DOSS ELEMENTARY MANDARIN FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION (FLI) PROGRAM PARENT SURVEY 2014

What is the Doss Mandarin FLI Program?

The Doss Elementary Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) program began in the 2013–2014 academic year. Students may apply to participate in the partial immersion program beginning in their kindergarten year. The program served 61 students in kindergarten and 1st and 2nd grades. Each year, the program will add a grade. The oldest students may elect to continue their Mandarin studies at Murchison Middle School and Anderson High School.

parentan opportunity to provide feedback about the Mandarin FLI's first year implementation, survey invitations were distributed to all parents who had an email address on file at the school office. When multiple parent email addresses were on file for a particular student, all available parent email addresses were sent an invitation (i.e., two parents or more may have received invitations to complete the survey about a single student's experiences). In addition, when parents had multiple children enrolled in the program in one or more grade levels, parents received one invitation per child. Each invitation was directly linked to a specific student. The results could then be disaggregated by grade level, to allow for specific findings pertaining to grade 3 experiences as opposed to kindergarten experiences, for example. Given that multiple parents may have completed a survey about their shared child, results were weighted by the number of people who completed the survey for a particular student. In that way, particular families' experiences did not over shadow other families' experiences simply because one family had two or three parents who completed the survey and the other family had one parent who completed the survey.

Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of responding families and the students represented. The majority of families invited to participate in the survey chose to respond. The sample was sufficient to draw conclusions about family experiences in year 1 aa1sio

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Table 1. Characteristics of Students Whose Families Participated in the Parent Survey

Characteristic	Number
Individual survey invitations	114
Families completing survey	43
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what is critical for the success of this program—teachers who are dedicated to the long journey, being

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One-third of parents across all three grades had concerns about their child's progress in the program. Among those who did, parents varied by grade level as to whether they believed the teacher knew of the problem. Of note was that parents of male students (75%) were more likely than parents of female students to have made the teacher aware of the problem.

Concerns about their child's progress included:

> "I am concerned about not having enough time in the regular school day to address the extra intervention needs of some students with learning challenges in both English and Chinese."
>
> "I feel that my child was unfairly labeled by the Mandarin teacher and that she essentially wrote him off."
>
> "Yes, I spoke to them both about it this week, as I just found out about it. Ability to challenge and/or differentiate for both my child and others (i.e., get them to do more as a team if they are ready to do so)."
>
> "My concern are we doing enough at home to make him successful in the classroom? Evening drills or exercises. I read to him in English. What about Mandarin? Tapes, videos. Do we need to find time for this now?"

Is your child receiving tutoring?

Only six students in kindergarten through grade 2 were receiving tutoring at the time of the survey. Of the six, only two overlapped with the students whose parents indicated they had concerns about their child's progress. One student received tutoring in English, and five received it in Mandarin. Three students received tutoring in kindergarten and two received it in grade 2.

Do you have specific suggestions for the Doss Mandarin FLI program?

"A well-tenured experience English counterpart may be a solid addition. Chinese pounds their head so when they go to English, their energy swells—controlling the class, ensuring and showing English is as important."

"As the homework load increases, I'd like access to a parent portal that describes in more detail each assignment. I've noticed with more difficult assignments we've received clear communication … I just want to be sure it continues. Also, more formal adoption of an online buddy system with Doss, Murchison, and AHS students and staff would be helpful and can serve to build community throughout the area."

"Currently feedback is welcome but mostly only discussed at open meetings of the whole Chinese immersion groups. We only had parent-teacher conferences in the beginning of the year with teacher initiated conferences the rest of the year. The 1st-grade class in the second half of the year was having PARENTs check and correct homework and then initial that it was done without sending the homework back for teacher for review EXCEPT for Chinese homework. Having the parents check and correct homework as teachers seems like a neglect of the teaching opportunity, [especially] in this first year of homework. I am happy to assist in homework completion, but it is critical that the teacher judge the work and assess the progress and weaknesses of that work. This was done without the parents' input. Teachers need to check the homework."

"No—this year has been a great success! We feel fortunate to have this opportunity and to be part of the program!"

"Develop more structured plans/ideas for parents on how they can help students maintain what they've learned during the academic year. I know funding is a challenge, but proactive planning can help tremendously with knowledge retention. This helps the student, teachers, and AISD in making sure that the FLI program is as successful as possible."

"English teachers must be strong, organized, and efficient in this program. Please hire the right people."

"I can't think of anything other than some afterschool opportunities with the middle and high school kids."

"I'd love to see more interactions across the grades … especially so the younger kids see the older kids speaking."

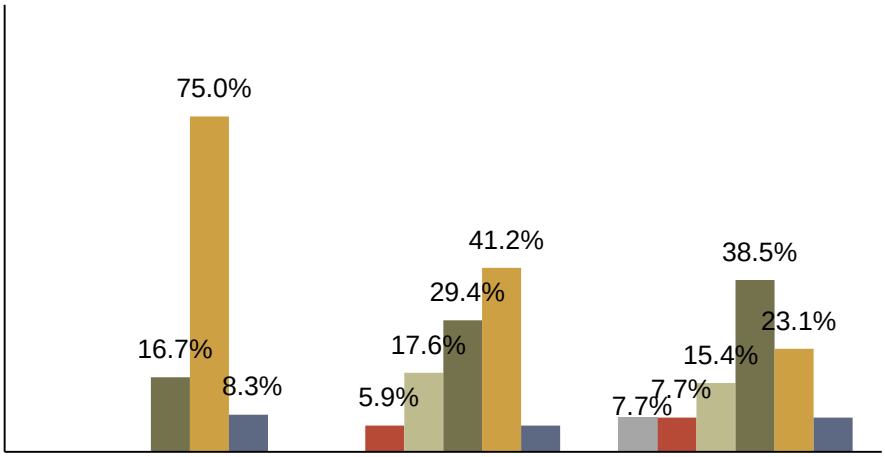
"Keep up the good work."

Have the parent immersion meetings throughout the year been useful to you?

Parents reported the parent meetings to be useful more than not useful (Figure 7). Nearly fifty-three percent (52.9%) of parents across all grades

regarding program planning and implementation. The methods though which the program elicited parental input continuously may have influenced the perceived usefulness of the parent immersion meetings. Administrators indicated that the parent immersion nights will gradually become more focused as a natural progression of the program and of the students' growing linguistic abilities and maturation.

Figure 7. Have parent immersion meetings throughout the year been useful to you?



2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

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Parents would benefit from additional support to understand their child's proficiency level in Mandarin (Figure 8). One-third expressed feeling . The approximate 40% in kindergarten and grade 2 and the less than 30% in grade 1 who indicated feeling probably could be shifted to a place of clearer understanding with minor communication clarifications or by adding additional comparison groups (i.e., to determine how proficient early elementary students typically are after 1 year of Mandarin immersion or how proficient other 1st-grade students are). On the other hand, the percentages 1st-grade parents who were unsure how comfortable they were with understanding their child's proficiency level and the percentage who were only a little comfortable with it (27.8%) were equal, while 11.1% of parents were a little uncomfortable by the end of year. Across grade levels, helping parents to better understand their child's proficiency level in Mandarin is recommended.

Figure 8. Do you feel comfortable that › ‘ — —•†‡”•–ƒ•† › ‘ — ” …Š‹Ž†ï• ’”‘ˆ‹…‹‡•…› Ž‡˜‡Ž ‹• ƒ•†

2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

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Among the response options provided, nearly all parents selected yes. Parents pointed out an error in survey design on this item. The two response options provided for this survey item read yes and no, with a follow-up open-ended response that asked how they made the determination that their decision had been the right one or not. Several parents used the open-ended response item to say that if an option had been included that read “undecided,” they would have used that option rather than yes or no. Future versions of parent surveys should include the undecided response option for this qpetion l0fact 76008A(espo)4(nqpetio3A(espo)4)10(qpe3&1EF009

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