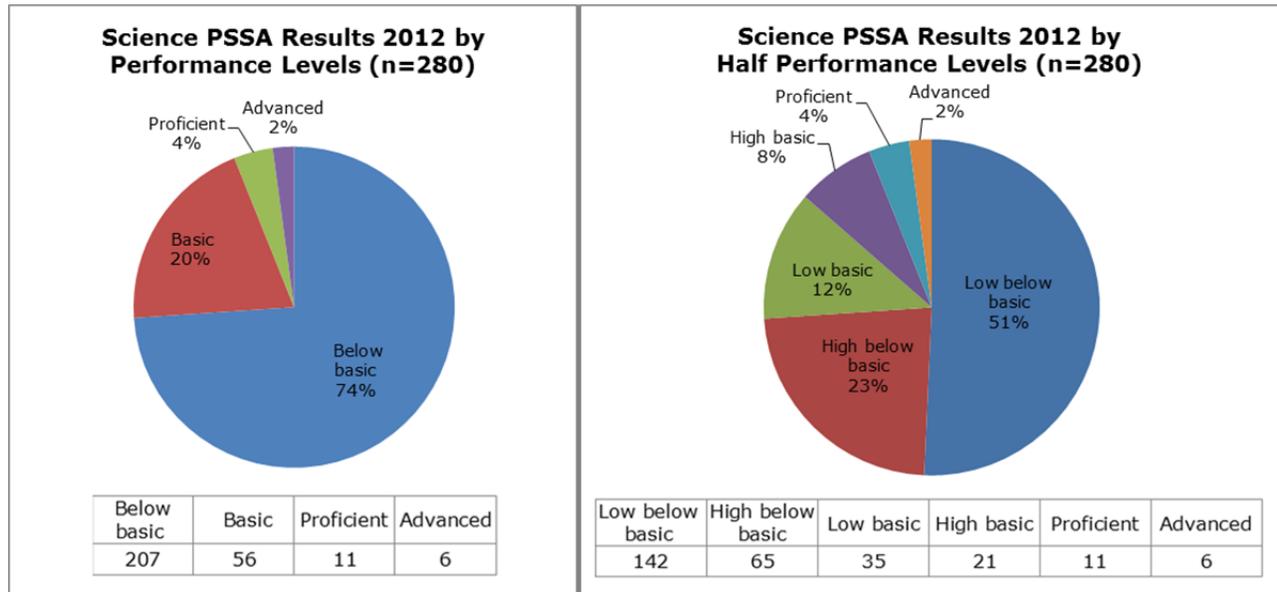
On the 2011 Science PSSA, 82 percent of refugee students (165 of 202) enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the Science PSSA (grades 4, 8, and 11) from RSIG school districts had data. Of these students, 7 percent scored at proficient or advanced levels when they took the assessment in spring 2011, 32 percent scored in the basic category, and 61 percent of students scored in the below basic category.

The second figure below breaks the below-proficient levels in half by scaled score numerical mid-points to create low and high basic and low and high below basic levels. In the basic and below basic levels, the percentages of students scoring in the ‘low’ portions of the performance levels were greater than the percentages scoring in the ‘high’ portions.

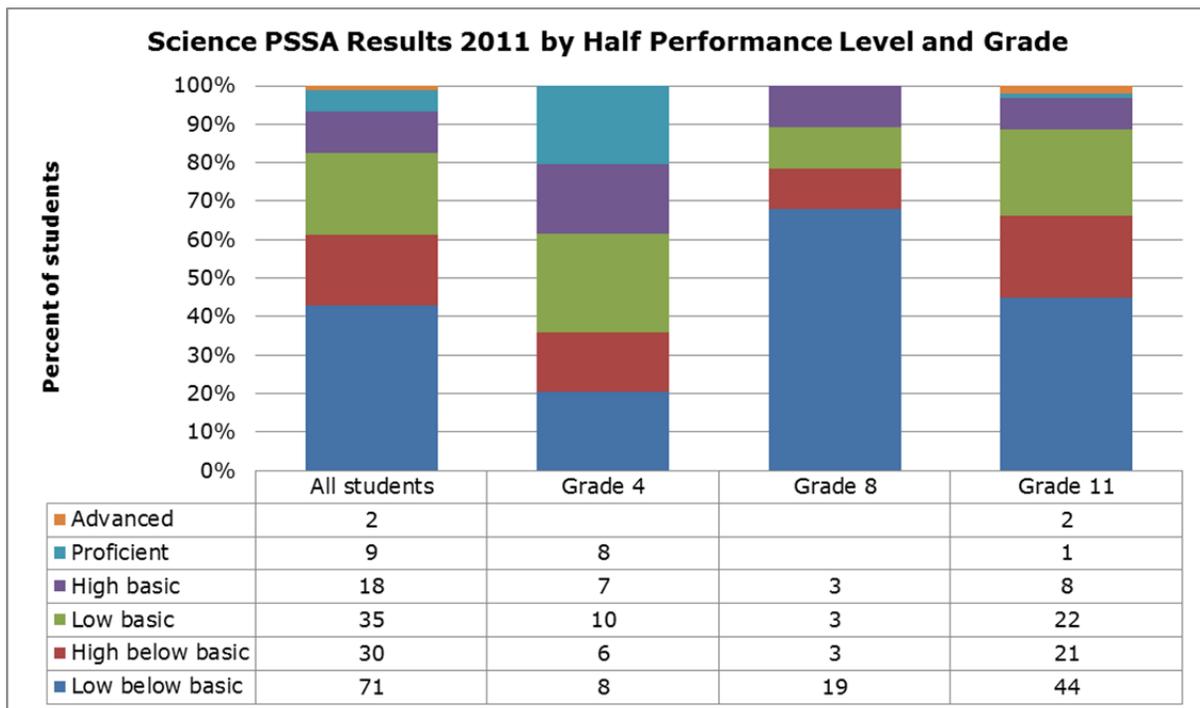


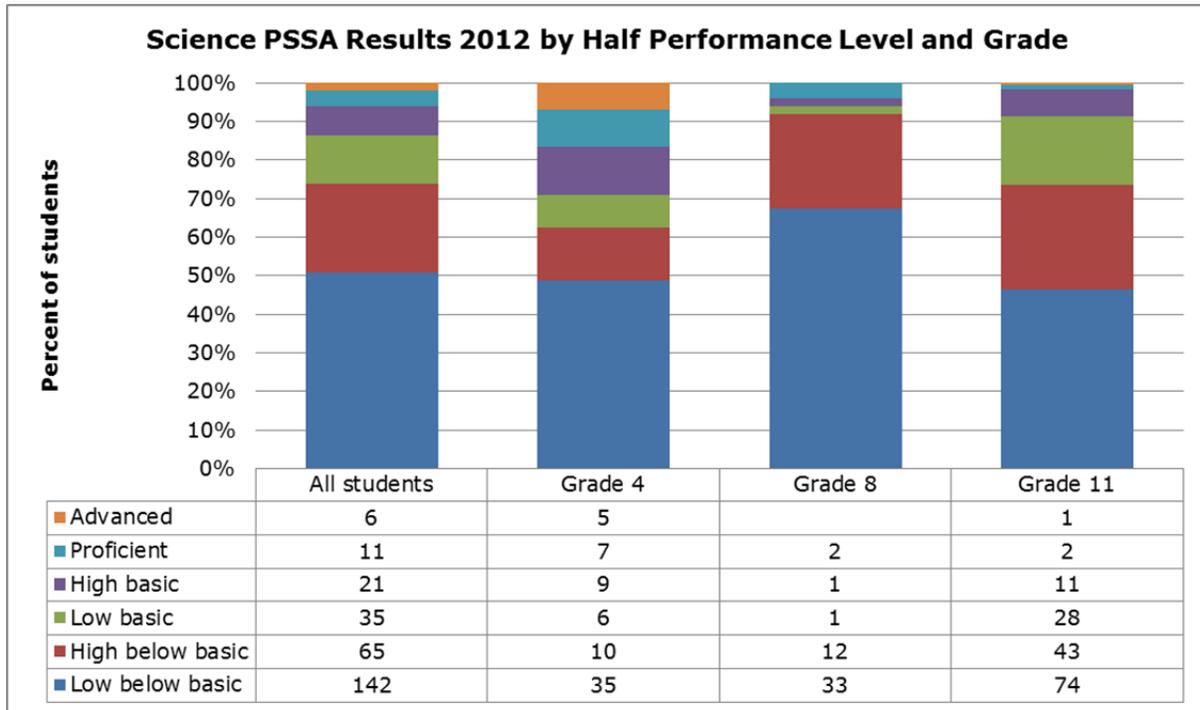
For 2012, 90 percent of refugee students (280 of 311) enrolled in grades eligible to take the Science PSSA (grades 4, 8, and 11) from RSIG school districts had data. Most notable in 2012 is the increase in the percentage of students scoring in the below basic level (from 61 percent to 74 percent). Like the 2011 results, the ‘low’ half performance level percentages were greater

than the 'high' portions of the below-proficient performance levels. It is also notable that 51 percent of students included in analysis scored in the low below basic level.



Evaluators further disaggregated Science PSSA results by grade level. In both years, fourth grade students had higher percentages scoring at proficient or advanced levels than eighth or 11th grades. However, the percentage of fourth grade students who scored at these levels in 2012 (17 percent of students) was less than the percentage in 2011 (21 percent).





Evaluators were not able to examine academic improvement on the Science PSSA because the assessment is not administered in consecutive grade levels, which is required for this analysis.

Like reading and math, evaluators compared refugee students' Science PSSA results to English language learner subgroup results. Based on evaluation findings for home language and ACCESS for ELLs, many refugee students are also English language learners, meaning that they would be part of the state English language learner subgroup used here for comparison.

State Science PSSA results for 2011 show that 22 percent of the English language learner subgroup scored in the proficient or advanced performance levels. This same year, 7 percent of refugee students in RSIG districts and grades scored in the proficient or advanced levels.

In 2012, state results for the English language learner subgroup indicated that 18 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced levels in science, compared to 6 percent of refugee students in RSIG districts and grades.

There are no Adequate Yearly Progress targets established for science. However, the percentages of refugee students in RSIG districts and grades who scored proficient or advanced on the Science PSSA are lower than the English language learner subgroup in 2011 and 2012.

Report Card Grades

Evaluators collected student report card grades in math, science, and social studies from the grantee school districts for the first time in 2011-12, as these items were included in Pennsylvania's 2010-12 Request for Applications. Following Office of Refugee Resettlement Pennsylvania Refugee School Impact Grant

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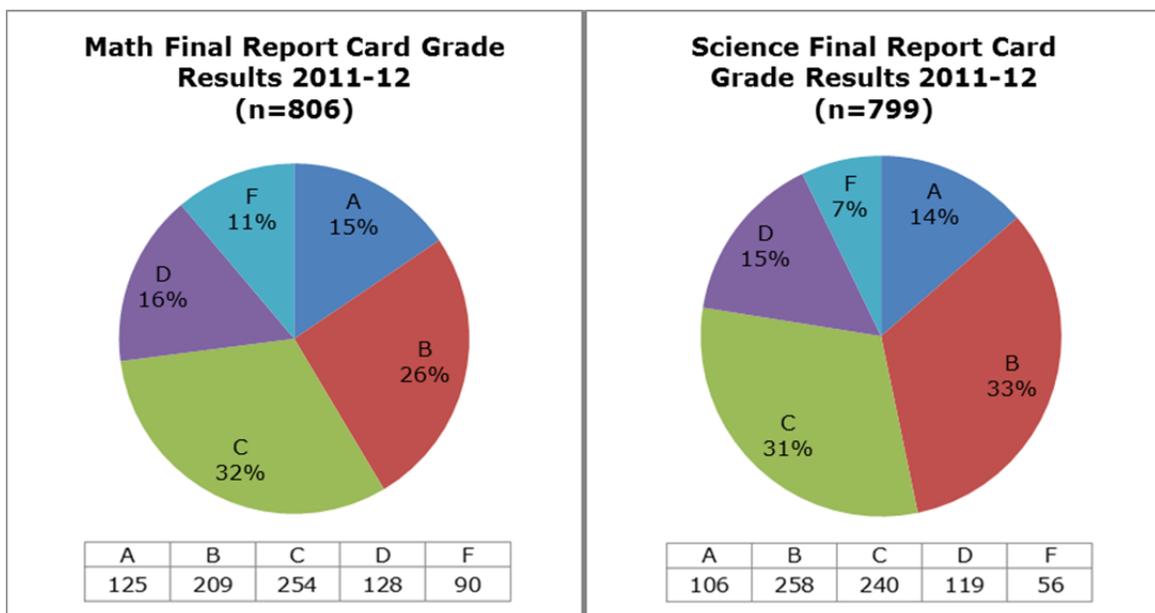
final report directions, ACCESS for ELLs assessment results were used in place of English, reading, or language arts report card grades. Evaluators examined student grades at the end of the year. Evaluators attempted to collect report card grade data for each quarter in order to assess gains from fall to spring. However, not all grantees were able to provide quarterly grades and not all subjects had quarterly grades.

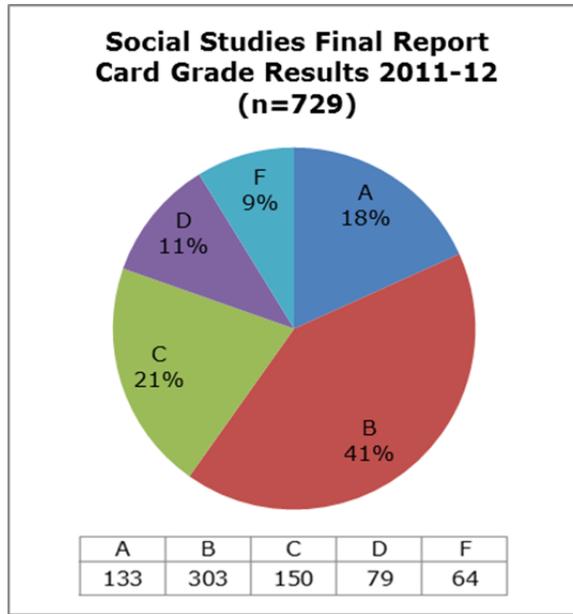
The figures below show student report card grade results for each content area. Follow-up with grantees confirmed that not all students had report card grades for each content area, nor did all students take a course within each area. These graphs only include those students having data that could be analyzed. Therefore, 63-69 percent of 2011-12 refugee students are included in report card results. The number of students for which each report card grades were available is included in each figure.

In math, 73 percent of students earned a ‘C’ or better as their final report card grade. The greatest percentage of students (32 percent) earned a ‘C,’ followed by ‘B’ (26 percent), ‘D’ (16 percent), ‘A’ (15 percent), and ‘F’ (11 percent).

In science, 78 percent of students earned a ‘C’ or better as their final report card grade. The greatest percentage of students (33 percent) earned a ‘B,’ followed by ‘C’ (31 percent), ‘D’ (15 percent), ‘A’ (14 percent), and ‘F’ (7 percent).

In social studies, 80 percent of students earned a ‘C’ or better as their final report card grade. The greatest percentage of students (41 percent) earned a ‘B’, followed by ‘C’ (21 percent), ‘A’ (18 percent), ‘D’ (11 percent), and ‘F’ (9 percent).

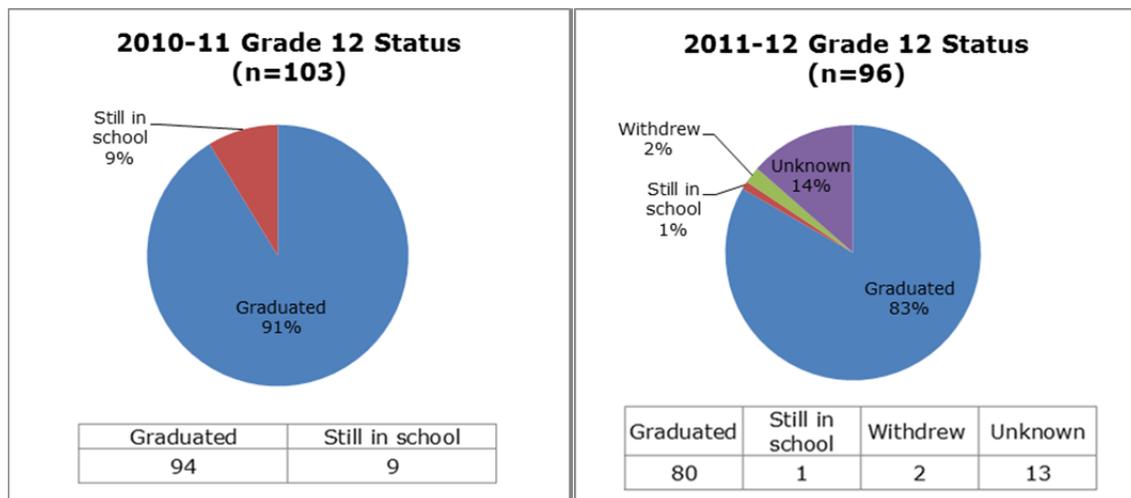




Graduation and Dropout

School completion is an area that Pennsylvania identified as a focus area in its program application. To examine this area, evaluators collected graduation and dropout data.

In 2010-11 there were 103 students in 12th grade, of which 91 percent graduated and 9 percent were identified as still being enrolled in school. In 2011-12 there were 96 students in 12th grade, of which 83 percent graduated, 2 percent withdrew, 1 percent was still in school, and 14 percent had an unknown status. It should be noted that three of the 2010-11 12th grade students are counted as being enrolled and graduating in 2011-12. These students are counted in both of the following graphs. The other six students reported as still in school at the end of 2010-11 were not identified as being enrolled in 2011-12. Between the two program years and two graduating classes, a combined 89 percent of students graduated.



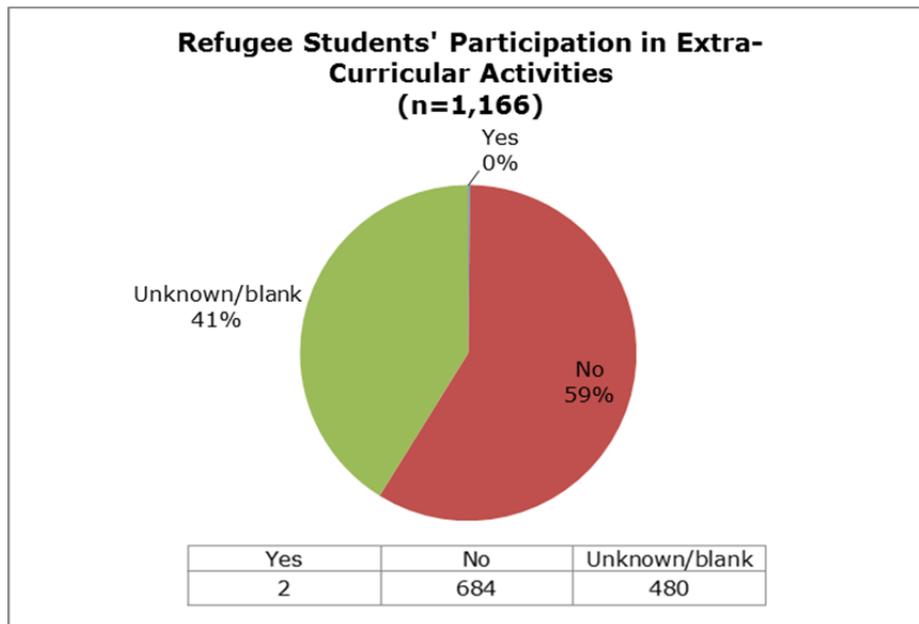
The reader should keep in mind that the information presented here regarding graduation and enrollment status for 2010-12 refugee students is based on the status of 12th grade students as reported by the district at the end of the program years. It does not represent how graduation rate is calculated and reported for Adequate Yearly Progress. Evaluators cannot calculate graduation rate in the same manner as Adequate Yearly Progress, as sufficient data is not available.

Districts reported that no students dropped out of 12th grade or any other grade.

Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Participation in one or more extra-curricular activity was collected for the 2011-12 program year only. District grantees attempted to provide this information at the student level, though in many cases, grantees did not track this information.

Of the 1,166 refugee students in 2011-12, more than half of students did not participate in any extra-curricular activities, according to grantee-provided data. This information was not available, or marked as unknown, for 41 percent of students. Only two students were reported as having participated in extra-curricular activities. In conversations with evaluators, grantees shared that refugee students were fearful of staying after school if no transportation was provided or that they had other family obligations that prevented them from participating.

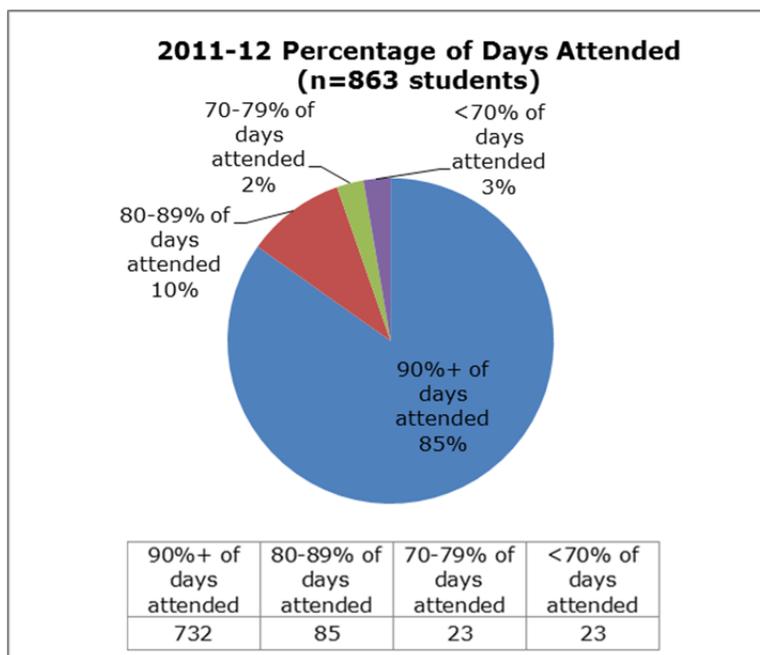


School Attendance

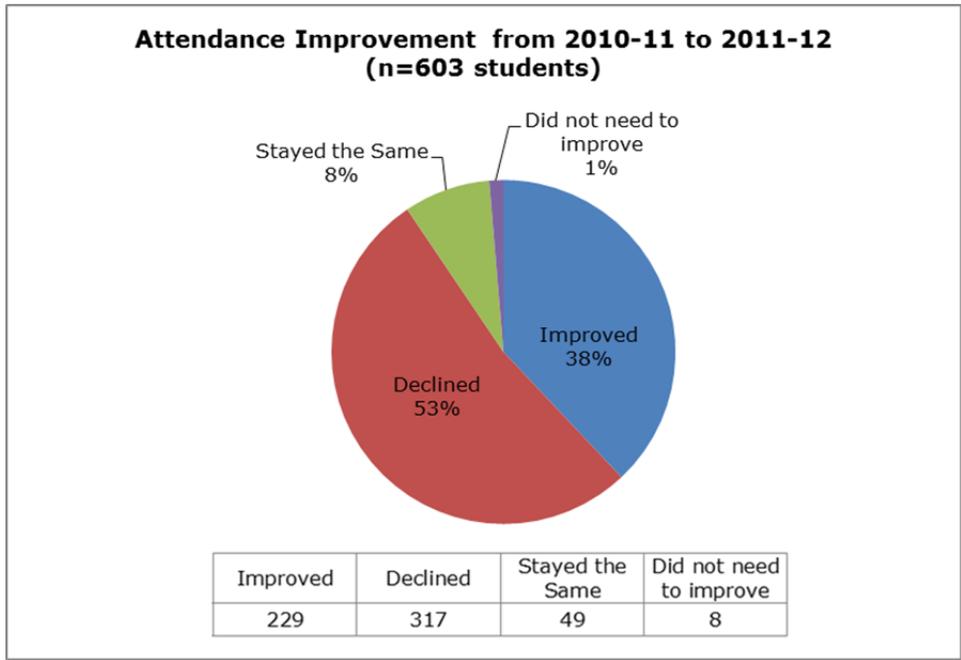
School attendance data was collected for the first time in 2011-12 as a way of examining social adjustment. Evaluators collected 2010-11 and 2011-12 attendance data for the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12 program year.

Of the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12, 1,094 students (94 percent) had 2011-12 attendance data. Days absent ranged from zero days to 141.5 days with a median of six days absent. A median is a measure of central tendency where half of the values included in analysis are equal to or less than the median value and half of the values are equal to or greater than the median value. Evaluators commonly use a median rather than a mean, or average, because the median is not as easily skewed by outlying or extremely high or low values. Five percent of students did not miss any days of school in 2011-12.

Office of Refugee Resettlement reporting included a reporting element for ‘percent of time in school.’ Since Pennsylvania sets an Adequate Yearly Progress target for school attendance at 90 percent, evaluators examined data in that context. Of the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12, 863 students (74 percent) had both attendance and enrollment data needed to calculate an attendance rate, which indicated that 85 percent of students attended 90 percent or more of the days they were enrolled during the 2011-12 school year. Few students (5 percent) attended less than 80 percent of the days for which they were enrolled.



Evaluators also examined attendance improvement status from 2010-11 to 2011-12 for those students enrolled in both 2010-11 and 2011-12 (731 refugee students). Of the 731 students, 603 (82 percent of students) had attendance data for both 2010-11 and 2011-12. Of these 603 students, more than half were absent more days in 2011-12 than they were in 2010-11. Thirty-eight percent of students improved, meaning they were absent fewer days in 2011-12 than they were in the prior year. Eight percent were absent the same number of days in both years and 1 percent of students did not miss any days of school in either year.

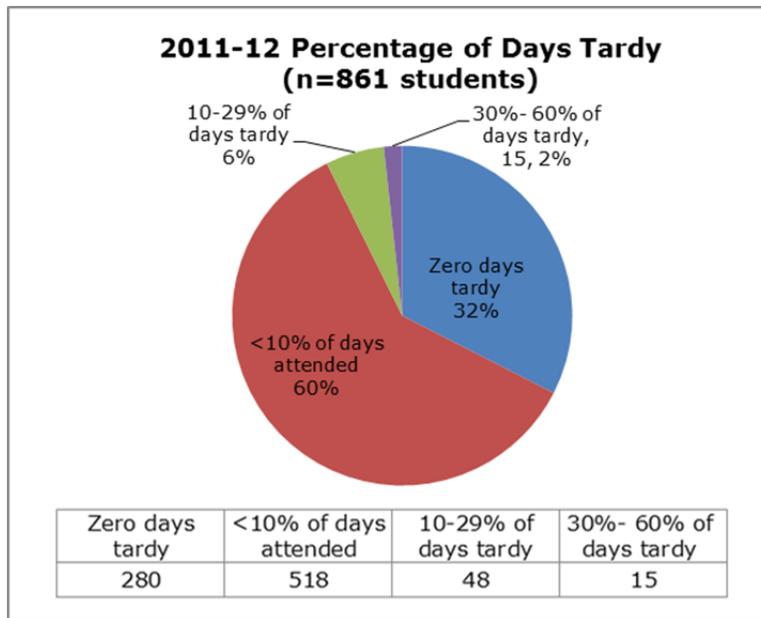


School Tardiness

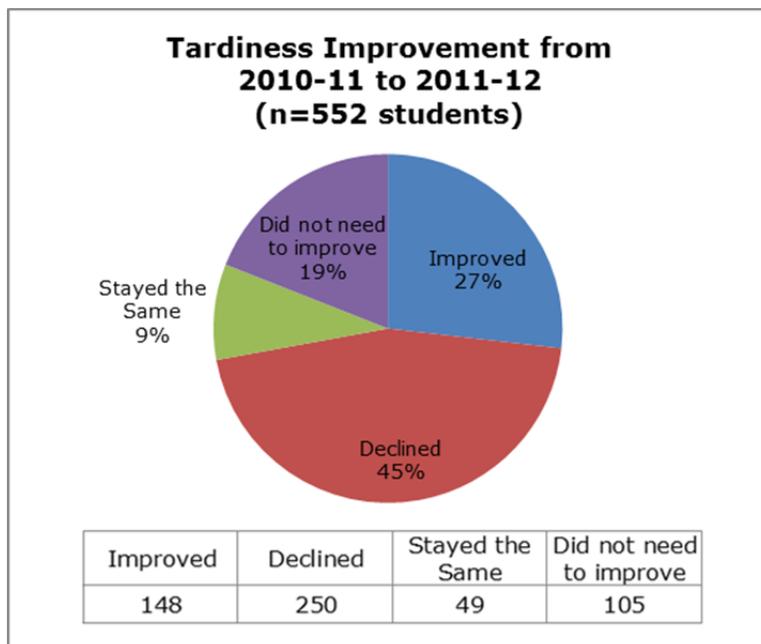
School tardy data was also collected for the first time in 2011-12 as another way of examining social adjustment. Evaluators collected 2010-11 and 2011-12 tardy data for the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12 program year. Tardiness is related to school attendance and may be an indicator of how students are adjusting to the expectation of being in school on time.

Of the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12, 1,091 students (94 percent) had 2011-12 tardy data. Days tardy ranged from zero days to 104 days tardy with a median of one day tardy. More than a third did not have any days tardy in 2011-12.

Of these same 1,166 students, 861 (74 percent) had both tardy and enrollment data to calculate the percentage of days they were tardy. Most students (92 percent) either did not have any days tardy (32 percent) or had less than 10 percent of attendance days tardy (60 percent).



Evaluators also examined improvement in school tardiness from 2010-11 to 2011-12 for those students enrolled in both 2010-11 and 2011-12. Of the 731 refugee students who were enrolled in school both years, 75 percent had tardiness data. Of the 552 students included in analysis, 45 percent were tardy to school more days in 2011-12 than they had been in 2010-11, meaning that they declined. Twenty-seven percent of students improved, meaning they were tardy fewer times in 2011-12 than 2010-11. Nine percent of students were tardy the same number of days in both years and 19 percent of students were not tardy in either year and classified as did not need to improve.

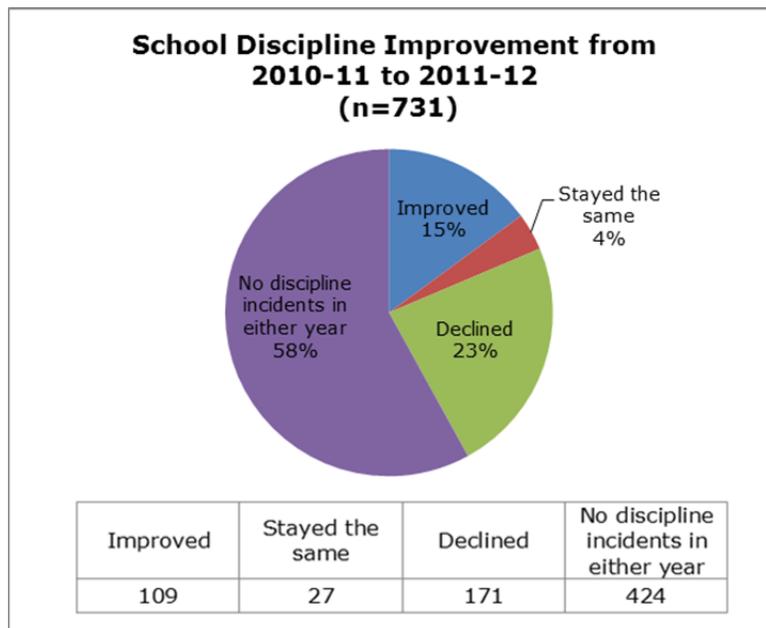


School Discipline Incidents

School discipline was also included for the first time in 2011-12 as another way of examining social adjustment. Evaluators collected 2010-11 and 2011-12 discipline data for the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12 program year. Behavior that results in disciplinary action may be a good indicator of how students are getting along with their peers and/or following the rules of the school they attend.

Of the 1,166 refugee students enrolled in 2011-12, 336 students (29 percent) were designated as having one or more discipline incidents in 2011-12 and 71 percent of students had zero discipline incidents. Discipline incidents ranged from zero to 114 with a median of zero discipline incidents.

Slightly more than half (58 percent) of the 731 students enrolled in both 2010-11 and 2011-12 had no discipline incidents in either 2010-11 or 2011-12. Of the 307 students having one or more discipline incidents in either year, the largest portion of these declined, meaning they had more discipline incidents in 2011-12 than they had in 2010-11.



Evaluator Reflections, Implications, and Considerations for Improvement

This evaluation report included an examination of outcomes for students identified as refugee in the grade levels and districts where RSIG funds were used in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 program years. It is important to keep in mind that students receive programming through a variety of sources that may have contributed to student outcomes. Based on the data and information collected as part of the 2010-12 RSIG grant cycle, evaluators identified several overall themes. Additionally, evaluators have identified several opportunities for improvement at both the state and grantee levels.

- There is great variation in the number of students identified as refugee in each grantee school district.

Recommendation: In cases where the number of identified students is extremely low in an already-awarded grantee, the state team should consider reallocating funds to those grantees that are serving more students, and/or revising grantee budgets to reflect the number of students to be served. In the next grant cycle, the state team should consider reviewing refugee resettlement data that may be available to determine where students who are refugees may be living and encourage the school districts in those areas to apply for funds.

- Many students showed positive academic, behavioral, and/or social adjustment outcomes. However, results also indicate that many students still have needs in these areas, especially social adjustment.

Recommendation: Grantees should identify, use or continue to use strategies to support refugee students academically. Grantees should also review academic, attendance, tardiness, and discipline data periodically throughout the year to identify individual student needs and provide support to students based on those needs. Grantees should consider ways that students may be engaging in the community and ways that students can be engaged in school during school hours.

The state program team at PDE should continue to use evaluation findings to identify areas where grantee school districts may need support and provide support, provide training, or assist grantees in locating support particular to their needs.

- Documentation of students receiving direct services from school district grantees improved from 2010-11 to 2011-12 because of increased awareness of data needs for evaluation. In 2010-11 this information was missing for approximately 80 percent of students. In 2011-12 this information was provided for approximately 80 percent. However, even though students are marked as receiving RSIG-funded services information on the specific services students received and the frequency and duration of those services continue to not be available. Such information is typically not available for students in general, not just refugee students.

Recommendation: Evaluators and the state team are exploring the usefulness of this data element and working to identify strategies to support grantees in collecting and providing such information. Collaboration and discussion were already underway.

- The evaluation of the RSIG program could be enhanced by additional data collection and district reporting, including implementation information and stakeholder feedback. However, evaluators and the state team at PDE will need to be conscious of amount of the program's funding and the burden on the districts additional data collection would cause.

Recommendation: In summer 2012, evaluators from Allegheny Intermediate Unit met with PDE staff and outlined changes to data collection from grantee school districts in order to capture more information, some of which is included in this report. For the next grant cycle, evaluators and PDE need to revisit Office of Refugee Resettlement reporting requirements and any additional PDE requirements outlined in the new application to ensure that all required information is identified and data collection tools are revised or developed. Grantees need to be aware of data collection requirements and due dates early in the program year.

Evaluators should consider options for collecting supplemental information about students that may provide context or clarification to already-collected data, such as length of time in the United States and length of time in the district, as being a new arrival to the country or district may be a contributing factor to outcomes. These data elements can also assist grantees in identifying the types of services students may need and the state team in identifying supports for grantees. Evaluators and PDE should discuss what data may be currently captured by districts or in PIMS.

Additionally, PDE and evaluators should collaborate to identify methods of collecting information about the training and support provided to grantee school districts through PDE related to this program. Evaluators and PDE have begun discussion about evaluation and data collection for the next program year as well as how to share information about evaluation with grantees.

The evaluation of the Refugee School Impact Grant program is intended to provide program results and information that the program can use to plan for the future and provide technical assistance to grantees. Results included in this report are based upon the data available and provided by the program and its grantees.