

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND BILINGUAL
EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

Task Force on English Language Learners and Bilingual Education

2025-2026

Task Force Goal

To assist urban public school systems nationally in improving the quality of instruction
for
English Language Learners and immigrant children.

Task Force Chair

Christina Martinez, San Antonio School Board

Task Force Members

Lewis Ferebee, Washington D.C. Chancellor
Matias Segura, Austin Superintendent
Sara Elaquad, Cleveland School Board
Stacey Woolley, Tulsa School Board

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Ongoing Support to Member School Districts

English Learners Program Directors and Staff Meetings

The Council's English Learners (EL) Team has continued regularly scheduled meetings for EL program directors and staff that began in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During these meetings, attendees lean on one another for shared expertise and best practices and exchange information on timely issues of concern. Typically, around 30-40 participants pose questions for collective thought, share updates, and offer suggestions. These meetings will continue as long as attendees find them to be useful. Since July 2021, the meetings have been held monthly. The kick-off meeting for SY 2024-25, featuring a welcoming of new EL directors and staff, was held on September 26, 2024. Recent topics and queries for discussion submitted by EL program directors include—

- programs and/or interventions to support foundational literacy for ELs;
- supports for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) who are over-aged/under-credited;
- foundational literacy skills instruction for English learners;
- oral language development;
- translation and interpretation services; and
- addressing immigration enforcement concerns.

Assistance to Member Districts

Technical Support

Members of the EL Team assist Council-member school districts upon request. This assistance ranges from quick responses to queries that may involve issuing brief surveys or long-term engagements on specific EL programmatic concerns. Recent topics on which districts have requested assistance include—

- data collection related to newcomer enrollment;
- planning for English language proficiency assessment (ELPA) as a statewide assessment event;
- assessment for monitoring language development in pre-K;
- funding formulas for staffing for EL instruction;
- developing multilingual pathways for all students; and
- guidance for using translation and interpretation devices.

Special Presentation on U.S. Department of Education Dual Language Immersion Playbooks

To support district efforts in developing high-quality Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs, the EL Team hosted a special session with leaders from the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) at the U.S. Department of Education and experts from WestEd. The session introduced the newly released DLI Playbooks,¹ which provide comprehensive guidance on designing, implementing, and sustaining evidence-based DLI programs. Presenters highlighted key components such as foundational conditions, staffing, and program monitoring, and discussed how districts can use the Playbooks to address common challenges. Additional federal resources to support EL programs were also shared.

2025 Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education (BIRE) Meeting in Baltimore, MD

Held from May 13 to May 17, 2025, in Baltimore, MD, the 2025 BIRE Meeting brought together educators, administrators, and partners from across the country to share strategies, explore innovations, and strengthen support for multilingual learners, immigrant students, and refugee populations. The Baltimore City Public Schools hosted school visits, offering attendees a firsthand look at multilingual programming in action.

Outcomes and Feedback

Overall, 202 individuals attended BIRE 2025. The attendees included:

- 111 participants from 30 Council-member districts
- 15 participants from 4 non-member districts
- 65 representatives from sponsoring organizations

Many districts attended as teams of two or more, fostering collaborative learning and planning. The agenda received strong positive feedback from participants. According to the post-meeting evaluation survey (n = 20), the following general sessions received the highest marks (“Very Helpful” or “Helpful”):

- *Rising Together to Welcome Newcomers* – 90% of respondents
- *Supporting Foundational Skills Instruction for ELs* – 90% of respondents
- *Understanding EL Trends and Identifying Challenges of Practice* – 80% of respondents
- *Thinking Outside the Box: Promoting Multilingualism* – 80% of respondents

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2024). *Dual language immersion playbooks*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/dual-language-playbook-full-20241219.pdf>

- *Advancing EL Success Through Systems, Data, and Schoolwide Support* – 75% of respondents

Participants were asked to identify the need for changes in various programmatic areas based on their learning during general and breakout sessions. The data reflected an intent to focus on targeted improvements, especially in professional development, multilingual pathways, and systemic supports, to better serve English learners. Across the listed potential programmatic elements to address, the majority of respondents indicated the desire for *some changes*. The elements reported as most needing improvement included—

- Building capacity of educators to support ELs across content areas
- Enhancing professional development that connects reading and writing instruction for ELs
- Developing or expanding pathways to multilingualism
- Develop protocols and guidance for using AI and translation technologies with ELs
- Enhancing scheduling and targeted supports to improve student access

Challenge of Practice Sessions

Building on the success of the previous year, the 2025 Challenge of Practice sessions continued to provide structured time for district teams to examine persistent challenges and identify actionable solutions collaboratively. Participants selected from key topic areas, facilitated by expert thought partners. The topic areas and thought partners for BIRE 2025 were—

- Leadership – Valeria Silva, Independent Consultant
- Newcomers – Jen Chard, City University of New York
- MTSS & ELs – Farah Assiraj, CEO and Founder, cairEDucation
- Access to Rigor – Okhee Lee, New York University
- Dual Language and Multilingual Pathways – Tammy Alsace, Independent Consultant; Gabriela Uro, Program Director, WestEd; Kate Wright, Project Director, WestEd

Evaluation survey respondents found the Challenge of Practice experience most beneficial for:

- Exchanging ideas with colleagues – 71%
- Time to plan with district teams – 71%
- Hearing new perspectives and challenges – 59%
- Consulting with experts – 53%

Participants reported intentions to take concrete actions in their districts as a result of the practicum, including convening teams (71%), sharing insights (53%), and piloting new strategies (18%). Additionally, participants expressed an interest in continued opportunities for

collaboration and reflection with their topical groups after the practicum. The most preferred follow-up activities reported on the meeting evaluation survey were *periodic update meetings with peers from other districts* and *one-on-one meetings with a thought partner*.

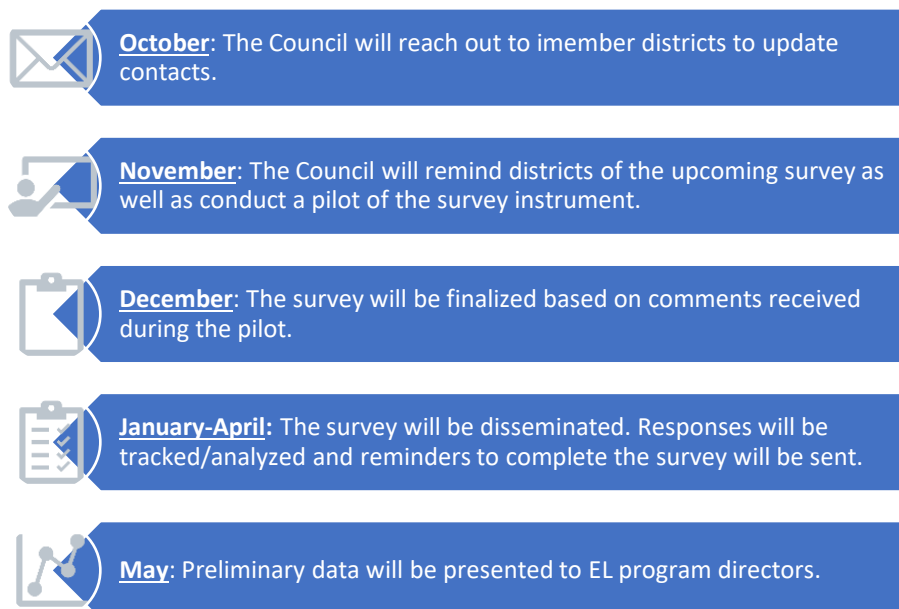
Next Steps. The Council’s EL Team is continuing to analyze feedback to refine future BIRE meetings and ensure the experience remains relevant, collaborative, and impactful for the wide range of attendees.

English Learners in America’s Great City Schools Update

In 2019, the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) published a 6-year follow-up report on English learners (ELs) enrolled in member districts that provided an in-depth view of the scale of EL enrollment, achievement, and services provided amongst its members.

Key indicators examined included EL enrollment, top languages spoken, student performance, staffing, and professional development. The 2024 update will re-examine these topics in addition to newer topics, reflecting the greater availability of EL-related data from the Council’s Academic Key Performance Indicators project and federal data sources.

The project timeline is as follows—



Status. The EL Team has produced and presented preliminary analyses on EL enrollment and the languages spoken by ELs using publicly available data from federal sources (e.g., EDFacts, Common Core of Data). Additionally, preliminary analyses were produced using the Council’s Academic Key Performance Indicator (KPI) project on chronic absenteeism, ELs in special education, AP course participation, Algebra I completion, English proficiency, and ninth-grade course failures. In mid-December, the survey pilot was completed, with comments received from Atlanta, Anchorage, Pinellas, and Tulsa. The survey was disseminated to EL directors in early January. Analysis of the data from 40 responding districts has begun, with the completion of the analysis and overall report expected by the Fall Conference in October.

PD and Staffing Survey Respondents – 40 Districts		
Anchorage	Detroit	Milwaukee
Arlington	Duval County	Minneapolis
Atlanta	Fayette County	Omaha
Aurora	Fort Worth	Orange County
Baltimore City	Guilford County	Philadelphia
Birmingham	Houston	Pinellas County
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Indianapolis	Providence
Chicago	Jackson	Richmond
Cincinnati	Jefferson County	San Diego
Clark County	Kansas City	San Francisco
Cleveland	Los Angeles	St. Paul
Dayton	Metro Nashville	Tulsa
Des Moines	Miami-Dade	Winston-Salem/Forsyth County

Playbook on Serving Dually Identified Students in Dual Language Immersion Programs

The Council is advancing a critical initiative to support English learners with disabilities (i.e., dually identified students) in dual language immersion (DLI) programs. While the existing DLI Playbooks developed by WestEd for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) offer foundational guidance for implementing DLI programs, they do not address the unique needs of dually identified students. This project seeks to fill that gap by developing a companion Playbook that provides targeted, evidence-based strategies to ensure these students have equitable access to high-quality native language instruction.

Council-member districts have repeatedly emphasized the need for more inclusive guidance. Districts such as Chicago Public Schools and Atlanta Public Schools are actively expanding their

DLI programs and have identified a pressing need for resources that support the inclusion of students with disabilities. Chicago is currently developing its “Multilingual Pathways for All” Implementation Plan and requires aligned tools to ensure dually identified students are not left behind. Similarly, Atlanta is enhancing its DLI offerings and seeks targeted strategies to support this growth. Other districts are also prioritizing inclusive access. Oakland is working to broaden participation in DLI programs, particularly among underrepresented non-EL student populations. Baltimore is scaling a nascent DLI initiative to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. Los Angeles has embedded DLI expansion into its strategic plan.

Despite the momentum behind DLI expansion, the absence of specific guidance for ELs with disabilities presents a significant barrier. Without intentional planning and support, these students risk being excluded from the benefits of bilingual education. This project directly addresses that challenge by equipping districts with the tools and strategies needed to design and implement inclusive DLI programs that serve all learners.

Project Objectives

The project is guided by three primary objectives—

- **Develop a Companion DLI Playbook** that outlines systems-level, evidence-based strategies for supporting dually identified students in dual language settings.
- **Engage a National Working Group of district EL leaders** to co-develop and validate inclusive practices through structured collaboration, ensuring the Playbook reflects the realities and needs of diverse school systems.
- **Disseminate the Playbook and implementation tools** to Council-member districts by October 2025, enabling immediate integration into planning and professional development cycles.

Anticipated Outcomes

The project is expected to yield several key outcomes—

- **Increased District Capacity:** District leaders and educators will gain actionable guidance to better serve dually identified students, improving program design and instructional delivery.
- **Improved Instructional Coherence and Equity:** System-level strategies will help districts align DLI planning, placement, and instruction with inclusive practices, ensuring consistent access for ELs with disabilities.
- **Greater Awareness and Understanding:** Through the Playbook and related resources, education leaders will deepen their understanding of the needs of dually identified students and the potential of native language instruction to support their success.

- **Stronger Professional Learning Infrastructure:** The project will support the development of ongoing professional learning opportunities, peer collaboration, and integration of inclusive practices into existing training frameworks.
- **Foundation for Systems Change:** By highlighting effective models and district innovations, the project will contribute to broader policy conversations on equity in multilingual and special education.

Working Group Participating Districts

The following Council-member districts are actively participating in the working group to develop and review the Playbook—

- Atlanta Public Schools
- Aurora Public Schools
- Baltimore City Public Schools
- Chicago Public Schools
- Guilford County Schools
- Jefferson County
- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Omaha Public Schools
- Portland Public Schools
- San Diego Unified School District
- School District of Palm Beach
- St. Paul Public Schools

Status. The first working group meeting was held virtually on June 26. Members reviewed research and findings from the Council’s prior Strategic Support Team reports on English learners and special education. Upcoming activities include a July meeting to provide feedback on the draft Playbook outline and an asynchronous review of materials in August. The project remains on schedule for dissemination in October 2025. To support this work, the Council recently received a \$20,000 grant from the Oak Foundation.

Foundational Literacy Skills Development for ELs and Instructional Materials

Foundational literacy skills development for ELs has been a recurring concern among district staff responsible for EL programs. The Council issued two surveys on literacy instruction to understand the challenges better. During the EL directors’ meetings, Council staff shared the findings to guide discussion on the next steps for support. From this discussion, EL directors identified two priority areas—(1) **reviewing/evaluating existing programs** used to

teach foundational skills to ELs and (2) **identifying supplemental materials** that specifically address the needs of ELs in developing foundational literacy skills.

The insufficiency of existing instructional materials for teaching foundational literacy skills to English learners and the reported needs of Council-member districts called for a research-based, robust, and clear set of criteria as well as a suggested protocol for reviewing and selecting quality materials that specifically address EL needs in foundational literacy development. In the spring of 2023, these criteria and a protocol for reviewing and selecting materials were published in *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners: Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations*. For its development, David Lai and Gabriela Uro led a **working group** comprising staff from Clark County, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York City, Omaha, San Antonio, and Tulsa, supported by language acquisition and literacy experts.

Publication Dissemination. Since the document’s formal unveiling at BIRE 2023, several presentations have been made to national and state organizations and Council-member districts, by request. Several external publications have referenced the *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners: Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations*.

Instructional Materials Review. In summer 2023, a ‘test drive’ of the framework’s selection criteria was conducted in Washington, D.C. The reviewers were practitioners and experts in literacy development with backgrounds in English learners and/or English language arts (ELA) from 13 Council-member districts. Reviewers volunteered to participate due to their experience in foundational skills development, whether generally or with ELs specifically, and their use of one or more of the instructional materials presented for review within their respective school districts.

All reviewers were asked to read *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners* before convening. Additional training was provided at the July convening, to norm around the principles and criteria presented in the framework document, ensuring that the reviewers shared a common understanding and language to discuss the materials. The 28-member group reviewed four materials/products: (1) Lexia Learning, (2) *Get Ready!* by Vista Higher Learning, (3) Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, and (4) *Lift* by Cengage.

The Council’s EL Team drafted publisher-specific compilations of notes and observations based on the Framework’s criteria, which were provided to the respective publishers. The review’s insights and findings were shared with the Council’s EL program directors during one of its monthly virtual meetings.

Next Steps. The EL Team is looking to develop a self-paced course, including *frequently asked questions* and presentation slides, to support Council-member districts in utilizing the framework to improve foundational literacy skills instruction for ELs.

PLP: Council’s Courses on Complex Thinking and Communication

The Council’s inaugural courses on *Complex Thinking and Communication* comprise 11 courses beginning with *Foundations*, followed by five courses in each pathway (ELA/ELD and Math). (See Figure 1.) The course content is intended to be delivered by district facilitators and amounts to more than one year’s worth of content.

Figure 1. Complex Thinking and Communication Course Sequence



District Usage. Currently, about seven districts are in the process of subscribing for SY 2024-25 to provide professional development via professional learning communities, including virtually. (See Table 2.) For some districts, course subscriptions have been delayed or paused as a result of leadership changes.

Table 2. Subscribing Districts/Schools

Current Subscribers by Launch Year	
2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilford County Public Schools Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools² NYC Department of Education – District 25³ 	2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newark Public Schools
2019⁴	2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carter G. Woodson Charter School

² Participated in original trial launch of courses in 2017.

³ Began implementing the 3Ls™ with Maryann Cucchiara prior to the development of the courses. Participated in the development of the ELA/ELD courses, and host Council-member districts.

⁴ Onboarding delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Current Subscribers by Launch Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kansas City Public School 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tulsa Public Schools 	

Training Sessions. Around 12 training sessions have been held by the Council, mostly in conjunction with its BIRE Meeting or the Fall Conference, **reaching over 127 facilitators from 28 districts** (with some attending several sessions) since launching in 2017.⁵ In 2020, two general sessions (for facilitators and other interested attendees) were held virtually. In 2021, a virtual four-part series was held starting on February 3 and concluding on March 17. On May 10, 2022, a training session was conducted in San Antonio prior to the BIRE Meeting. (For sessions held from 2020 to 2022, see Table 3.)

Table 3. Training Sessions 2020 through 2022

Date/s & Focus	Location	Content	Trainees	Districts
June 17, 2020 Implementing 3Ls™ in a Virtual Setting (Guilford)	Zoom	ELA/ELD	209 from CGCS Districts, 228 Total	33 CGCS Districts, 1 Nonprofit, 1 Non-CGCS School
December 7, 2020 Webinar Presentation on 3Ls™ and Foundational Skills	Zoom Webinar jointly sponsored by SAP & CGCS	ELA/ELD	96 from CGCS Districts; 223 Total	32 CGCS Districts, 94 Other Organizations
February 3, 2021 3Ls™ Training Series: Introduction and Connecting to District Initiatives	Zoom	ELA/ELD	29	8
February 17, 2021 3Ls™ Training Series: Framed Motivation and Word Play	Zoom	ELA/ELD	33	6
March 3, 2021 3Ls™ Training Series: Reading Closely and Juicy Sentences	Zoom	ELA/ELD	40	10
March 17, 2021 3Ls™ Training Series: Differentiated Tasks	Zoom	ELA/ELD	30	7
May 10, 2022 (BIRE Pre-Meeting) 3Ls™ Training for Facilitators and District Planning	Hybrid (in-person trainees plus some virtual presenters)	ELA/ELD	35	11

Expert training and kick-off. Training sessions have been held in specific districts by request. (See Table 4.) Districts have also supported one another by offering experienced educators

⁵ These figures do not include participants of the virtual training sessions held in 2020 and afterward.

familiar with the content of the professional development courses as presenters and inviting other districts to attend their sessions.

Table 4. District-requested Training Sessions

District	Date	Presenter	Notes
District of Columbia	Jun. 2018	Maryann Cucchiara	Training for 25 teachers who taught in summer school
Guilford County	Aug. 2019	Maryann Cucchiara	Approximately 30 facilitators and teachers
Metro-Nashville	Sep. 23-25, 2019 (virtual) Nov. 12-13, 2019 (in person)	Maryann Cucchiara	Held virtual session with coaches and teachers Held in-person session for over 50 teachers
Oakland	Jun. 13, 2019	Lily Wong Fillmore	Overview for about 30 teachers
Anchorage	Nov. 26-27, 2018 Nov. 11, 2019	Harold Asturias	Launch math pathway with teachers, coaches, and facilitators
San Antonio	Sep. 22, 2020 (virtual) Sep. 29, 2020 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Held virtual session with coaches and PD leaders Held virtual session for teachers
Kansas City	Jun. 9, 2021 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Held virtual session with EL team, Literacy team, principals, and district academic leaders, introducing them to the 3Ls™ approach
Kansas City	Aug. 3, 2021 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Introductory training session for teachers
Anchorage	Summer 2021 (virtual)	Rachel Rosenbaum Mandell	Developed lesson plans and units of study for newcomer summer program and supported the instructional delivery virtually
Clark County	February 8, 2022 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Introduction and planning meeting with EL office leadership
Kansas City	April 8, 2022 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Introductory overview and hands-on activity with senior academic leadership team—deputy superintendent and assistant superintendents of school leadership, curriculum, instruction, equity, and innovation
Guilford County	Aug. 2022	Allison Velez (NYC)	Introductory training session for teachers, which included a participant from East Baton Rouge Public Schools
Kansas City	Sep. 15, 2022 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Introductory training session for teachers

District	Date	Presenter	Notes
Metro-Nashville	Feb. 2, 2023 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Walk through sample 3Ls™ lesson flow using district-adopted texts
Guilford County	April 2023	Maryann Cucchiara	3Ls Lesson Review in preparation for the BIRE 2023 school visits
Metro-Nashville	October 19, 2023 (virtual) January 17, 2024 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Presentation on the connection between 3Ls™ and WIDA ELD standards
Kansas City	November 1, 2023 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	"Power and Promise of the 3Ls™ Approach"
Tulsa	January 23, 2024 (virtual) January 24, 2024 (virtual)	Maryann Cucchiara	Lesson feedback
Kansas City	Spring 2024 February 16, 2024 April 5, 2024	Guilford County Schools Staff	In-person support
Newark	Fall 2024 – Spring 2025	Maryann Cucchiara and Alicia Serrano (Guilford County, retired)	Implementation support
Tulsa	Fall 2024 – Spring 2025	Guilford County Schools Staff	Interdistrict support visitation

Technical Assistance. The Council provides ongoing support with planning for the implementation of the courses. Upcoming training and support include virtual sessions and in-person support for Newark Public Schools and Tulsa Public Schools.

Course Development: Teaching Writing to English Learners Using Cognitive Strategies

In 2018, the *Pathway to Academic Success Project* at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), was awarded a five-year, \$14.7 million grant,⁶ based on its strong record of improving outcomes for English learners and a robust dissemination component thanks to the partnership with the Council of the Great City Schools. Dr. Carol Booth Olson, Principal Investigator (PI) on

⁶ Harriman, P. (2018, October 23). UCI receives \$14.7 million grant to expand its successful literacy outreach project. Retrieved from UCI News website: <https://news.uci.edu/2018/10/23/uci-receives-14-7-million-grant-to-expand-its-successful-literacy-outreach-project/>

the *Pathway to Academic Success Project* at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), invited the Council to collaborate on the project, specifically to bolster the dissemination part of the application for *Education Innovation and Research* (EIR) expansion grant application administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

Course development. Specifically, as a partner with the University of California Irvine Writing Project, the Council received over \$600,000 to create a set of courses for a professional learning program to be disseminated using the *CGCS Professional Learning Platform*, following the Council's design for hybrid professional learning. The courses include videos and training materials to provide a much-needed focus on writing instruction offered by the *Pathway* professional development. Specifically, the *Pathway*-content professional learning experience builds educators' capacity to teach text-based analytical writing to English learners across all content areas.

Pilot courses. Three courses were completed by April 2023 for piloting in: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Dallas Independent School District, Guilford County Schools, Oakland Unified School District, and Pinellas County Public Schools. The pilot was successfully completed, providing insightful feedback for the final development of the courses. Participating districts were granted *gratis* access to the courses throughout SY 2023-24.

Facilitator Training. The Council's EL Team secured an additional \$40,000 to host an in-person training session for course facilitators. This training took place on August 8 and 9 in Washington, D.C., with participation from six Council-member districts: Anchorage, Baltimore City, Denver, Guilford County, Minneapolis, and St. Paul.



CGCS @GreatCitySchls · Aug 8

All students can become excellent readers and writers! This morning, we kicked off a two-day training with six districts aiming to improve writing instruction for English learners using a cognitive strategies approach. Learn about our PD at cgcs.org/Page/667



Topics covered in the training session included —

- the structure of the seven courses on *Using Cognitive Strategies to Teach Academic Writing and Language Development*;
- features and expectations of the hybrid courses;
- research behind using cognitive strategies to teach writing;
- research behind building knowledge about language features to support reading and writing development; and
- the planning process for delivering the hybrid courses in school districts.

To facilitate further study of the course materials, free access to the courses was provided to participating districts for the 2024-25 school year.

Status. The EL Team is working on finalizing the seven courses. Council staff expect completion of all related materials by Fall 2025.

Welcoming Newcomer Students

A. Survey: Meeting the Needs of Newcomers in Great City Schools

In 2022, the Council conducted a comprehensive survey, of Council-member districts at that time, to understand how member districts define a subset of English learners—newcomers and SLIFE—and what types of support, instruction, and services are provided to meet the needs of these students. The results from the survey were presented at BIRE 2023 and during several of the EL Program Directors monthly virtual meetings. Survey results have been used to identify topics for which experts have been invited to present at monthly meetings or during BIRE.

B. Guidance for Identification and Placement

The Council’s EL Team assembled a working group comprising EL program directors and staff to inform the development of a guidance document for identifying newcomers/SLIFE and placing them appropriately for learning and support. This was in response to a request for the Council to create a guidance document to assist Council-member districts in identifying newcomers and responding to their unique needs following the joint discussion of the survey’s preliminary findings at the EL Task Force meeting convened during the 2022 Fall Conference.

The Council has partnered with a research group from the City University of New York (CUNY) to develop a model *Educational Background Questionnaire* (EBQ) to help educators ascertain students’ educational background for purposes of making programming and instructional decisions using an asset-based approach that accounts for the diverse range of skills, abilities, and educational experiences students bring with them to the United States.

- **Pilot.** In addition to the EBQ, CUNY developed a literacy assessment tool modeled after the existing Multilingual Literacy Screener (MLS) created for New York State. This tool will be available to districts beyond New York. The Council supported five districts in piloting the Spanish literacy assessment alongside the EBQ during SY 2023-24: Austin, Clark County, Chicago, and Metro-Nashville. The pilot concluded in September 2024, following the final focus group session to gather feedback from intake managers and pilot coordinators who administered both the EBQ and the Spanish literacy assessment to students.
- **Document review.** The Council surveyed districts for information and documents throughout the summer of 2023 related to district processes, protocols, and guides that impact the instruction and services that newcomers/SLIFE receive. The information and documents will guide and inform the work of the working group.

Status. The document was reviewed by the working group, task force members, and EL directors during the spring of 2025. A final version is expected by October 2025 for presentation at the Fall Conference.

Supporting Immigrant Students and Families

Following the 2024 presidential election, significant concern has emerged concerning the impact of potential shifts to federal immigration policy on school districts. The EL Team has compiled resources to support member districts in communicating with their communities and planning.

Compilation of Resources

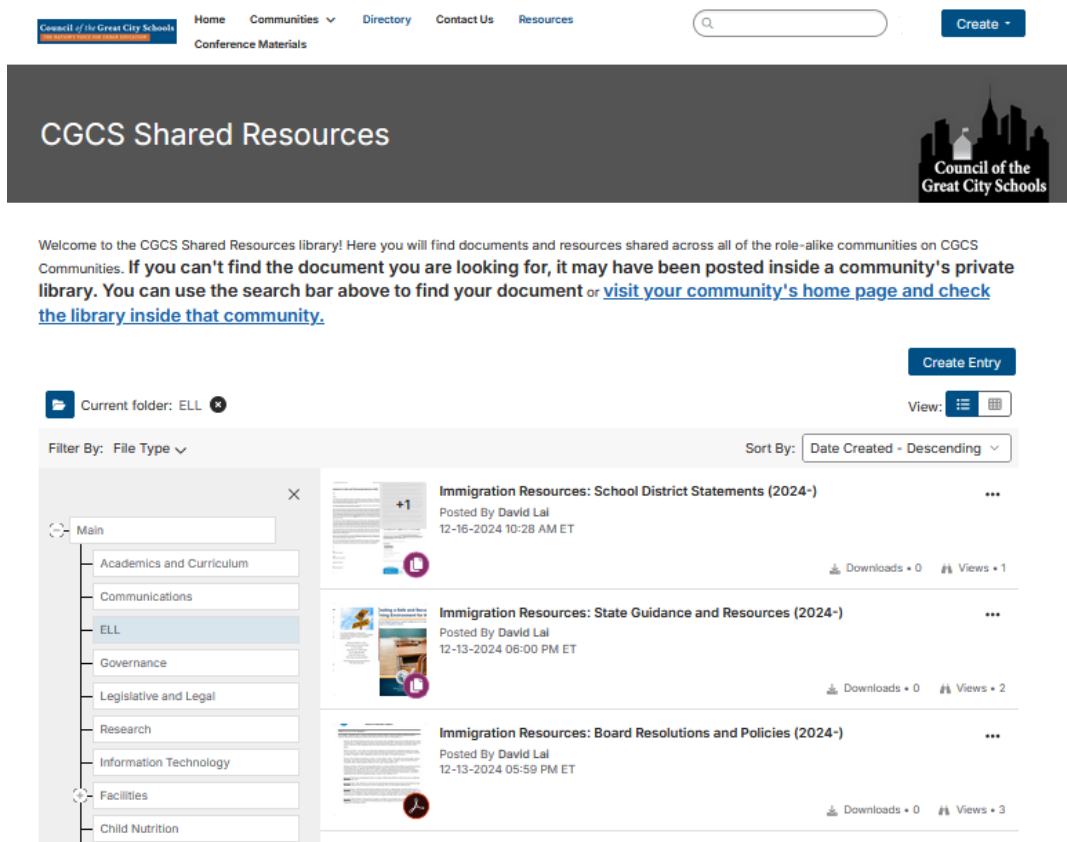
The Council has compiled a range of resources and documents to assist school districts in deciding how and whether to issue a letter or statement, adopt a resolution, or share information and resources with the community. This compilation includes documents providing additional background, resolutions and statements from school districts, and guides to address frequently asked questions.

- **School board resolutions and policies.** Resolutions and policies from school boards concerning commitments to educating all students and promoting safe schools.
- **School district letters, statements, and guides.** Statements from school districts to community stakeholders reaffirming obligations to students, reassuring immigrant families, and answering questions.

- ***School district resource sites.*** Webpages developed by school districts to inform community members of immigration-related policies and resources.
- ***Immigration advocacy organization resource guides.*** Informational guides about immigration and related legal issues for families and school personnel.
- ***Frequently asked questions.*** Responses to commonly asked questions about immigration and legal protections.

Immigration-Related Documents on CGCS Communities

The password-protected CGCS Communities site (<https://connect.cgcs.org/>) allows Council-member districts to browse and download documents that address immigration-related concerns. Navigate to the resources by clicking “Resources” on the main navigation bar and selecting the “ELL” subfolder.



The screenshot shows the CGCS Shared Resources library interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Communities, Directory, Contact Us, and Resources. A search bar and a 'Create' button are also present. Below the navigation bar is a header section with the text 'CGCS Shared Resources' and the Council of the Great City Schools logo. A welcome message states: 'Welcome to the CGCS Shared Resources library! Here you will find documents and resources shared across all of the role-alike communities on CGCS Communities. If you can't find the document you are looking for, it may have been posted inside a community's private library. You can use the search bar above to find your document or visit your community's home page and check the library inside that community.'

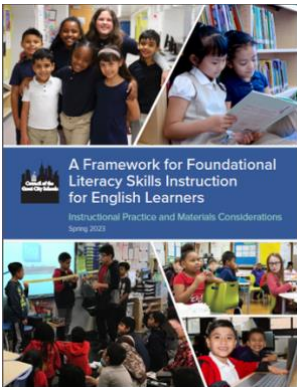
The interface shows the 'Current folder: ELL' selected. A sidebar on the left lists various categories: Main, Academics and Curriculum, Communications, ELL (selected), Governance, Legislative and Legal, Research, Information Technology, Facilities, and Child Nutrition. The main content area displays a list of documents, sorted by 'Date Created - Descending'. The documents listed are:

- Immigration Resources: School District Statements (2024-)** Posted By David Lai, 12-16-2024 10:28 AM ET, Downloads: 0, Views: 1
- Immigration Resources: State Guidance and Resources (2024-)** Posted By David Lai, 12-13-2024 06:00 PM ET, Downloads: 0, Views: 2
- Immigration Resources: Board Resolutions and Policies (2024-)** Posted By David Lai, 12-13-2024 05:59 PM ET, Downloads: 0, Views: 3

Status. The EL Team will track district responses and federal immigration policies to update the shared resources.

Recent Publications

The Council's EL Team publishes a number of briefs, reports, and resources on a regular basis. Below are examples of the most recent publications. These documents are accessible through the Council's website at: <https://www.cgcs.org/Page/631>. Most documents are produced with Creative Commons licenses to encourage free distribution throughout the membership and with external audiences.



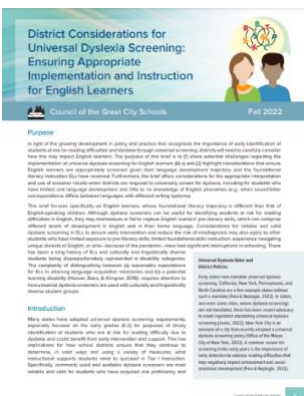
[A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners: Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations](#) (Spring 2023)

English learners (ELs) need a comprehensive and connected approach to foundational literacy skills development that involves grade-level instruction by teachers who build on the linguistic repertoire of ELs, teaching how the English language system works to convey meaning. This document rethinks English foundational skills instruction—explicating the research, explaining what teachers should know, and providing considerations for designing and selecting instructional materials.



[Great City Schools Step Up to Meet the Needs of Refugee Children](#) (May 2023)

In May of 2022, the Council of the Great City Schools brought together bilingual directors, educators, and staff from big-city member districts and invited them to share the work they had done and continue to do on behalf of newcomers and refugee students and their families. In addition to providing newcomer aid, instruction, and social services to the new arrivals, attendees reported helping families find housing and coordinating community services.



[District Considerations for Universal Dyslexia Screening: Ensuring Appropriate Implementation and Instruction for English Learners](#) (October 2022)

The purpose of this brief is to (1) share potential challenges regarding the implementation of universal dyslexia screening for English learners (ELs) and (2) highlight considerations that ensure English learners are appropriately screened given their language development trajectory and the foundational literacy instruction ELs have received. Furthermore, the brief offers considerations for the appropriate interpretation and use of screener results when districts are required to universally screen for

dyslexia, including for students who have limited oral language development and little to no knowledge of English phonemes (e.g., when sound/letter correspondence differs between languages with different writing systems).

WELCOMING AND SAFE SCHOOLS

Background

Following the 2024 presidential election, significant concern has emerged among immigrant communities served by the Council of the Great City Schools' member districts. These districts serve millions of immigrant families, some of whom have mixed immigration status.

In accordance with the Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, member districts enroll all students, regardless of immigration status. Since 2017, in response to federal anti-immigrant rhetoric and actions, school districts have made concerted efforts to create welcoming environments and enhance family engagement, particularly among immigrant and refugee families, through public statements and policy changes. These efforts to foster safe learning environments have continued in the years since, particularly as the unrest during the COVID-19 pandemic and other global events have intensified safety concerns within schools.

School Districts' Commitment to Educate All Students

School districts continue to fulfill their legal obligation to educate all students, regardless of their immigration status.¹ In some cases, superintendents have sent a letter to the school community and families, and in other cases, school boards have adopted specific resolutions to promote safe and welcoming learning environments. The range of messages included in the school district letters and resolutions collected by the Council include:

- re-affirmation of the district's commitment to *Plyler v. Doe* and that schools have an interest in promoting safe learning environments;
- clarification of school staff roles regarding requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for information about students and families or any assistance to immigration enforcement;
- establishment of protocols for responding to ICE requests for access to school campuses; and
- clarification that information about immigration status is not collected, and thus not reported.

Compilation of Resources

The Council has compiled a range of resources and documents to assist school districts in deciding how and whether to issue a letter or statement, adopt a resolution, or share information and resources with the community. This compilation includes documents providing additional background, resolutions and statements from school districts, and guides to address frequently asked questions.

- ***School board resolutions and policies.*** Resolutions and policies from school boards concerning commitments to educating all students and promoting safe schools.
- ***School district letters, statements, and guides.*** Statements from school districts to community stakeholders reaffirming obligations to students, reassuring immigrant families, and answering questions.

¹ 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

- **School district resource sites.** Webpages developed by school districts to inform community members of immigration-related policies and resources.
- **Immigration advocacy organization resource guides.** Informational guides about immigration and related legal issues for families and school personnel.
- **Frequently asked questions.** Responses to commonly asked questions about immigration and legal protections.

Immigration-Related Documents on CGCS Communities

The password-protected CGCS Communities site (<https://connect.cgcs.org/>) allows Council-member districts to browse and download documents that address immigration-related concerns. Navigate to the resources by clicking “Resources” on the main navigation bar and selecting the “ELL” subfolder.

The screenshot displays the 'CGCS Shared Resources' website. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for Home, Communities, Directory, Contact Us, and Resources, along with a search bar and a 'Create' button. Below the navigation bar is a dark banner with the text 'CGCS Shared Resources' and the Council of the Great City Schools logo. A welcome message states: 'Welcome to the CGCS Shared Resources library! Here you will find documents and resources shared across all of the role-alike communities on CGCS Communities. If you can't find the document you are looking for, it may have been posted inside a community's private library. You can use the search bar above to find your document or visit your community's home page and check the library inside that community.' Below this, a sidebar shows a folder structure with 'ELL' selected. The main content area lists three documents: 'Immigration Resources: School District Statements (2024-)', 'Immigration Resources: State Guidance and Resources (2024-)', and 'Immigration Resources: Board Resolutions and Policies (2024-)', each with a thumbnail, title, author, date, and download/view counts.

23 June 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chairman
Committee on Education and the
Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Ranking Member Robert C. Scott
Committee on Education and the
Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Committee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Committee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Committee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Cassidy, Chairman Walberg, Chair Collins, Chairman Cole, Chair Capito, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Sanders, Ranking Member Scott, Vice Chair Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As representatives of a broad coalition of associations serving English learners, we urge you to hold the U.S. Department of Education accountable in its responsibilities and legal obligations in the allocation of Fiscal Year 2025 appropriated funds for Title III, English Language Acquisition, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act 2025 was signed into law on 15 March and kept our government funded for the remainder of the fiscal year. While this law extended the fiscal year 2024 budget through 30 September 2025, it gave agencies and departments, including the U.S. Department of Education, 45 days from enactment to “submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a spending, expenditure, or operating plan for fiscal year 2025” (Section 1113.a).

To date, Title III ESSA appropriations for FY2025 have not been communicated, either to the Committees on Appropriations or to the State Education Agencies, whose fiscal year begins 1 July 2025.

On 3 June 2025, Secretary Linda McMahon in her hearing before the Senate Committee on Appropriations stated that those allocations would come “in the [government’s] fiscal year”¹.

The Secretary’s delay in allocating Title III ESSA funding FY2025 severely impacts the budgeting and planning process of the States in serving and supporting the 5.3 million English learners² in our public schools.

We the undersigned representatives from the National English Learner Roundtable strongly urge you to hold the U.S. Department of Education accountable to the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act 2025 and to demand that it immediately allocate \$890 million for Fiscal Year 2025 Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this request.

Sincerely,

Participating Organizations from the
National English Learner Roundtable

¹ <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-review-of-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2026-budget-request-for-the-department-of-education>

² <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf/english-learners-in-public-schools>

ACTFL

AFT

Association of Language Companies

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents - ALAS

Californians Together

Center for Applied Linguistics

Children at Risk

Council of the Great City Schools

English Learner Portal

Immigrant Connections

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)

Internationals Network for Public Schools

Joint National Committee for Languages

National Association for Bilingual Education

National Association of English Learner Program Administrators (NAELPA)

National Council for Languages and International Studies

National Education Association

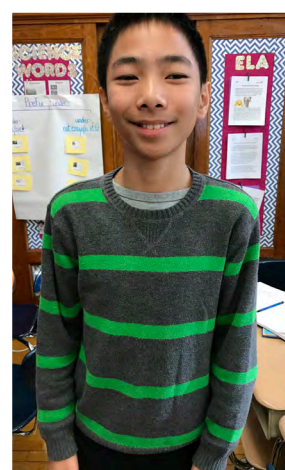
Revolución Educativa

TESOL International Association

UnidosUS

NEWCOMER GUIDANCE

Considerations for Identifying and Supporting Newcomer Students



Considerations for Identifying and Supporting Newcomer Students

Prepared by:
The Council of the Great City Schools

In collaboration with:
The Research Institute for the Study of Language in
Urban Society at the City University of New York

August 2025



About the Council

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 81 large-city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban education and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research, and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth.

Chair of the Board

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CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools

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Council of the Great City Schools

About the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society at the City University of New York

The central mission of RISLUS is to investigate those research questions that are at the nexus of language and the urban environment, especially in New York City. Basic and applied research is conducted on: structural questions, approached from a variety of theoretical viewpoints, associated with the language of urban dwellers, especially but not limited to those who are bilingual or bidialectal; social, and educational issues associated with the language of urban dwellers, with special emphasis on bilingual and bidialectal communities and their language-related strengths and needs; the language and language-learning profile of students at the elementary, secondary and college levels, especially at CUNY and in the NYC public schools, and on the progress of these students in the acquisition of English as well as in the strengthening and development of their native languages and other modern languages; the acquisition of academic literacy skills in English by all students, but especially by students whose native base is another language or another variety of English; the acquisition of academic literacy skills in the home languages of emergent bilinguals, leading to full bilingualism built on knowledge and skill in both the home language and English.

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Contributors

The Council of the Great City Schools convened a working group comprising English learner program administrators and welcome center staff from member districts, and consultants with expertise in designing and administering educational background questionnaires (EBQs) and interviews. This group played a key role in shaping the development of the associated considerations and provided valuable feedback throughout the process.

The *Educational Background Questionnaire* included in this document was piloted in several Council-member districts. Pilot coordinators and intake managers in these districts contributed meaningful insights that informed the refinement of both the questionnaire and the administration protocol.

We extend our sincere thanks to all contributors for generously sharing their time and expertise.

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¹ Job title during the project may no longer be current.

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- **Clark County**—Cindy Flores (Pilot Coordinator), Ingrid Rodriguez (Intake Manager), and Alejandro Grimaldo (Intake Manager)
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- **Aaron Park**, English Learner Policy Fellow (Former)

Project Origin and Purpose

English learners (ELs) are a diverse group of students, covering a wide range of academic and social realities. Newcomers are no exception. Schools are entrusted with meeting the needs of all students, including the newest arrivals to the United States (U.S.). With increasing and persistent inquiries from school districts on how to meet the transitional needs of newcomer students while ensuring appropriate educational placement, the Council of the Great City Schools first sought to identify which students were considered *newcomers*. This step was crucial in determining their specific needs, which are distinct from those of other student groups, such as English learners in general.

Results of a 2021 survey on newcomers in the Great City Schools revealed a wide array of practices implemented by districts to designate students as newcomers. Most included considerations for time in the U.S., while some districts only considered the level of English proficiency. Several districts considered interruptions in schooling for further identification of students as *Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)*.

In light of such disparate identification practices across Council-member districts, the Council's Task Force on English Learners and Bilingual Education recommended developing guidance for an assets-based approach to understand the educational experience and knowledge that newly arrived students and students with potential interruptions in formal education (i.e., students often called "newcomers") possess for programming and placement decisions. A working group of Council-member districts was assembled for this purpose.

Early in the group's work, it was decided that the guidance would need to be paired with an appropriate screening instrument to improve upon existing ones. Already experienced with developing and validating educational background questionnaires (EBQs), notably for the State of New York, The Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS), based at the City University of New York (CUNY), was identified as a collaborator to develop the screening instrument.

This document, and accompanying educational background questionnaire, was jointly developed by The Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS), based at the City University of New York (CUNY), in collaboration with the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS).

Document Organization

Responding to the needs of newcomer students in an appropriate and timely manner requires understanding their educational experiences, especially related to content knowledge and multilingual development. This document offers considerations to help districts determine:

- a) how to define and identify newcomer students;
- b) what educational and language background information is needed for educational decision-making;
- c) how to obtain the needed information; and
- d) how to use the obtained information to inform program and instructional placement, as well as wraparound supports.

Moreover, this document can help districts consider how they collect data and whether the systems in place continue to be the most effective in yielding accurate and actionable information to support newcomer students.

The document is divided into six parts as follows:

- **PART I** provides background information on key terminology and the rationale behind the considerations. Understanding terms such as "newcomer students" and "SLIFE" (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education) is essential for navigating the document. This background also offers framing for the considerations presented in the following sections.
- **PART II** outlines three steps for determining a newcomer definition to guide local responses, such as the development of specialized programs or services.
 - **Step 1** describes the purpose of understanding students' educational backgrounds and experiences before arriving in the United States.
 - **Step 2** outlines how districts would use information about students' prior experiences to create a districtwide response to support newcomers and SLIFE. The rationale for this step is to ensure the information gathered is asset-oriented to help create appropriate support structures.
 - **Step 3** focuses on important pedagogical considerations for placing newcomers in programs and services, ensuring their educational needs are met most effectively.

- **PART III** provides information on what to gather and how to gather it in order to accurately and expeditiously identify newcomers who may require unique and additional support and services. This information guides decision-making regarding policy, programming, and instructional support, ensuring that appropriate resources are provided to meet students' needs.
- **PARTS IV and V** present the considerations and protocols for administering an educational background questionnaire (EBQ) as part of a newcomer screening process, along with a sample EBQ.
- **PART VI** concludes the document with guidance on how to plan for and implement a screening process that incorporates an EBQ.

DRAFT

PART I

Background

DRAFT

Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

PART I

Background

Who Are Newcomers and SLIFE

From the very beginnings of public education in the United States (U.S.), schools—particularly in major cities—have embraced newly arrived children and their families. In more recent years, urban public schools have welcomed families from Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Vietnam, Ukraine, Sudan, and many other nations, offering them a place of refuge, opportunity, and hope for a brighter future. As these families settle in and build their lives, they enrich the nation’s fabric with their distinct contributions, shaping its culture and fortifying its strength.²

How New Arrivals Occur

Journeys to the United States occur through a wide range of ways. Immigrants are permitted to enter the U.S. legally through a variety of programs. (See Table 1.) In fact, over 80 different types of immigrant visas are granted to enter the country, and the U.S. welcomes thousands of refugees each year and provides Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or grants asylum to thousands of others.³ These varied programs are often associated with different experiences and needs in school, a reason for identifying students who may require specialized programming and support. Despite their legal entry, stability remains uncertain for many—visas can expire, TPS designations shift, and humanitarian protections often lack permanence.

2 Casserly, M. (2023, March). *Great city schools step up to meet the needs of refugee children*. Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/35/publication%20docs/CGCS_Welcoming%20Refugees_v4.pdf

3 Ward and, N., & Batalova, J. (2023, June 15). *Refugees and asylees in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states>. In FY 2022, over 36,000 individuals were granted asylum based on data from the Office of Homeland Security Statistics (U.S. Department of Homeland Security).

Table 1. Major Immigration Programs for Newly Arrived Students and Families

Program	General Qualifications	Implications for Students and Potential Needs	Key Conditions and Employment Authorization ⁴
Dependent Visa ⁵	Children of visa-holding parents (workers, students, etc.)	More stability while visa holder maintains status, but uncertainty if visa is lost.	Must adhere to the visa requirements, including living with the primary visa holder. Usually requires a separate work authorization (such as an Employment Authorization Document).
Asylum and United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) ⁶	Individuals, including children and families, fleeing persecution in home country (e.g., Congolese refugees)	More stability once asylum is granted, but high emotional burden from past trauma and legal uncertainties.	Must maintain status by complying with the terms of their protection. Eligible to work immediately upon approval of status.
Humanitarian Parole ⁷ (Case-by-Case)	Individuals, including children and families, with urgent humanitarian needs (e.g., Ukrainian, Afghan, and Venezuelan parole programs) who would otherwise be ineligible for admission to the United States, on a case-by-case basis	Highly unstable—status is temporary and does not guarantee long-term stay. High emotional stress from displacement and uncertainty.	Must leave the U.S. by the end of the authorized period unless an extension is granted. Work authorization is not automatically granted; applicants may need to apply separately for work permits.
Temporary Protected Status (TPS) ⁸ (Designated Nations)	Eligible nationals from designated crisis-affected countries (e.g., Haiti, Venezuela) already in the United States by a specified date	Instability due to uncertain renewals; potential for long stays if TPS is renewed. Emotional strain from family displacement and fear of losing status.	Must re-register during the designated periods and remain in compliance with the conditions set by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Authorized to work during the designated period of protection.

4 An Employment Authorization Document (EAD) may function as an identity document for some, with no age restrictions for obtaining an EAD. Such an authorization, therefore, does not supersede laws concerning the employment of minors. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2025, February 26). *Chapter 2—Eligibility requirements*. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-10-part-a-chapter-2#footnote-1>

5 U.S. Department of State. (2025). *U.S. visas*. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>

6 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2024, October 22). *Refugees*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>

7 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2025, January 24). *Humanitarian or significant public benefit parole for aliens outside the United States*. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian_parole

8 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2025, February 26). *Temporary protected status*. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>

Illustrating Unique Experiences and Needs: Refugees and Asylees

Some new arrivals, specifically refugees and asylees, are fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries.

- A **refugee** is a person located outside the United States who is of special humanitarian concern to the United States and has been persecuted or has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, and is admissible to the United States. (See Section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.)⁹
- An **asylee** is a person who is already present in the United States or is seeking admission at a port of entry because of a well-founded fear of persecution.¹⁰

Refugees are required to apply for Lawful Permanent Resident (“Green Card”) status one year after being admitted. Asylees may apply for Lawful Permanent Resident status one year after they are granted asylum.¹¹

The process to obtain refugee or asylee status in the U.S. is long and complicated.

Refugee Process

To apply for refugee status through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), individuals must first receive a referral—either from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a U.S. embassy, certain non-governmental organizations, or eligible family members already in the U.S. Every year, the President, after consulting with Congress and government agencies, sets a refugee admissions ceiling and determines which groups or nationalities qualify as priorities based on humanitarian concerns, family reunification needs, or special U.S. interests.¹²

To qualify as a refugee, applicants must demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, and they usually must be outside their home country (though exceptions exist for certain cases). After referral, they complete an application, provide detailed biographic, background, and security information, and attend an in-person interview with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer abroad, who assesses whether they meet the legal definition of a refugee under U.S. immigration law. If approved, they undergo a medical exam, receive cultural orientation, and work with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to arrange travel, which can take several months to over a year, depending on circumstances. Upon arrival, refugees can work immediately, receive resettlement assistance, and must apply for a “Green Card” (formally known as Permanent Resident Card) after one year. They can also petition to bring spouses and children within two years of arrival.¹³

9 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2015, November 12). *Refugees and asylum*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum>

10 Ibid.

11 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2024, October 22). *Refugees*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>

12 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2024, November 22). *The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) consultation and worldwide processing priorities*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/usrap>

13 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2024, October 22). *Refugees*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>

Asylum Process

Asylum-seekers face multi-year delays as they wait for their asylum interviews and hearings. After filing asylum applications with USCIS, they often wait over six years for an interview with an asylum officer. Those seeking asylum in immigration court wait an average of four years for their final hearing before an immigration judge. At the start of 2024, both the USCIS asylum office and the immigration courts had backlogs of over one million asylum applications each.¹⁴

These long wait times due to asylum office and immigration court backlogs have a devastating impact on individuals seeking asylum and their families. The legal limbo leaves them in fear of deportation. Families also suffer prolonged separations, as they must wait years for the asylum grants necessary to petition to bring spouses and children to the U.S. Living conditions while waiting for asylum adjudication are often harsh for families. Asylum-seekers face restrictions to work, making it exceedingly difficult to support their families. Moreover, they are generally not eligible for federal public benefits, including cash assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Social Security.¹⁵

The Role and Responsibilities of Public Schools in the United States

As one of the first U.S. institutions to welcome newly arrived families and children, public schools play an important role in the integration of immigrant families into U.S. society. The journey from home countries and the adjustment to a new country often result in a host of socioeconomic and social-emotional needs that are important to address for the academic success of children in school. These needs are roughly encapsulated in the use of terminology, such as “newcomers.” It is important to note that *newcomer* is not statutorily defined, nor is the term used consistently across school districts and states.

Newcomer Students

Students new to the U.S., and often called *newcomers*, include individuals who have an immigrant visa, or who may be a refugee or asylee, or even be in limbo awaiting a stable immigrant status (e.g., those who have Temporary Protected Status). The 2016 and 2023 editions of the *Newcomer Toolkit*, published by the U.S. Department of Education, elaborate on the many groups that fall under the umbrella term of *newcomer*.¹⁶

14 Human Rights First. (2024, July 9). *Saving lives, ending inefficiencies*. Retrieved February 26, 2025, from <https://humanrightsfirst.org/library/saving-lives-ending-inefficiencies/>

15 International Rescue Committee. (2024, October 31). *What happens once asylum seekers arrive in the U.S.?* International Rescue Committee. <https://www.rescue.org/article/what-happens-once-asylum-seekers-arrive-us>

16 Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023, June). *Newcomer toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/newcomer-toolkit>

In this document, “newcomer” is used generally to apply to any of the related terms in Table 2. On the other hand, when specific groups are referenced, such as “SLIFE,” the specific term is used.

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Some newcomers are students who have experienced gaps in their formal education due to factors like displacement, conflict, or unstable living conditions. These students, frequently called SLIFE, often face challenges in foundational academic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and may require specialized support to learn the structures/processes of schooling and to acquire foundational skills.

Table 2 lists various terms, referenced or defined federally, related to newly arrived students who may be referred to as “newcomers.” The U.S. Department of Education’s *Newcomer Toolkit* (2023) non-statutorily describes newcomers based on three factors: (1) still learning English (i.e., English learner status), (2) born outside the U.S., and (3) less than three years of school in the U.S. However, state and/or local definitions for “newcomers” may include other considerations. The table summarizes how these factors apply to the various terms. In this document, “newcomer” is used generally to apply to any of the related terms in the table. On the other hand, when specific groups are referenced, such as “SLIFE,” the specific term is used.

Table 2. Federal References to Newly Arrived Students

Term and Definition	English Learner Status	Place of Birth	Time in U.S. Schools
Federal Non-Statutory			
Newcomers. K-12 students born outside the U.S. who have arrived within the last 3 years and are still learning English. An umbrella term including refugees, SLIFE, and voluntary immigrants with varying educational backgrounds. (<i>Newcomer Toolkit</i> , 2023) ¹⁷	Yes	Born outside the U.S.	Less than 3 years
Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Students with gaps in schooling due to war, displacement, migration, etc. Includes some refugees and other displaced learners. (<i>Newcomer Toolkit</i> , 2023) ¹⁸	Typically ELs; often need literacy in home language and academic support	Generally born outside the U.S.	Varies

17 Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023, June). *Newcomer toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/newcomer-toolkit>

18 Also called *Students with Interrupted Formal Education* (SIFE). Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023, June). *Newcomer toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/newcomer-toolkit>

Table 2. Federal References to Newly Arrived Students

Term and Definition	English Learner Status	Place of Birth	Time in U.S. Schools
Federal Statutory			
Immigrant Children & Youth. Individuals ages 3–21, not born in the U.S., in U.S. schools <3 years. (ESEA) ¹⁹	Yes or No	Born outside the U.S.	Less than 3 years
Recently Arrived English Learners (RAELs). English learners enrolled in U.S. schools for less than 12 months. States can adjust how these students are included in accountability systems. (ESEA) ²⁰	Yes	May be U.S.-born or immigrant	Less than 12 months
Refugees/Asylees. Individuals who have been forced to flee their home country due to persecution, war, or violence. Refugees are granted entry before arrival in the U.S.; asylees apply for protection after arrival. (Refugee Act of 1980 / Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)) ²¹	Yes or No	Born outside the U.S.	Varies

Acculturative Stress and Migratory Grief

Edited by: Alejandra Murray, Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Acculturative stress and migratory grief are deeply interconnected. Both reflect the psychological and emotional challenges that newcomers face as they adapt to a new environment.

Acculturative stress refers to the normal psychophysiological response to the major life change of migrating and adjusting to a new country and culture. It includes the stress of facing specific migration-related challenges, such as resettlement difficulties, accessing adequate housing and employment, language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and navigating healthcare, education, and legal systems, often without a support network and, in some cases, immigration status uncertainty.

¹⁹ Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq. (2015).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2024, October 22). *Refugees*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>

This stress is experienced by the family unit and can manifest emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively, with students experiencing feelings of insecurity, sadness, confusion, anxiety, social withdrawal, and even physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, and more.

Alongside acculturative stress, newcomers often experience migratory grief, a natural emotional response to the many significant losses that can accompany migration.

There are seven core types of migratory grief:

1. **Loss of support network:** The loss of close relationships with family and friends, along with the challenge of building connections in a new country.
2. **Loss of language:** The “loss” of one’s native language when migrating to a country with a different language, as well as the challenge of learning and adapting to a new linguistic environment.
3. **Loss of culture and traditions:** The “loss” of one’s culture, understood as a set of values, customs, beliefs, cuisines, activities, and traditions. Migrants must cope with losing contact with their culture of origin while striving to adapt to the culture of the new country.
4. **Loss of land:** The loss of connection with one’s homeland and the effort to adapt to a new geography and climate. Elements such as light, temperature, colors, scents, and landscapes can have a significant emotional impact on migrants.
5. **Loss of social status:** Many migrants must start from scratch and take on precarious jobs, particularly when their professional qualifications are not immediately recognized in the new country.
6. **Loss of group identity:** Includes the loss of connection with one’s original identity group and the challenge of finding a new group to belong to. It also involves the potential exposure to prejudice, racism, and xenophobia in the new country.
7. **Loss of physical integrity:** Refers to the physical risks migrants may face when relocating, such as workplace injuries from physically demanding or hazardous jobs, household accidents due to overcrowded living conditions, fear of deportation, mistreatment or abuse (including sexual abuse), dangerous travel conditions, and exposure to unfamiliar diseases.

The grieving process is a normal and expected reaction to these profound losses and plays a crucial role in a migrant’s adaptation. Migratory grief often requires a reconstruction of identity, as individuals reconcile their past and present selves in a new cultural and social context.

The emotional symptoms of migratory grief, such as deep sadness, anger, fear, and helplessness, often overlap with the emotional burden of acculturative stress. For this reason, educators and school districts must recognize these reactions as part of a normal adjustment process, not as mental disorders.

Immigrant students may exhibit withdrawal, frustration, or regressive behaviors while navigating both the stress of adapting and the grief of loss.

Considerations for Districts and Schools

To support newcomers, school districts should recognize both acculturative stress and migratory grief as interconnected aspects of newcomers' experiences and strive to provide assistance. Assistance can include providing a stable and supportive environment, ensuring basic needs are met, and fostering emotional self-regulation. Teachers, counselors, and school staff should be trained to identify these symptoms and provide appropriate support, including offering expressive activities, mindfulness practices, and resources that help students process their grief. By understanding and addressing both acculturative stress and migratory grief, schools can better help immigrant students navigate their adjustment and successfully integrate into their new environment.

When to Refer Newcomers to School Counselors or Specialized Support

- Prolonged sadness that prevents the child from playing or interacting with others
- Frequent, intense outbursts or aggressive behavior
- Frequent, uncontrollable crying episodes
- Excessive worry that affects concentration and academic performance
- Frequent relational problems, including isolation from peers and family
- Intense, highly activating flashbacks
- Serious difficulty sleeping with prolonged periods of insomnia and/or recurrent nightmares about lived experiences
- Disconnection from reality or denial of what happened
- Frequent physical complaints (somatic symptoms)
- Irrational fears of unfamiliar places or people

Source: Summary of *Terapia para Migrantes*²² Presentation to Council of the Great City Schools by Alejandra Murray, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, on May 31, 2024. Murray, A. (2024, May 31). *Key concepts to understand and support immigrant students* [PowerPoint slides].

22 Terapia para Migrantes. (n.d.). *Terapia para Migrantes*. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://www.terapiaparamigrantes.com/>

Legal Obligations: Access to Public Education

“Public school districts may not deny access to an education to any child based on immigration status. Schools must provide all students with equal access to a public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their or their parent’s actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status, and determine whether the student is eligible, on the same basis as any other student, to participate in programs supported with local, state, and federal funds.”

– *Dear Colleague Letter: Resources for Ensuring Equal Access to Education for Immigrant Students (January 2025)*

Fortunately, schools do not need to decipher the myriad of immigrant visas and other temporary immigration statuses of children enrolling in schools or their parents. Schools have a legal obligation to serve ELs, migrant students, newcomers, unaccompanied minors, and others.²³ In fact, schools do not ask about immigration status or collect this information. It is unlawful to create barriers to enrolling newcomer students in public K-12 education.²⁴ The U.S. Department of Education has provided legal and non-regulatory guidance and resources to support districts in meeting their obligations, including the following:

- **Dear Colleague Letter: Resources for Ensuring Equal Access to Education for Immigrant Students (January 8, 2025).**²⁵ This document outlines schools’ legal obligations to provide equal educational opportunities to immigrant and newcomer students, irrespective of their own or their parents’ immigration status. It highlights key federal protections, including *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), and emphasizes the need for language assistance services, inclusive enrollment practices, and accessible communication with families. The document also provides resources from the U.S. Department of Education, such as the *Newcomer Toolkit*²⁶ and *English Learner Family Toolkit*,²⁷ to support educators in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of English learners. Additionally, it details available federal programs, grants, and technical assistance to help schools comply with civil rights laws and enhance educational access for all students.
- **Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents (January 7, 2015).**²⁸ This document emphasizes the legal obligations of State Educational Agencies (SEAs) and school districts to provide English learners with equal access to quality education. It outlines federal laws, including Title VI, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act

23 U.S. Department of Education. (2025, January 14). *Equal education opportunities for English learners*. Retrieved February 26, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/race-color-and-national-origin-discrimination/race-color-and-national-origin-discrimination-key-issues/equal-education-opportunities-english>

24 Lhamon, C. E., Rosenfelt, P. H., & Samuels, J. (2014, May 8). *Dear colleague letter: School enrollment procedures*. U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/05/08/plylerletter.pdf>

25 Cardona, M. (2025, January 8). *Dear colleague letter: Resources for ensuring equal access to education for immigrant students*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/key-policy-letters/dear-colleague-letter-resources-ensuring-equal-access-education-immigrant-students>

26 Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023, June). *Newcomer toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/newcomer-toolkit>

27 Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023, September). *English learner family toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit>

28 Lhamon, C. E., & Gupta, V. (2015, January 7). *Dear colleague letter: English learner students and limited English proficient parents*. U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>

(EEOA), and Title III of the ESEA, which mandate language support services and prohibit discrimination based on national origin. It also provides guidance on compliance issues, strategies for using federal funding effectively, and ensuring meaningful access to school-related information for parents.

- **Dear Colleague Letter: School Enrollment Procedures (May 8, 2014).**²⁹ This document reaffirms the legal obligation of school districts to provide equal access to public education for all children, regardless of their immigration status or that of their parents. It highlights federal protections under Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the landmark *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) decision, which prohibits schools from denying education to undocumented children. The document warns against enrollment practices that may discourage immigrant families from registering their children and outlines permissible and impermissible enrollment procedures, emphasizing that schools cannot require proof of citizenship, a Social Security number, or specific documentation that would exclude undocumented students. It also clarifies that while schools can require proof of residency and age, they must ensure these policies do not unintentionally discriminate against immigrant families. The guidance aims to help school districts comply with federal civil rights laws and create an inclusive educational environment for all students.

Identifying “Immigrant Children and Youth” for Title III Immigrant Subgrants

Under ESEA section 3114(d)(1), State Education Agencies (SEAs) must reserve up to 15 percent of their Title III allotment to award subgrants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that have experienced a “significant increase” in the enrollment of immigrant children and youth compared to the previous two fiscal years.³⁰ These subgrants support educational programs for recently arrived students, but eligibility is based solely on the ESEA definition of “immigrant children and youth,” not on immigration status. The statutory definition under ESEA section 3201(5) identifies a student as an *immigrant child or youth* based only on three factors: age (3-21), place of birth (outside of the U.S., the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico), and length of time enrolled in U.S. schools (less than three academic years).

“Immigrant children and youth” classification does not indicate a student’s legal residency or citizenship status. For example, a student who was born abroad to U.S. citizen parents and recently moved to the United States would meet the ESEA definition of an immigrant child, just as a student who arrived on a visa would. Even though their legal statuses are different, both students would be counted as immigrant children and youth for funding purposes. Since this classification is strictly for educational support and does not require or reveal immigration status, school districts have no reason to ascertain immigration status. Furthermore, under *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), school districts cannot take actions that might discourage students from enrolling, such as requesting immigration documents.

29 Lhamon, C. E., Rosenfelt, P. H., & Samuels, J. (2014, May 8). *Dear colleague letter: School enrollment procedures*. U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/05/08/plylerletter.pdf>

30 U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2025). *The biennial report to Congress on the implementation of the Title III state formula grant program, school years 2020–22*. Washington, D.C.

The Challenge of Characterizing Newcomers Holistically

The inconsistency of “newcomer” definitions across federal, state, and local agencies and the absence of screening protocols and assessments in students’ native language have resulted in a wide range of district-designed protocols to identify the educational experiences of newly arrived students and their related needs to succeed in U.S. schools. Thus, the term “newcomer” encompasses considerable heterogeneity.

The *Newcomer Toolkit* (2023) specifically calls on educators to consider the individual characteristics and experiences of students when making programming and instructional decisions.³¹ Overcoming the challenge of identifying the relevant individual characteristics and experiences of newly arrived students with appropriate processes and instruments is key to making proper instructional placements, equipping educators, and providing relevant support services that lead to success in U.S. schools. Districts have stepped up to the challenge of preparing educators and designing programs and services to address the heterogeneity of needs, building on the rich experiences that newcomers bring.

- **Albuquerque Public Schools** developed the *Newcomer Summer Program* for students in grades 6-12 by leveraging partnerships with Albuquerque’s local refugee resettlement agency, multiple community partners, and funding from various sources. The program offers a diverse curriculum that includes math, social studies, English, music, and art, supplemented by weekly field trips to local cultural sites and instruction on navigating local transportation. This program has been successful in facilitating academic, cultural, and social integration for newcomers and SLIFE (Baca, 2024).
- **Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s** Multilingual Multicultural Education Department established the *EL High School Acceleration Program*, which provides non-traditional opportunities for students to receive credit for courses taken abroad and offers accelerated pathways to earn high school credits for graduation and workforce preparedness (González & Berrios, 2024).
- **Metro Nashville Public Schools** added EL teachers and boosted resources for translation and interpretation. Professional development pathways for EL educators were created in addition to providing wraparound supports from counseling, social workers, and other services. Frequent check-ins with new students are conducted, supported by counselors and interpreters, to ensure their needs are consistently met (Hegwood et al., 2022).
- **New York City Public Schools’** Division of Multilingual Learners created “SIFeshare,” an interactive professional learning network to help educators build strong learning communities for serving SLIFE and newly arrived ELs (Trobe, 2023).

Importantly, some districts have been instrumental in efforts to shift deficit-oriented mindsets to asset-based ones that recognize newcomers for the resilience, rich experiences, and life knowledge they bring. These districts create environments that foster belonging and confidence while enriching the entire school community with cross-cultural understanding and global awareness.

31 Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023, June). *Newcomer toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/newcomer-toolkit>

Designing Opportunities for Asset-based Learning

New York City Public Schools implements a *Stand-Alone English as a New Language (ENL)* model for newcomers/SLIFE to access grade-level texts and receive dedicated English language development in all classrooms. The district also utilizes thematic units of study to provide opportunities for newcomers to actively engage in their learning. Instructional goals are designed to build background knowledge, target vocabulary development, and increase access to grade-level texts. Teachers also encourage the use of home language as a resource and aim to build student agency. Additionally, peer interactions are leveraged to support learning, especially in areas such as learning figurative language, deepening understanding of key ideas and concepts, and comparing language and language patterns.

Opportunities for Newcomers to Participate in Grade-level Content: *Asset-based Learning Structures*

- Team across content areas to include high-leverage, consistent routines for sense-making
- Design scaffolds that promote access and engagement through 6 evidence-based instructional goals for ELLs
- Include grade-level knowledge building with connected cycles of reading, talking, and writing activities
- Build participation alongside their peers, strategically leveraging home language

<u>*Identify a set of consistent routines across a thematic unit</u> to promote language, literacy, and content growth:	<u>*Plan lessons across the week with a focus on six high-leverage instructional goals for ELLs:</u>	<u>*Design scaffolded activities within read, talk, write cycles</u> that support success with the instructional goals:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three Reads Protocol 2. Text Translate Protocol 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build Background Knowledge 2. Target Vocabulary Development 3. Increase Access to Grade-Level Texts 4. Use Home Language (HL) as a Resource 5. Build Student Agency 6. Use Peer Interactions to Support Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with cognates (vocabulary development) • Making sense of key themes and concepts (build background, vocabulary development) • Learning figurative language (peer interactions, HL) • Deepening understanding of key ideas concepts (use of home language, peer interactions) • Comparing language and language patterns (peer interactions, HL) • Modeling language for authentic purposes (increase access to grade-level texts, HL)

Source: Adapted from Baez, J. (2023, May 4). *Thematic units of study for ELLs: Designing opportunities for newcomer ELLs to participate in their learning* [PowerPoint slides].

In the absence of clearly defined protocols or terminology, school districts have implemented efforts to identify newcomer students and ascertain their educational and non-academic needs to make decisions about instructional programming and wraparound supports. These efforts include developing or adopting questionnaires and protocols administered by multilingual staff (or using interpretation services) to identify the diverse range of skills, abilities, and educational experiences that students bring with them to the United States and administering literacy and numeracy assessments when available in the students' home languages.

These efforts are examples of districts tackling the unique challenge of evaluating and interpreting the educational experience and knowledge students bring from abroad, within the framework of the U.S. K-12 system, to provide newly arrived students with meaningful access to public education. However, depending on how these challenges are addressed, the term “newcomers” may provide very little actionable or meaningful insights into the needs of these students. For instance, some newcomer students arrive with English language proficiency skills, while others may know little to no English. Some newcomer students may have strong academic skills in core academic subjects, such as math, science, and language arts, while others may have experienced significant interruptions to academic instruction and foundational skills development.³² Yet, in many current identification schemes, these differences are not recognized or leveraged as assets.

Welcoming Afghan Refugees to Tulsa Public Schools

Fall 2021

In the fall of 2021, Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) began welcoming the arrival of Afghan refugee students and families.³³

Enrollment and Housing Support

Initially, many of these refugees were housed in temporary accommodations (e.g., hotels). To ensure enrollment was as seamless as possible, TPS implemented on-site enrollment services at the temporary accommodations, enabling families to register their children without needing to travel far from their temporary homes.

Parent Orientation and Support

To alleviate confusion and build trust with newly arrived families, offering an essential foundation for their children’s educational journey, TPS prioritized providing in-depth orientation for parents at the temporary housing accommodations. The two-hour orientation sessions introduced parents to the U.S. education system and specific details about TPS programs. TPS provided translated materials and offered interpreters, ensuring that communication was clear and accessible in Pashto and Dari. As a result, parents felt more empowered to navigate the educational system, with the opportunity to ask questions and revisit information whenever necessary.

Instructional Support for Refugee Students

Upon enrollment, refugee students were placed in the Tulsa Virtual Academy (TVA),³⁴ which provided a flexible, online learning environment. The TVA offered both synchronous and asynchronous classes, allowing students the flexibility to learn at their own pace while receiving support from live instructors.

³² Ibid.

³³ Since 2021, Tulsa Public Schools has welcomed refugees from other countries around the world and expanded the services and supports for these new arrivals.

³⁴ School districts were still responding to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the fall of 2021.

To address the specific needs of English learners, TPS deployed its language and cultural services team to provide direct, in-person support at the temporary housing units twice a week. This direct instruction focused on foundational English language skills as well as helping students navigate the online learning platforms.

To further support academic integration, TPS instructors visited the temporary housing units once a week, where they worked directly with students to establish relationships and ensure they were successfully engaging with the online platform. This weekly check-in helped ensure that students not only received the academic instruction they needed but also had the emotional support necessary for their transition.

Support and Coordination

Recognizing the complexity of refugee resettlement, TPS formed a refugee task force, bringing together cross-functional teams from across the district. This task force met weekly to coordinate services and address the unique needs of refugee students and their families. The task force's focus was on ensuring that services such as special education, mental health support, transportation, and child nutrition were accessible to all families, particularly those in short-term housing.

TPS also partnered with local organizations to offer job opportunities for refugees and to hire a refugee navigator who could serve as a liaison between the families and the school district. This partnership aimed to address not only educational needs but also employment opportunities for refugee adults. Additionally, TPS collaborated with three local organizations to fund adult English as a second language (ESL) classes for refugee parents.

Community and Transportation Support

Transportation was another critical aspect of refugee integration into the school system. To help students access resources around the city, TPS partnered with Tulsa Transit to offer free bus rides to secondary school students. Students were provided with student IDs that allowed them to use public transportation at no cost, thus facilitating their mobility and access to important services.

Once students transitioned to neighborhood schools, TPS made sure to support them with orientation and integration. School staff offered tours and extended time for families to familiarize themselves with the school environment. Recognizing the American school system might differ significantly from what refugee students were accustomed to, staff worked to ensure that students felt comfortable and confident in their new surroundings.

For secondary students, TPS coordinated with school teams to identify student leaders who could help orient new refugee students, fostering a sense of community and inclusion. Additionally, refugee students were grouped into cohorts, ensuring they shared the same bell schedule and courses, which helped create a support network among peers.

Source: Tulsa Public Schools. (2021, December 15). *Tulsa PS refugee support update* [Letter].

PART II

District Considerations for Identifying and Serving Newcomers

DRAFT

Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

PART II

District Considerations for Identifying and Serving Newcomers

Part II outlines three steps to assist districts in carefully considering **why** and **how** they would classify students as newcomers and/or Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). The decision to identify and service newcomers and SLIFE separately from the general EL population can lead to added complexity to which the district must respond, including the heterogeneity of newcomers and the commitment of time, staff, and resources required to address the identified needs.

- Step 1:** Districts articulate the purpose for which they wish to screen for and classify newcomer students.
- Step 2:** Districts determine programmatic responses to the academic and non-academic needs of newcomers and their families and plan for allocating district resources to support programs and services.
- Step 3:** Districts articulate a sound pedagogical rationale for making newcomer placements, given their needs, within the context of the district's programs and resources.

STEP 1: Articulate the Purpose for Identifying Newcomers

Purpose for Identifying Newcomers

First, the district needs to determine the purpose for identifying students as newcomers and/or SLIFE, including how such identification benefits the students. Figure 1 shows six of the main reasons why Council-member districts identify newcomers and SLIFE. These reasons include providing programming and resources for identified students, as well as administrative data collection and reporting requirements.

Figure 1. Reasons for Identifying Newcomers and/or SLIFE



In the absence of a federal statutory definition for *newcomers* or *SLIFE*, districts and states have the discretion to define and use these terms. Using this discretion wisely means knowing WHICH terms to use, the PURPOSE for using specific terms, and ensuring the definitions capture the unique district contexts, such as funding schema and program design. Districts may want to consider the following questions to help determine what drives the intent to classify students as newcomers and/or SLIFE—and how the classification benefits students in ways existing programs might not support:

Programs and Services

- Does the district design and implement, or plan to design and implement, targeted instructional and/or support programs for newcomers?
- Is the district providing **specific** services or programs for identified newcomers/SLIFE and their families that differ from those offered to other students new to the district?
- Can the district address the needs and concerns of newcomers and/or SLIFE in ways that are manageable and align with the needs of other student groups?

In the absence of a federal statutory definition for *newcomers* or *SLIFE*, districts and states have the discretion to define and use these terms. Using this discretion wisely means knowing WHICH terms to use, the PURPOSE for using specific terms, and ensuring that the definitions capture the unique district contexts, such as funding schema and program design.

Accountability, Funding, and Reporting

- How does the district collect data related to newcomers for accountability and funding eligibility? Do these data collection practices need improvement?
- Does the district seek funding from federal or state sources or philanthropic organizations?
- Is the district responding to state and/or federal agency reporting requirements?

Table 3 lists some of the most common purposes for identifying newly arrived students, the corresponding terms (included under the “newcomers” umbrella term), and definition sources.

Table 3. Common Purposes for Identifying Newly Arrived Students

Purpose	Terms and Considerations
Accountability	
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) ACCOUNTABILITY	Under ESSA Title I regulations for ELA assessments, ³⁵ Recently Arrived English Learners (RAELs) are defined as students who have been enrolled in a school in one of the 50 U.S. states or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months.
Funding	
Federal FUNDING for immigrant children and youth under ESSA Title III	Per Title III of ESSA, Immigrant Children and Youth (A) are aged 3 through 21; (B) were not born in any State; and (C) have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than 3 full academic years. ³⁶ Districts can receive Title III allocations based on the SEA grant distribution criteria.
State or local FUNDING	Districts may access state or local funds in accordance with definitions and eligibility requirements defined at those levels.
Programming and Support	
District-designed, targeted INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS	Districts need to identify educational needs specific to newcomers to inform program components that provide instructional support and access to educational opportunities.
District-designed, RESPONSIVE SUPPORTS (mental health, socioeconomic, legal, etc.)	Districts need to determine culturally responsive and appropriate services, staffing, location of services, and wraparound supports (e.g., transportation needs) that meet the unique needs of newcomers.
Data Collection	
District DATA COLLECTION for funding advocacy, enrollment projections, and evaluation	Districts need to enhance the student information system (SIS) to include fields related to newcomers to support seeking federal, state, and local funds; to operationalize accountability; and to evaluate programs.
DATA COLLECTION to inform programming, funding, and accountability in response to newly emerging needs	Districts newly experiencing significant enrollment of newcomers need to collect data on enrollment and student needs to inform programs and supports.

35 For *Exception for Recently Arrived English Learners* (ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)), see ESSA Flexibilities. U.S. Department of Education. (2018, October). ESSA flexibilities. U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essa-flexibilities-document-for-publication.pdf>

36 Defined in Section 3201(5) of the ESEA. U.S. Department of Education. (2019, January 2). *Non-regulatory guidance: English learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidenglishlearners10219.pdf>

Creating Schoolwide Systems to Support Newly Arrived English Learners

New York City Public Schools produced *A Leader's Resource for Welcoming Newly Arrived ELLs*,³⁷ to support school leaders and intake teams in assessing and strengthening school-level systems to meet the needs of newly arrived English learners. The tool focuses on school-level planning in three key areas—human resources, physical resources, and school culture/professional learning—guiding them to consider specific staffing, instructional, and support practices for newly arrived students, including the alignment of bilingual and English as a New Language (ENL) teaching assignments with student needs, hiring bilingually-certified staff, and offering advisory programs tailored for this population.

The tool also outlines services and supports that are distinct for newly arrived students and their families. These include creating specialized intake teams with cross-role membership (administrators, ENL teachers, parent coordinators, and social workers), developing multilingual welcome materials, designing orientation sessions specifically for newly arrived families, and creating systems for targeted communication, such as using messaging apps and hosting Saturday adult classes. The tool also encourages schools to partner with multilingual community-based organizations (CBOs) to expand available supports, further differentiating these services from what might typically be offered to other new students.

Schools are encouraged to embed newcomer needs into grade-level and departmental team meetings, campus-wide cultural events, and professional learning for all staff. Data-sharing protocols, collaborative team reviews, and feedback mechanisms (such as surveys and advisory groups) are built into the process to ensure newcomer supports are monitored alongside broader schoolwide efforts. This approach allows schools to address newcomer needs in ways that are intentionally designed for this population, while still aligning with the school's overall systems for student support.

Reasons NOT to Identify Students as Newcomer/SLIFE

Caution must be taken to ensure that the identification of SLIFE facilitates support that is truly in the best interest of students, rather than simply making their coursework easier or creating unnecessary isolation from their peers. The goal should always be to provide meaningful opportunities for academic and social integration, fostering their growth within an academically rigorous but supportive environment.

With long-term academic success and socialization as critical outcomes, certain practices should be avoided to ensure classification does not inadvertently hinder students' progress or limit opportunities:



1. **Do not give less rigorous content to “make things easier.”** The temptation may arise to reduce the academic rigor for newcomers or SLIFE in an attempt to make their transition easier. However, this approach can be detrimental in the long term. It can prevent them from developing the necessary skills they need to succeed academically and may convey a deficit-oriented message that they are not capable of engaging in the same level of coursework as their peers.

³⁷ New York City Public Schools Division of Inclusive & Accessible Learning. (2024, September). *The first steps: A leader's resource for welcoming newly arrived ELLs in NYC Public Schools*. New York City Public Schools.

2. **Do not segregate newcomers.** It is crucial that newcomers or SLIFE are not isolated from their peers. While targeted support may be necessary, it is equally important for newcomers and SLIFE to have opportunities for peer interaction and participation in the broader classroom community. Isolation limits social and academic integration, which can result in feelings of alienation or a lack of motivation. Inclusion, collaboration, and exposure to the same standards as their peers are essential for their academic and personal growth.
3. **Do not let concerns about graduation requirements limit support or opportunities.** Graduation requirements are important, but focusing too much on meeting these benchmarks can lead to rushed decisions that prioritize fulfilling requirements over providing meaningful support for newcomers and SLIFE, aligned with their interests and goals. In other cases, they may lead to a sense that investing in students with barriers to graduation is not worthwhile or result in accountability-based penalties.

Districts that choose to identify newcomers/SLIFE to provide targeted support can address underlying concerns constructively, reducing the potential negative effects of labeling. Table 4 offers examples of common observations and associated productive and unproductive reasons for identifying newcomers/SLIFE. Step 2 will expand on the needs of newcomers/SLIFE and potential responses that are more constructive.

Table 4. Unproductive and Constructive Reasons for Classification

Concern	Unproductive Reason for Classification 	Constructive Reason for Classification 
Struggling with academic content	Provide newcomers/SLIFE with less challenging courses and assignments to “make things easier.”	Train teachers of newcomers/SLIFE to offer additional time or targeted support to help them engage with the same level of content as their peers.
Adjusting to a new environment	Place newcomers/SLIFE in a separate class or school to “protect them.”	Provide an intentionally designed environment with support, promoting social and academic integration.
Meeting graduation requirements	Lower academic standards, or assign students to a lower track.	Develop partnerships to provide academic acceleration to newcomers/SLIFE in addition to supporting them to develop foundational literacy skills.

Academic Acceleration to Meet Graduation Requirements

Cleveland Metropolitan School District's *English Learner High School Acceleration Program* is designed to support newcomers aged 16-22 who have prior schooling experience but lack official transcripts. Many newcomer students, particularly refugees, enter the school system with significant academic knowledge but are placed in lower grades due to missing records. This program seeks to address that challenge by offering a structured yet flexible pathway to graduation, allowing students to earn credit for prior learning while receiving intensive language support.

Students in this program undergo pre- and post-assessments to determine their competency in various subjects. Non-state-tested courses, such as Health, World Languages, Fine Arts, and General Electives, can be completed through project-based learning or credit recovery if needed. For state-tested courses, including English, Algebra, American History, and American Government, students must complete in-person coursework following the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) guidelines. The program is designed to enable students to graduate within two years, utilizing an intensive semester-based schedule that ensures they stay on track with their educational goals.

Sample Schedules



Year 1 Sample Schedule			Year 1 Sample Schedule		
Semester 1			Semester 2		
Period	Courses	Staffing Requirements	Period	Courses	Staffing Requirements
1	ELA/ELD 1	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	1	ELA/ELD 2	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
2	ELA/ELD 1	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	2	ELA/ELD 2	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
3	ELA/ELD 1	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	3	ELA/ELD 2	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
4	Lunch		4	Lunch	
5	American History	SS/TESOL Endorsed Teacher	5	American Government	SS/TESOL Endorsed Teacher
6	Algebra 1	Math/TESOL endorsed Teacher	6	Algebra 1	Math/TESOL endorsed Teacher
7	Credit Recovery	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	7	Credit Recovery	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
8	Project-Based Learning	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	8	Project-Based Learning	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
PBL is assisted by ELA/TESOL Endorsed Teacher, but evaluated by content teacher.			PBL is assisted by ELA/TESOL Endorsed Teacher, but evaluated by content teacher.		
Year 2 Sample Schedule			Year 2 Sample Schedule		
Semester 1			Semester 2		
Period	Courses	Staffing Requirements	Period	Courses	Staffing Requirements
1	ELA/ELD 3	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	1	ELA/ELD 3	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
2	ELA/ELD 3	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	2	ELA/ELD 3	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
3	ELA/ELD 3	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	3	ELA/ELD 3	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
4	Lunch		4	Lunch	
5	Credit Recovery	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	5	Credit Recovery	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
6	Credit Recovery	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	6	Credit Recovery	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
7	Project-Based Learning	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	7	Project-Based Learning	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
8	Project-Based Learning	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher	8	Project-Based Learning	ELA/TESOL endorsed Teacher
PBL is assisted by ELA/TESOL Endorsed Teacher, but evaluated by content teacher.			PBL is assisted by ELA/TESOL Endorsed Teacher, but evaluated by content teacher.		

Source: González, J. O., & Berrios, Y. (2024). *English learner high school acceleration program* [PowerPoint slides].

STEP 2: Determine Responses to the Identified Needs

A district's decision to identify students as newcomers should be paired with an articulation of how the needs of identified students would be met, depending on the district context and the specific needs. Common needs of newcomer students and families identified by Council-member districts³⁸ involve:

- A. School-to-Home Connections, Acculturation, and Agency
- B. Routines in U.S. Schools
- C. Educational Needs Regarding Academic Content Knowledge

Upon identifying the needs that the district will specifically address, the responses need to be determined. These responses can be grouped by their target—students or the adults serving them.

- **Student-facing responses.** District supports and resources to address newcomer needs, such as instructional practices and resources for acculturation to the U.S. school environment, culturally responsive supports, and wraparound social-emotional services.
- **Adult-facing responses.** District supports and resources to equip educators with the knowledge, pedagogy, and materials to address the educational needs of newcomers and/or SLIFE, such as relevant professional development, adequate staffing, and tools/resources to engage with newcomers and their families meaningfully. Adult-facing responses may also include support for families.

Table 5 outlines the most common needs identified by educators in Council-member districts for newcomers, along with possible responses through district programs and services. It is important to note two key aspects of the table's contents:

- First, while English acquisition is a common need among newcomers, this is not universally true. For example, newcomers from English-speaking countries like Liberia or Jamaica may not be classified as English learners but still require support in adjusting to U.S. school norms.
- Second, SLIFE are a subset of newcomer students. Many of the needs of newcomers and SLIFE overlap, meaning that district responses can address the needs of both groups. However, under each of the three main areas, specific needs unique to SLIFE are also highlighted.

³⁸ The identified needs and possible district responses were derived from an iterative process with the working group as well as extensive engagement with EL program directors and staff from across the Council's membership.

Table 5. Needs of Newcomers and Considerations for Responses

Need	Response Considerations
School-to-Home Connections, Acculturation, and Agency	
Acclimation to U.S. school community norms for parental engagement	<p>Adult-facing (Parents) Guide parents through school processes (e.g., requesting an excused absence) and norms for interacting with members of the school community, including for advocacy.</p> <p>Student-facing Support students to learn that certain processes in school require parents/guardians, and for students without guardians, teach them the appropriate processes and ways to find support.</p>
Acclimation to self-advocacy in the U.S. school environment	<p>Adult-facing (School Personnel) Provide professional learning for district staff to engage constructively with student self-advocacy and not presume unreasonable defiance to authority.</p> <p>Student-facing Teach students how to seek help and how to advocate for themselves.</p>
Coping with acculturative stressors and other mental health needs	<p>Adult-facing (School Personnel) Provide professional learning to district staff who engage with newcomers and their families to understand the acculturative stressors that are typical and expected. This learning helps counselors, family liaisons, and interpreters to engage in culturally respectful and asset-oriented ways to support newcomers and their families, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with families to welcome mental health services, especially if those services are stigmatized in their home countries, and Referring families to, and helping them access, mental health support and/or counseling services that are culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible.
<p><i>Special Considerations for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing of past instability and traumatic experiences. Prolonged interruptions in formal schooling may be associated with difficult life experiences due to economic, social, or political instability. Interruptions may also occur during a long and difficult journey from their home country to the U.S. Understanding distinctions between youth and adult societal roles. SLIFE may have adult-like experiences and responsibilities, and may lack support from adults (e.g., unaccompanied minors). 	
Routines in U.S. Schools	
Acclimation of students and families to U.S. school routines	<p>Adult (Parents) and Student-facing Help students and families understand school routines like taking the school bus, eating in the cafeteria, taking tests, using the library, and attending parent-teacher conferences.</p>
Acclimation of students to U.S. classroom routines	<p>Student-facing Create specific student-friendly protocols for unfamiliar routines such as: submitting schoolwork, understanding when and how to work collaboratively vs. independently, hand-raising, using technology, requesting a hall pass to go to the bathroom, sitting in class, etc.</p>

Table 5. Needs of Newcomers and Considerations for Responses

Need	Response Considerations
<i>Special Considerations for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning unfamiliar school routines. If students have no or very limited formal education, learning school routines may require additional support and can take more time compared to newcomers who have prior, more consistent school experience in their home country. • Understanding age-related laws. SLIFE may have led adult-like lives in their home country and be unfamiliar with U.S. laws related to drinking, smoking, and compulsory education. 	
Educational Needs Regarding Academic Content Knowledge	
Acquisition of content-area knowledge emphasized in U.S. schools	Adult-facing (School Personnel) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development (PD), support, and resources to help teachers understand and address the educational needs of newcomers. • Provide PD and resources to show teachers how to help students transform rich, informal knowledge into school learning.
Understanding of the pedagogical practices and the expression of knowledge expected in U.S. schools, especially when these are different from prior schooling (critical thinking versus dictation and memorization)	Adult-facing (School Personnel) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train counselors, family liaisons, and teachers how to support newcomer students (and families) in understanding new expectations. • Provide PD and reminders for teachers to provide ample opportunities for newcomers to learn new expectations, have patience as students acclimate, and celebrate incremental progress.
Development of foundational English literacy skills for students who do not speak English, especially in the secondary grades	Adult-facing (School Personnel) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide PD to help teachers understand students' literacy needs and develop effective instructional responses for teaching comprehension, not just decoding.³⁹ • Train teachers and administrators to know that learning grade-level content should not be delayed because students do not yet know how to read in English or their home language.
<i>Special Considerations for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing reading stamina. Students who have not been consistently in school may lack reading stamina. • Developing foundational literacy skills. Due to limited exposure to formal education, SLIFE may not know how to read or write in their home language. • Transferring informal knowledge. SLIFE possess life skills and knowledge acquired through working and adapting to changing environments. Instruction and support are needed to transfer this informal knowledge into the formal school expectations and formats. • Needing extra time, space, and support. In some cases, Tier I instruction that includes EL services might be insufficient to successfully support a student's transition, thus requiring a separate class period or program for SLIFE. 	

39 Council of the Great City Schools. (2023). *A framework for foundational literacy skills instruction for English learners: Instructional practice and materials considerations*. Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/35/CGCS_Foundational%20Literacy%20Skills_Pub_v14.pdf

Meeting the Needs of Newcomers through Summer Programming

The Albuquerque Public Schools' *Newcomer Summer Program* serves recently arrived English learners in grades 6-12 who have been in U.S. schools for less than three years, many with limited or interrupted formal education. Participants come from diverse backgrounds, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Syria, Mexico, Rwanda, and more.

School-to-Home Connections, Acculturation, and Agency

The program strengthens connections between schools, students, and families through multilingual and culturally responsive support. A diverse team of educators, specialists, and case managers who collectively speak 16 languages helps students and families navigate their transition to U.S. schools. Newcomer specialists provide classroom support in Kinyarwanda/Kirundi, Swahili, French, Arabic, Dari/Farsi, Pashto, and Spanish.

To support students' acculturation and sense of agency, the program incorporates learning circles facilitated in students' native languages. These spaces allow for semi-structured discussions on topics such as current events, cultural sharing, mental health, and gender roles, highlighting and celebrating students' cultural assets, including poetry, songs, dance, and language.

Routines in U.S. Schools

The program introduces students to U.S. school culture and expectations through interactive and engaging experiences. Key program components include:

- Student clubs, including Soccer, Afghan Student Well-being, Boys and Girls, Gardening, Art, and Student Empowerment Club, provide students with opportunities for social connections, well-being, and leadership development.
- Field trips to Explora Children's Science Museum, ABQ Zoo & Botanical Gardens, Rio Grande River & Bosque, and local colleges allow students to explore and engage with their new community beyond the classroom.

Educational Needs Regarding Academic Content Knowledge

Recognizing that students are learning English while simultaneously engaging with academic subjects, the program provides:

- Credit (0.5 elective credit for high school students upon successful completion) through a content-based elective course that integrates English, math, science, social studies, art, and music.
- Multilingual newcomer specialists who offer classroom support in students' native languages, assisting with both language acquisition and academic comprehension.
- *Orientation & Planning Week* for staff, featuring professional development on newcomers and encouraging a collaborative and strengths-based approach among educators.

Source: Baca, A. (2024, May). *Albuquerque Public Schools newcomer summer program* [PowerPoint slides].

Districtwide Investment

Once a district has determined it wishes to identify students as newcomers and/or SLIFE for specific, concrete reasons (Step 1), and determined how it will respond to the needs of the identified students (Step 2), the district needs to identify the corresponding resources and plan for implementing the responses. Resource and implementation considerations include leadership and educator buy-in and internal structures/processes that will be used for collecting and using data for placement and programmatic decisions that maximize student success, including high school graduation. In other words, to create and sustain effective instructional practices and supports for newcomers and SLIFE, districts need:

1. The support and express commitment from district leadership to collect and report newcomer information to better meet the needs of these students.
2. Structures, programs, and staffing that respond programmatically to the identified needs of newcomers.
3. A sense of shared responsibility among relevant departments for creating structures and protocols for the timely and accurate collection of information, the protection of student privacy, and the effective use of data reporting for decision-making.

Advocacy for Resources to Serve Newcomers

Minneapolis Public Schools has made several key investments to support newcomer students:

- A Newcomer Team was established to provide cross-departmental support for newcomer students across various departments.
- 25 full-time equivalent (FTE) ESL teachers were added across the district by weighting FTE allocation for students with WIDA proficiency levels 1 and 2.
- The district funded the *Office of Latine Achievement* to provide additional support for Spanish-speaking students and families.
- The district engaged in advocacy at the state legislature to increase EL funding by 25 percent annually over the next four years and to add Hmong and Somali as World Language licenses.

Source: Warfa, M., Demorest, M., & Tayyeb, M. (2023, May). *Minneapolis Public Schools* [PowerPoint slides].

(1) The support and express commitment from district leadership to collect and report newcomer information to better meet the needs of these students.

Existing district structures, protocols, and data collection practices often do not adequately support the screening and data collection needs related to newcomer students and their families. To ensure the accurate and effective collection of information, district leadership must commit to:

- Expanding data fields in the student information system to collect essential background information on newcomers.
- Providing instruments (questionnaires and assessments) in multiple languages and access to qualified interpreters to obtain reliable information from students and families.
- Strengthening protocols to safeguard the collection and reporting of background information.
- Establishing a designated team responsible for interpreting collected data and making recommendations for instructional placement and support services.

Importance of Reviewing Data Regularly

Data collection on newcomers and SLIFE must be ongoing to ensure programs remain responsive to evolving needs. Regular review of enrollment trends and student data is essential for accurate decision-making and effective resource allocation.

Several districts have implemented data dashboards to track newcomer trends and inform programming, such as:

- **Guilford County**—Tracks newcomer arrivals, academic needs, and support services.
- **Los Angeles**—Uses comprehensive data systems for placement, resources, and student services.
- **Oakland**—Monitors language proficiency, enrollment, and academic progress.

(2) Structures, programs, and staffing that respond programmatically to the identified needs of newcomers.

Existing district programs may require adaptations to serve newcomers effectively. While some newcomer needs align with those of other students, many require a more tailored approach. Considerations for how districts can respond programmatically include:

Identification and Numbers of Newcomers

- Determining that the district has enough students identified as newcomers who need a specific type of support to create specialized programs.
- Determining a district process to identify SLIFE and provide appropriate academic support.
- Establishing systems to collect and report data to evaluate the effectiveness of programs/services to meet the needs of newcomers.

Program Availability

- Developing or adapting district programs to address the academic needs of newcomers specifically, ensuring that assigned teachers are knowledgeable and effective in working with these student populations.
- Expanding district supports and services to address the social-emotional and non-academic needs of newcomers, including access to food and housing assistance, immigration legal services, and mental health supports tailored to their unique experiences.
- Establishing referral protocols for wraparound services that account for language and cultural barriers to ensure respectful and effective access to essential resources.

Once districts develop structures around newcomer identification and programs to support them, these programs must be revisited on an ongoing basis to make sure the programs and structures evolve in response to new immigration trends of the district, and reflect best practices that emerge as more research and coherent guidance become available.

Given ongoing staffing shortages, districts must also address key questions related to recruiting and retaining staff equipped to meet the needs of newcomers:

- **Experience and familiarity:** Has the district identified teachers with expertise in supporting newcomers, ensuring an inclusive and effective learning environment?
- **Linguistic and cultural connections:** Are there educators who speak the students' home languages or share their cultural backgrounds to facilitate meaningful support?
- **Relevant professional learning:** Does the district provide timely, relevant professional development to build educators' capacity to effectively serve newcomer students?
- **Tailored supports for SLIFE:** Are there educators who understand the specific needs and assets that SLIFE bring to the classroom and who are equipped to support these students?

Equipping Teachers of Newcomers and SLIFE

Sacramento City Unified School District provides a robust set of resources to help educators support newcomers and SLIFE. These resources include research-based best practices and a list of scaffolds designed to support language development during instruction. Teachers can access videos and examples linked to these best practices and use checklists to track student language development.

To foster community building in the classroom, Sacramento City Unified offers resources on creating a welcoming environment and addressing cultural differences, along with guidance for staff with limited understanding of the diverse cultures they serve. There are also research-based articles to support classroom management, EL instruction, and lesson planning. Social-emotional learning is also emphasized, with strategies to build empathy and help students understand the challenges their peers may be facing. Furthermore, the district offers tools that explain the brain science behind trauma, providing educators with strategies to support affected students effectively.

Resources for Teachers

Instructional Supports	Welcoming/Community Building	Cultural Resources	Social Emotional Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based best practices • List of scaffolds to provide substantial support during instruction • Videos and examples linked • Checklists to keep track of language development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building classroom community • Building a community of caring learners • Article: <i>Engaging ELLS in the Classroom</i> (accessing content & establishing connections) • Creating a welcoming environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing and understanding cultural differences • Supporting staff with limited understanding of the diverse cultures welcomed and served • Research-based articles to support classroom management, ELL instruction, lesson planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of lessons and activities that build empathy and understanding about what peers are facing • Understanding brain science behind trauma; defines and provides some strategies and tools to support students

Source: Adapted from Simms, O. L., & Brown, S. (2022, May 13). *Welcoming newcomer and refugee students* [PowerPoint slides].

(3) A sense of shared responsibility among relevant departments for creating structures and protocols for the timely and accurate collection of information, the protection of student privacy, and the effective use of data reporting for decision-making.

To improve data collection and reporting on newcomers, a collaborative approach is essential. Relevant departments must share responsibility for:

- Developing clear protocols for timely and accurate data collection while ensuring student privacy.
- Establishing processes for securely reporting and utilizing collected data to inform decision-making.
- Ensuring all relevant stakeholders—educators, administrators, and support staff—are trained in best practices for data collection, privacy protections, and the effective use of data to support newcomer students.

By fostering interdepartmental collaboration, districts can create sustainable structures that ensure newcomers receive the appropriate support and services they need.

Protecting Student Privacy

Student data are legally protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Districts cannot share these data externally—or even with some internal staff—unless specific conditions are met, or unless the parent provides written consent.⁴⁰

FERPA's Core Protections

FERPA guarantees parents (and eligible students) certain rights, including:

- The right to inspect and review education records.
- The right to request corrections to inaccurate or misleading information.
- The right to control (in most cases) who can access personally identifiable information (PII) from student records.

Parents have the right to know:

- What is collected?
- Why is it collected?
- How will it be used and protected?

Safeguarding Data

Limit Access to Data. Only staff who have a clear, educational need to see specific student data should have access. This typically includes enrollment specialists, teachers working directly with the student, and district data staff supporting EL programs. Data should not be accessible without a clear educational reason and appropriate safeguards.

40 U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). FERPA. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/ferpa>

Secure Data Storage and Transmission. All newcomer and SLIFE data should be stored in district-approved, secure systems, such as the student information system (SIS). Avoid using unsecured spreadsheets, personal email accounts, or cloud services to store or share these data. When sharing data internally or externally (with required permissions), use secure transfer methods, such as encrypted email or a secure file-sharing platform.

Train Staff Regularly. Ensure all staff involved in enrollment processes understand their FERPA responsibilities. These include:

- Recognizing which data are protected.
- Knowing how to handle requests for data (from families, staff, researchers, and outside agencies).
- Understanding when data can and cannot be disclosed—and who to contact if unsure.

Review Data-Sharing Agreements Carefully. If working with external partners—such as researchers studying programs or vendors providing screening tools—make sure all contracts include FERPA-compliant privacy terms. These agreements should clearly spell out:

- What data can be shared?
- How will data be protected?
- When must data be destroyed?
- What prohibitions exist on redisclosure?

STEP 3: Articulate the Rationale for Newcomer and SLIFE Placements

Districts must establish clear guidelines for placing students in programs and connecting them with services that effectively meet their academic, linguistic, and social-emotional needs. Thoughtful placement decisions should be informed by a comprehensive understanding of students' backgrounds, prior education, and English proficiency while ensuring access to appropriate supports.

Program-related Questions for Placement

As educators are equipped with important and relevant information to better understand the assets and needs of newcomers, the following set of questions must be weighed to develop clearly delineated programs and services and to make proper placements for newcomers:

- a) Will the student be able to thrive with Tier I support in the program placement? If not, is there a need for a transitional program? If so, will it be fully staffed and supported to produce the intended educational outcomes? Will the placement unnecessarily segregate newcomers?
- b) How will the district's English learner program address the needs of newcomers if those needs are determined to be different from other English learners? What additional supports will be available for SLIFE?
- c) What are the time parameters of programs specifically targeted for newcomers and/or SLIFE?

Tip for Getting Started: Collect and Use Data to Understand Needs

Spending a year on focused data collection can provide a clearer understanding of the newcomer population and their specific needs. This information is essential for making informed decisions on resource allocation, ensuring the greatest impact. A structured approach to data collection helps to:

- assess the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional needs of newcomers;
- identify gaps in existing programs and services;
- determine staffing needs, including bilingual educators and cultural liaisons; and
- develop targeted supports that address both academic and non-academic challenges.

A strong data foundation ensures that programs are responsive, equitable, and sustainable as newcomer populations evolve.

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PART III

Data Collection Instrument and Protocols

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Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

PART III

Data Collection Instrument and Protocols

Getting Started: Educational Background Questionnaire (EBQ)

This guide outlines an **Educational Background Questionnaire (EBQ)** that serves as a starting point that districts can adapt to gather the information about students for targeting supports and services. In addition to a questionnaire highlighting important information to request from students and families during intake, the guide includes considerations for administering and interpreting the questionnaire.

Educational background questionnaires are typically time-consuming to administer, involve well-trained district staff, and may require substantial language interpretation resources. Families do not want to sit through a long interview process, especially if they have experienced similar information-gathering as part of their refugee or asylum process. Thus, districts need to have clear processes or protocols to determine which educational background information needs to be obtained from students and how it will be used. This will allow the district to better allocate its staff and language resources.

District Protocols

Once the district has determined a purpose for classifying students as newcomers and/or SLIFE, it will be important to establish a protocol to gather student background information so appropriate instruction and support can be delivered. Staff should receive training and guidance to carry out the district protocol to identify students who are newcomers and/or SLIFE. Because not all English learners are newcomers, and not all newcomers are SLIFE, adherence to a carefully designed flowchart will help district staff determine which students and/or families will answer an EBQ.

The Varied Experiences and Backgrounds of Newcomers and SLIFE

The intersectionality of English proficiency, time in U.S. schools, prior formal education, and content knowledge complicates decision-making to discern which students will answer an EBQ. Assumptions cannot be accurately made about the English proficiency or educational background of students and their families. Newcomers and/or SLIFE may have content knowledge and skills that are dramatically different from their U.S.-born and/or -raised peers; however, not all SLIFE have had the same educational trajectories. Many newcomers will have experienced at least some formal education and may present transcripts. Some newcomers have a degree of English proficiency because they received instruction in English or studied English as a foreign language. All newcomer students arrive with a wealth of lived experience, world knowledge, and cultural knowledge that can be leveraged in the classroom if the opportunity is provided.



Designing the protocol. The protocol design should reflect the purposes for which the district is interested in identifying newcomer students and include clear guidelines for which students should be administered an EBQ to maximize accurate identification, avoiding unnecessary widespread screening. If the district has programs and supports for newcomers and/or SLIFE in place, the EBQ can be used to help inform which programs or supports a particular student should receive. Furthermore, if the district is in the initial data collection phase, newly experiencing the enrollment of newcomers, the protocol and questionnaire design should include questions that are helpful for the emerging stages of building data collection processes and related supports and/or programs for newcomers.



Designing the questionnaire. The sample EBQ provided in Part V is designed to obtain relevant educational background information to make determinations about instructional programs and support needs. Districts may opt to adopt the EBQ in its entirety. Districts with existing questionnaires as part of their registration process might consider enhancing those questionnaires with additional content from this EBQ.



Interpretation. A critical part of the district protocol is guidance for the interpretation of results and the intended use of such results for student placement and identification of needed support. Districts need trained staff to interpret the results and work with relevant staff to make recommendations for placement and services.



Review of EBQ administration protocols. Districts new to administering an EBQ should review how the process works after several months or a year and decide if any adjustments are needed (e.g., additional staff training, revising protocols, refining questions, etc.)

Candidates for Educational Background Questionnaire

Districts may have a flowchart or matrix that enables them to determine which students (and families) are given an EBQ. (See Table 6.) The flowchart should be designed to be used in schools and the central office. Four key factors are important for districts to consider when designing a decision protocol:



Target student age. Starting at what age or grade level will the district administer the EBQ? Children younger than 7 or entering before grade 2 will have limited schooling experience. Obtaining child development information for these young newcomers may be best through a district's existing process to learn about the early learning experience of all students, with appropriate interpretation to minimize language barriers for the families. The sample EBQ provided in Part V was developed for older elementary, middle, and high school students. This questionnaire is typically not used for students arriving in grades K-2, or under 6-7 years of age.



New to U.S. schools. If the student went to school abroad and has been in U.S. schools for less than three years, the student could be identified as a newcomer, based on the *Newcomer Toolkit* (2023) non-statutory definition. When registration documentation or personal interactions reveal that a student is new to U.S. schools and there are no accompanying transcripts from schools abroad, the questionnaire would be a helpful tool to obtain information about educational experience.



Exposure to English. When a student is entirely new to English or shows very little proficiency in English—and the student does not have transcripts that indicate prior enrollment in formal education—the questionnaire, administered with interpretation services if needed, may help obtain key information for placement.



Previous schooling experience. If during the initial exchanges, district staff learn that the student's last completed grade is below what would be expected for their age, or that the circumstances of schooling were unusual, such as school operating on a limited schedule or without consistent access to teachers, the questionnaire will help gather important information related to the student's educational background.

The sample EBQ provided in Part V was developed for older elementary, middle, and high school students. This questionnaire is typically not used for students arriving in grades K-2, or under 6-7 years of age.

Flowcharts are approximations of a reality that can include unforeseen circumstances, making determinations difficult. Ultimately, if the information from the listed factors does not clearly determine to whom to administer the EBQ, two key questions to ask students are: (1) What was the last grade you attended?; and (2) Did you go to school consistently before coming to the U.S.?

Table 6. Educational Background Questionnaire Usefulness Considerations







Considerations	EBQ Potentially Beneficial	EBQ Unlikely to Benefit
Target Student Age 	Student is 7 years old or older, entering grades 3 and up (older elementary, middle school, high school). These students are typically expected to have sufficient schooling experience and are better suited for the EBQ.	Student is younger than 7 years old, entering grades K-2. Students under age 7 or in early elementary grades typically have limited formal schooling experience, making the EBQ less applicable.
New to U.S. Schools 	Student is new to U.S. schools (less than 3 years in U.S.) and lacks transcripts from schools abroad. Newcomers may lack educational documentation from their home countries, and the EBQ can help assess their academic background and needs.	Student has been in U.S. schools for more than 3 years or has transcripts from previous schooling. If students have been in the U.S. for over 3 years, they likely have integrated into the U.S. educational system and may not require the EBQ.
Exposure to English 	Student is new to English or shows very little proficiency and lacks prior formal schooling transcripts. A lack of English proficiency, especially with no educational background records, makes the EBQ helpful to assess academic and language needs.	Student has some English proficiency or has transcripts indicating prior formal education. Students with some English proficiency or educational transcripts can likely be placed appropriately without the EBQ.

Table 6. Educational Background Questionnaire Usefulness Considerations

Considerations	EBQ Potentially Beneficial	EBQ Unlikely to Benefit
Previous Schooling Experience 	Previous schooling experience is irregular, inconsistent, or lacking (e.g., limited schedule, school without teachers, or lack of consistent access to education). Inconsistent or irregular schooling indicates that students might be missing foundational knowledge, making the EBQ an essential tool for understanding their academic history and needs.	Student has consistent formal education and transcripts available for evaluation. If students have a consistent formal educational background, the EBQ may not provide additional valuable information, as records can be used directly for placement.

Given the heterogeneity of newcomers, there is no single answer or flowchart that will select with perfect certainty to which students the EBQ should be administered. District staff will need to engage in an ongoing process of data analysis to ensure the EBQ results in improved screening protocols to better serve newcomers and/or SLIFE, and to make protocol and/or questionnaire modifications, as necessary, considering the particular population of newly arrived students. Table 7 shows a sample decision-making chart for identifying which students will benefit from taking an EBQ.

Table 7. Sample Decision Chart

Considerations	Yes	No
Target Student Age —Is the student 7 years old or older (entering grade 3 or higher)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> EBQ is unlikely to benefit. (Student is too young with limited formal schooling.)
New to U.S. Schools —Has the student been in U.S. schools for less than 3 years and lacks transcripts from abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> EBQ is unlikely to benefit. (Student has either substantial U.S. schooling history or transcripts from previous schooling.)
Exposure to English Proficiency Level —Does the student show very little English proficiency and lack formal schooling transcripts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> EBQ is unlikely to benefit. (Some English proficiency and/or transcripts provide enough data for placement.)
Previous Schooling Experience —Is the student's previous schooling irregular, inconsistent, or severely disrupted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> EBQ is unlikely to benefit. (Consistent formal schooling with transcripts provides sufficient placement data.)
Determination	If mostly  , EBQ is likely to be beneficial.	If mostly  , EBQ is unlikely to be beneficial.

Supporting Newcomer Families

If a student does not receive an EBQ, but interactions reveal that the family is new to U.S. schools, the district may have another protocol to determine how to support and engage newly arrived families. Some key considerations for supporting newcomer families, even if an EBQ is not administered, are provided below and summarized in Table 8.

- **Identifying newcomer families of young children.** Young students, such as those in K-1, might not have accumulated significant schooling experiences abroad, exhibiting characteristics similar to U.S.-born students. However, their family might, indeed, be new to the U.S. and unfamiliar with the U.S. school environment. Districts should identify these families and offer orientation and support to help them engage with the school district and support their children's academic and social-emotional success.
- **Leveraging social networks.** Families newly arrived in the U.S. might have access to social networks that include fellow nationals who speak the same language and who have settled in the area years before. These social networks are invaluable to help newly arrived families know how to navigate the U.S. school system. Some districts may be in a position to apply for grant funding to hire a community liaison who can facilitate connections and help families find linguistically and culturally familiar resources. However, some families will arrive in areas absent fellow nationals who can assist them in understanding how to navigate U.S. schools to support their children. For these families, school-provided information and support will likely be the sole source of guidance.
- **Home language access.** When district staff speak the languages of newly arrived students, they may learn valuable information about educational experiences in the context of day-to-day interactions and instruction. When this language connection does not exist, however, having a meeting with an interpreter present in order to gather targeted information (even if not the EBQ that is usually administered) and impart key information can help staff learn background information that might not be expressed otherwise. Additionally, this may provide students and families with a chance to ask questions or share needs they may otherwise not be able to express.
- **Asset-based placement and programming.** If students' last attended grades are appropriate for their ages and they or their families confirm consistent attendance, placement in those grades is reasonable, pending transcript review or testing. These students would not be identified as SLIFE since they have consistently attended school. Additionally, staff should recognize the possibility that some newcomer students have taken advanced courses in their home country and should be given information on pathways to access advanced coursework or gifted and talented programming.

Table 8. Considerations for Supporting Newcomer Families

Considerations	Responses
Family Identification —Ensures parents are equipped with the knowledge to engage actively in their child's education and navigate school procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the unique needs of young children (K-1) whose families may be new to the U.S. and unfamiliar with the school environment. • Conduct a family needs assessment to determine language barriers, prior school experiences, specific cultural considerations, and family aspirations for their children. • Implement parent orientation programs that explain school routines, expectations, and available resources in multiple languages.
Social Network Integration —Strengthens sense of belonging and provides emotional and practical support, easing the transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate connections to immigrant communities, often by connecting newcomer families with established community members who speak the same language. • Establish a community liaison program where local residents or school staff serve as cultural ambassadors to support newcomers. • Offer social events or gatherings where families can meet and learn from each other, reducing isolation.
Language Support and Access —Promotes effective communication, which leads to a better understanding of the student's needs and school expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure language access at all stages, from enrollment to parent-teacher conferences, by offering interpretation services in the family's native language. • Train bilingual staff in school policies and academic expectations, empowering them to help bridge communication gaps. • Use visual aids and translated materials to ensure written information is accessible, even when face-to-face language support is unavailable.
Asset-Based Student Programming —Ensures that students are not under- or over-placed, fostering their academic growth based on their actual abilities and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the student's educational background by considering prior schooling experiences. Even if not formally documented, this insight helps guide appropriate grade and course placement. • Offer placement flexibility by considering the student's readiness for advanced coursework, as some may have experienced rigorous educational systems in their home country. • Provide pathways to advanced programs (like gifted and talented) based on demonstrated skills, not just grade level.

Supporting and Engaging Newcomer Families

- **Austin Independent School District:** Worked with community organizations to enhance communication and engagement with refugee and newcomer families. Program offerings for families included: Afghan Women's Sewing Group, GirlForward Mentorship Group, CSA Vegetable Program, 4ATX Foundation Verde Leaders Soccer Group, Refugee Parent Advisory Group, and Afghan Boys Cricket League (Fernandez & Johnson, 2023).
- **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools:** *Charlotte Mecklenburg Afghan Allies Meaningful Partnerships for Success (CHAAMPS) Initiative* provided continuous case management through the Learning & Language Acquisition department, ensuring newly enrolled CHAAMPS students were connected from the International Center to schools, received mentoring, and had their basic needs met through community partnerships and donations (Trez et al., 2022).
- **St. Paul Public Schools:** Fostered collaboration between the Office of Multilingual Learning and Student Placement Center to identify SLIFE, determine EL eligibility, and create onboarding materials (e.g., translated videos on navigating the city bus system, multilingual key documents) (Schmidt de Carranza, 2023).

PART IV

Protocols for EBQ Administration

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Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

PART IV

Protocols for EBQ Administration

Districts vary in how newcomer students register for school—some do so at centralized welcome centers or the district's central office, while others register at school sites. The logistics for administering an educational background questionnaire (EBQ) will depend on whether this takes place at a central location or school sites. This section describes the most common resources required to support an effective administration of an EBQ and the overall protocol to obtain a more holistic assessment of newcomer strengths and needs.

District Resources for EBQ Administration

Depending on the district's registration practices and experience with welcoming newly arrived families and children to the U.S., a questionnaire may be administered as part of its existing registration process for newcomers. If so, districts may want to add only select questions from the sample EBQ in Part V. School districts with less experience welcoming newly arrived families may find it useful to use the EBQ in its entirety as part of efforts to develop more robust protocols for screening and placing newly arrived students for academic success.

A set of factors important to ensuring the successful administration of the EBQ is presented in the following paragraphs and summarized in Table 9.

Language Access. Removing language barriers is vital to obtaining accurate and comprehensive responses to the EBQ. Districts are required to provide language access to families by ensuring that multilingual staff or interpretation services are available on site to assist in the registration process, including administering related questionnaires like the EBQ. Prior to beginning the questionnaire, districts must determine the language in which students and parents feel most comfortable communicating, and secure interpretation services if necessary.

- Whether at a central welcome center or school sites, staff administering the EBQ should have proficiency in the family's home language or use an interpretation service to elicit full and accurate responses.
- Students may feel nervous answering without their parents, and parents will likely have more complete information about school attendance. If the student is of elementary school age, the questionnaire may be administered primarily to the parent.

Adequacy of Facilities. Privacy and a level of comfort will result in more accurate responses. Spaces should provide the appropriate privacy and quietness to administer the questionnaire, mindful of FERPA considerations.

- Centralized registration or welcome sites should administer the EBQ in smaller, private spaces rather than open areas.

- When the EBQ is administered at a school site, it should take place in smaller, more private spaces where an interpreter can work with staff, rather than an open office.
- The site should have sufficient resources, including phone lines for language interpretation and devices if EBQ answers are recorded electronically.
- Hours of operation and staff schedules should accommodate the schedules of newly arrived families, taking into consideration employment, transportation, and/or childcare constraints.

Monitoring EBQ Administration and Safeguarding Student Information. The district English learners office should conduct internal placement audits to ensure that the questionnaire information is used to provide students access to grade-level content and to provide relevant support services for newcomers. Additional considerations are as follows:

- **Qualifications for Administering EBQ.** The administration of the EBQ should be performed by appropriately trained staff who have proficiency in the newcomers' home language or are trained and comfortable in utilizing interpretation services. Cross-cultural understanding and an asset-oriented view of immigrant communities are key. Designated staff who administer the questionnaire should embody this disposition and/or be trained in culturally relevant customer service.
- **Monitoring Quality of EBQ Administration and Responses.** Once implemented, the district (e.g., EL/ML office) should monitor the administration of the questionnaire to avoid overburdening families, and to ensure schools are equipped to respond to the information in a supportive and constructive manner. Monitoring the administration of the EBQ should also consider the quality of the information obtained and the experience of families and students to evaluate if alternate sites or district offices would be better positioned to support this unique group of students (e.g., a welcome center).
- **Sharing EBQ Results.** The district protocol and resources should address how the results of the EBQ will be shared with district and/or school staff. The district's protocol and its guidance will answer questions such as:
 - What is the process for sharing the questionnaire results with staff?
 - Which staff will see the results, and who will be expected to take action based on the results?
 - If the questionnaire responses are initially recorded in a language other than English, what is the process for translating and storing the answers so they are available to all staff who need to access them?
 - Who maintains the student EBQ file, and for how long, especially in the absence of a transcript? Who is responsible for purging files, and on what schedule?
 - Is there a summary with program placement recommendations provided? To whom?
 - How is the information used to provide instructional support?

Table 9. Considerations for Educational Background Questionnaire Administration

Factor	Considerations
Language Access and Staff Qualifications	
Multilingual Staff or Interpretation Services	Ensure availability of multilingual staff or interpreters to administer the EBQ, ensuring clear communication and accurate responses.
Language Preference	Ask families which language they feel most comfortable using before administering the EBQ.
Cultural Competency	Staff should be trained in cultural awareness and possess an asset-based view of immigrant communities, understanding the unique needs of newcomer families.
Administering with Parents Present	A parent or guardian should be present during the EBQ administration if possible to clarify answers. For younger students (elementary age), prioritize administering the EBQ to the parent to ensure more accurate information about the student's educational history.
Facility Considerations	
Private, Quiet Space	Administer the EBQ in private spaces to maintain confidentiality and comply with FERPA, avoiding public or open areas like front offices.
Available Resources	Ensure access to resources such as phone lines for language interpretation and devices for digital formats if needed for EBQ collection.
Flexible Hours of Operation	Offer flexible hours for families, accommodating their schedules, considering factors like employment, transportation, and childcare constraints.
Monitoring and Oversight	
Monitor EBQ Administration	Regularly monitor how the EBQ is being administered to ensure accuracy, effectiveness, and that families are not overwhelmed by the process.
Evaluate Process for Improvement	Continuously evaluate whether different locations or times (e.g., a welcome center) could better support families in completing the EBQ.
Privacy and Data Protection	
Confidentiality and FERPA Compliance	Ensure all student data collected via the EBQ are protected under FERPA guidelines, with strict confidentiality maintained throughout the process.
Sharing Results and Following Up	
Sharing Results with Relevant Staff	Develop a process to share EBQ results with relevant staff (e.g., counselors, EL/ML departments) and with parents to guide appropriate placement and support.
Clear Follow-up Actions	Provide parents with a summary of EBQ results and any necessary follow-up, including program placements, additional services, or next steps for student support.
Data Management and Retention	Establish clear policies for the retention, review, and purging of EBQ files, ensuring that they are kept only as long as necessary and in compliance with district policies.

Preparing Staff for EBQ Administration

Staff administering the EBQ must be knowledgeable about its structure and qualified to do so in a culturally responsive and supportive manner. Table 10 outlines key training considerations, emphasizing the qualifications, skills, and practices critical for staff members to successfully engage with newly arrived families and collect meaningful data.

Table 10. Training Topics and Considerations to Prepare Staff for EBQ Administration

Training Topic	Considerations for Districts in Training Staff to Administer the EBQ
EBQ Questions, Purpose, and Related Supports	<p>Note: Before training staff, determine whether to use the sample EBQ included in this document or modify an existing district questionnaire. If using the sample EBQ, review the questions to determine whether any should be added, removed, or revised for relevance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize staff with the EBQ questions and flow so they can ask the questions fluently. Make sure staff understand the purpose of each question and how it connects to student support so they can ask appropriate follow-up questions.
Engaging with Newcomer Students and Families	<p>Basic Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff members should have proficiency in the home language of newcomers or be trained in utilizing interpretation services. Staff members must possess a cross-cultural understanding and maintain an asset-oriented view of immigrant communities. Staff members should be comfortable with culturally relevant customer service. <p>Practical Skills</p> <p>During questionnaire administration, staff members should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> practice cultural competency and active listening; give families time to process and respond; encourage trust and transparency; reassure families that their responses are confidential and vital for student support; and foster an open, transparent environment.
Emphasizing EBQ Purpose to Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff members should ensure the EBQ's role in supporting newcomer students is clear to students and families. Staff members should emphasize the importance of gathering accurate data for student support.

Table 10. Training Topics and Considerations to Prepare Staff for EBQ Administration

Training Topic	Considerations for Districts in Training Staff to Administer the EBQ
EBQ Data Collection	<p>Question Logic/Structure</p> <p>Staff members should be comfortable adapting questions in real time based on the conversation. Below are some helpful principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide in advance if some questions should be asked only in specific situations (e.g., gathering information about subjects taken only if transcripts are not available). • Indicate sections that may be left blank. • Advise staff that supplemental questions should be left blank if no information is provided. • Advise staff that “if-so” questions only require answers only when relevant. <p>Contextual Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members should know how to record contextual notes to capture any relevant background information provided by the family. • Staff members should know how to discern what information is relevant versus irrelevant for the goals of the EBQ when taking contextual notes.
Data Sensitivity and Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members should understand the importance of confidentiality and student privacy laws (e.g., FERPA) when gathering data, and be able to communicate this effectively to families.

Developing a Newcomer/SLIFE Screening Protocol

St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) has designed a structured protocol to identify newcomer students, including English learners and SLIFE, ensuring that students receive appropriate services and support. The protocol is designed to maximize accurate identification while avoiding unnecessary screening for all students. It also helps to inform the specific services and supports each student may need, based on their unique circumstances.

Newcomer Identification Process

1. **Enrollment and Screening.** All new and returning students to SPPS are initially enrolled at the Student Placement Center (SPC), not at the school sites. Once enrolled, students are assessed by the SPC Assessment Team to identify those who speak a language other than English, using the Home Language Survey (HLS). The assessment team determines whether students are eligible for English language services based on their responses.
2. **Language Support.** Throughout the enrollment and assessment process, the SPC and Office of Multilingual Learning and Literacy (OMLL) provide language support using bilingual staff or the assistance of outside agencies. This ensures that families and students receive clear communication in their native language. Additionally, OMLL provides training for SPC staff to administer the *WIDA Screener* for students in grades 1-12, while the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* is administered by EL teachers at the school sites.

SLIFE Identification Process

To specifically identify SLIFE, the protocol includes a SLIFE Family Interview, in line with the Minnesota *Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS)* Act. During this interview, a member of the SPC assessment team conducts an oral interview with the student's family to assess the eligibility based on the Minnesota Department of Education SLIFE criteria. According to the criteria, a student can be considered SLIFE if at least three of the following five conditions are met:

1. Comes from a home where a language other than English is typically spoken, or speaks a language other than English.
2. Enters a U.S. school after grade 6.
3. Has at least two years less schooling than their peers.
4. Functions two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics.
5. May be preliterate in their native language.

Post-Screening and Identification

After the identification process, families receive a pamphlet that outlines the EL services, including identification criteria, exit criteria, eligible services, and parental rights to determine services. This pamphlet helps ensure that families are fully informed about their child's placement and support options.

Data Collection and Flagging in the Learning Management System

The OMLL works with the SPC to gather and process data on students, and relevant information is entered into the Learning Management System (LMS). Based on these data, students are assigned the appropriate flags in the system to ensure they are connected with the right services. This process helps to build and maintain accurate data for new and returning newcomer students, especially important in the early stages of enrollment as the district is still developing its data collection practices.

Source: Schmidt de Carranza, S. (2023, May 3). *Operation de-silofication: Partnership between Office of Multilingual Learning & student placement center* [PowerPoint slides].

PART V

Educational Background Questionnaire

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Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

PART V

Educational Background Questionnaire



Overview of Questionnaire

The Educational Background Questionnaire (EBQ) consists of six sections as follows:

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|---|
|  | 1. Introduction |  | 2. Language Background Information |
|  | 3. Experience with English |  | 4. Technology |
|  | 5. Educational History |  | 6. Out-of-School Activities & Wraparound Supports |

For each EBQ section, the rationale for the questions and suggestions for using the information are provided.

The questions for each section are grouped into the following two types:

-  **Priority questions.** These questions are the most likely to inform decision-making about what programming, supports, or additional resources will be needed as students begin their education in the district. These questions are recommended during an initial interview, whether in a welcome center, a district intake office, or a school.
-  **Supplemental questions.** Each section also has supplemental questions, which help provide additional context to inform student supports. Supplemental questions can be skipped if they are not needed or if the district has no way to address or meet the related needs, even if information is provided. Additionally, it may make sense to ask some of the supplemental questions at the school since they will be helpful for educators to build the home-to-school connection with students. Additional follow-up questions and clarification questions may be asked as necessary.

Getting the Balance Right: Reflections from the Educational Background Questionnaire Pilot on Questions to Ask and Questionnaire Length

In order to have a successful EBQ experience, districts are encouraged to customize the questions, prioritizing those that help coordinate support for individual students and gather data needed to justify adding or expanding programs for newcomer students. **Table 11. Preparing to Implement a Newcomer Identification Process in Part VI on page 68** may be helpful for thinking about how to customize the questionnaire.

Context and Rationale

During the pilot of the sample EBQ, the working group and pilot participants (pilot coordinators and intake managers) met several times to discuss the questionnaire and how the implementation was working in different district contexts. The main takeaway was that the EBQ provided valuable information but took a long time to administer. The sample EBQ in this document was updated based on the feedback to balance usefulness and administration time, notably by categorizing questions as “priority” or “supplemental.” Nevertheless, it is critical for districts to decide on the most meaningful questions for their goals and available services.

Administering the Questionnaire

The Educational Background Questionnaire is intended to be administered orally to a student, together with a parent or guardian, in a language that both the student and guardian understand well. Students may feel nervous answering without a trusted adult, and adults will likely have more complete information about school attendance. If the student is of elementary school age, the questionnaire may be administered primarily to a parent or guardian. Appendix 1 includes a sample script that can be used to introduce the purpose of the questionnaire to families. Providing the questionnaire as a worksheet for a student to complete independently is strongly discouraged as it can likely result in unclear, incomplete, or contradictory information—all of which compromise the utility of the EBQ.

A version of the questionnaire with space for writing answers is available in Appendix 2.

Administering the Educational Background Questionnaire to Students

Administration Guidelines

- **Oral Administration:** Conduct the questionnaire verbally to maximize clarity and accuracy through interaction.
- **Language:** Use a language that both the student and guardian understand well.

Parental Involvement

- For elementary school-aged students, the questionnaire may be administered primarily to the parent or guardian.

- For older students, the questions may be directed to the student, but the parent or guardian should be encouraged to add information or context as needed.
- Parents should be included in the conversation since they often have more complete information about school attendance.
- Some students may feel nervous answering alone, or provide inaccurate information if they do not understand a question.

Educational Background Questionnaire

This section presents the questions for learning about the educational background of newly enrolling students identified for further screening to be administered as part of the enrollment process.

1. Introduction

- Begin by describing the purpose of the Educational Background Questionnaire and establishing a rapport to make the student and family feel comfortable with the questions.
- Asking a couple of questions about interests or goals is a good way to ease into questioning. See *Sample Script* in Appendix 1.



2. Language Background Information

- 2.1. What language(s) do you consider your home/first language?
- 2.2. In what language were your school lessons taught (orally) prior to arriving in the U.S.?
- 2.3. What was the language of the textbooks in your school prior to arriving in the U.S.?



Supplemental Questions

- (2.4.) How comfortable do you feel speaking/understanding/reading/writing in each of the languages you listed above?
- (2.5.) What language do the people who live with you prefer to read?

3. Experience with English



- 3.1. Did you study English in your home country?
- 3.2. Do any of the people you live with now speak English? Are they parents/guardians? Siblings? Someone else?

Supplemental Questions

- (3.3.) What did your English lessons look like? (e.g., copying English words and phrases from the blackboard, role-playing in English, reading in English, watching videos in English, etc.)
- (3.4.) How comfortable do you feel reading/writing/listening/speaking in English?

4. Technology



- 4.1. Are you comfortable using computers, laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones?

Supplemental Questions

- (4.2.) Do you currently have access to computers or laptops or tablets?
- (4.3.) Did you have access to computers or laptops or tablets in the last place you lived?
- (4.4.) Are you comfortable using computers, laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones?
- (4.5.) Did you use computers, laptops, or tablets in your previous school? How did you use them?

5. Educational History



- 5.1. What was the last grade you attended?
- 5.2. What was the last grade you completed?
- 5.3. What grade were you in when you were __ years old? (Ask this question for all school-aged years, age 5 through their current age.)
- 5.4. Have there been months or years that you have not gone to school?
- 5.5. Do you have access to transcripts from your former school(s) that you can share?
- 5.6. In what country did you complete most of your schooling?

Supplemental Questions

- (5.7.) What subjects did you study?
- (5.8.) What subject do you feel you do your best in?
- (5.9.) What type(s) of school did you attend? (e.g., public, private, religious, international, etc.)

(5.10.) What setting did you attend school in? (e.g., large school, small school, one-room schoolhouse, school in refugee camp, homeschool, etc.)

(5.11) What did a typical school day look like?

(5.12.) How many hours a day did you attend school?

6. Out-of-School Activities & Wraparound Supports



Supplemental Questions

- (6.1.) Before you came to the U.S., did you have other activities that you had to do instead of going to school or studying, like working or taking care of siblings?
- (6.2) Do you still have to do those things, or will you have new things you have to do now that you're in the U.S.?
- (6.3.) What kind of non-academic activities and services did your school provide? (e.g., tutoring, meals, etc.)
- (6.4.) Did you participate in sports, clubs, or volunteer? (These need not be formal clubs.)
- (6.5.) We have services available to all of our students. Would you like to participate in any of these programs?

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

- Begin by describing the purpose of the Educational Background Questionnaire and establishing a rapport to make the student and family feel comfortable with the questions.
- Asking a couple of questions about students' interests or goals is a good way to ease into questioning.



Notes: A sample script that can be used to introduce the purpose of the questionnaire to families can be found in Appendix 1.

Purpose: Explain the questionnaire and registration process to newcomer students and their families to put them at ease. Establish a rapport for students and parents to feel more at ease and provide comprehensive and helpful responses.

Supporting Students and Families:



Placement: Learning about students' goals, interests, and aspirations can inform asset-based programming.

Section 2: Language Background Information

Language Background Information

- 2.1. What language(s) do you consider your home/first language?
- 2.2. In what language were your school lessons taught (orally) prior to arriving in the U.S.?
- 2.3. What was the language of the textbooks in your school prior to arriving in the U.S.?



Supplemental Questions

- (2.4.) How comfortable do you feel speaking/understanding/reading/writing in each of the languages you listed above?
- (2.5.) What language do the people who live with you prefer to read?

Notes: This section is not meant to substitute for the district's Home Language Survey. These questions are typically asked at the district level, as part of the registration process and the process for identifying students as English learners.

Purpose: The purpose of questions in this section is to elicit information about languages the student has used, in both home and school environments prior to coming to the U.S. These questions can help staff identify additional languages that support effective communication with students and their families, especially during the early days after arriving at school.

Interpretation: The answers to these questions should help paint a more comprehensive picture of the student's experiences with language and literacy. If home language assessment instruments are available, that data will give more information about home language and literacy abilities.

Supporting Students and Families:



Placement: Language background information may help districts decide if a student should be placed in a dual language immersion program if one is available.



Support: Schools may provide written materials to newly arrived students and their families if they learn what language the student (and family) prefers to read.

Section 3: Experience with English

3. Experience with English

- 3.1. Did you study English in your home country?
- 3.2. Do any of the people you live with now speak English? Are they parents/guardians? Siblings? Someone else?

Supplemental Questions

- (3.3.) What did your English lessons look like? (e.g., copying English words and phrases from the blackboard, role-playing in English, reading in English, watching videos in English, etc.)
- (3.4.) How comfortable do you feel reading/writing/listening/speaking in English?



Notes: These questions are not meant to substitute for the district's formal screening process for determining if students require an instructional program to develop English language proficiency.

Purpose: The questions in this section aim to provide staff with information about students' prior experience with English *that is complementary* to the results of standardized English language assessments.

Interpretation: Answers to these questions are particularly valuable when students have difficulty responding to computer-based assessments during the formal English proficiency screening or have minimal levels of English proficiency.

Supporting Students and Families:



Placement: Information gleaned from a comprehensive picture of the students' familiarity with and proficiency in English can help educators plan for placement and instruction, scaffolds, and books related to each of the four domains—speaking, listening, reading, and writing.



Support: Understanding the emphasis of English lessons in the home country may give insight into areas of strength and weakness. For example, some English language education may emphasize vocabulary and grammar exercises rather than using the English language in “real-life” situations. If significant differences between domains are found during the

English proficiency screening, the descriptions of what lessons were like may provide supporting information to help focus schoolwork on domains or targets with which students have had less practice.

Section 4: Technology

4. Technology

4.1. Are you comfortable using computers, laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones?



Supplemental Questions

(4.2.) Do you currently have access to computers or laptops or tablets?

(4.3.) Did you have access to computers or laptops or tablets in the last place you lived?

(4.4.) Are you comfortable using computers, laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones?

(4.5.) Did you use computers, laptops, or tablets in your previous school? How did you use them?

Purpose: This section helps educators understand the level of familiarity and comfort that students (and their families) have with computers and other devices.

Interpretation: Students who are familiar with digital devices will be better able to participate in computer-based practices in the school. Responses to these questions can be useful for classroom teachers to know how to support students new to using classroom technology.

Supporting Students and Families:



Support: If technology use is an assumed part of participating in school, students who have not had prior exposure to technology will need explicit instruction in how to use school-issued devices or how to access and use a device if one is not provided by the school.

Families will likely need assistance in supporting their children in using and properly securing devices. Additionally, students who have used devices previously, but not for school purposes, may need guidance and support around expectations for the appropriate use of devices in school contexts. Families and older students will also need guidance with understanding school district policies for device updates, maintenance, and repairs.

Section 5: Educational History

5. Educational History



- 5.1. What was the last grade you attended?
- 5.2. What was the last grade you completed?
- 5.3. What grade were you in when you were __ years old? (Ask this question for all school-aged years, age 5 through their current age.)
- 5.4. Have there been months or years that you have not gone to school?
- 5.5. Do you have access to transcripts from your former school(s) that you can share?
- 5.6. In what country did you complete most of your schooling?

Supplemental Questions

- (5.7.) What subjects did you study?
- (5.8.) What subject do you feel you do your best in?
- (5.9.) What type(s) of school did you attend? (e.g., public, private, religious, international, etc.)
- (5.10.) What setting did you attend school in? (e.g., large school, small school, one-room schoolhouse, school in refugee camp, homeschool, etc.)
- (5.11) What did a typical school day look like?
- (5.12.) How many hours a day did you attend school?

Notes: Schooling outside of the U.S. can take many forms, and this should not be presumed to be less comprehensive or rigorous. A typical school day may vary depending on where students attended, and some schools may have scheduled or unexpected school closures. Rather than assume that a different educational approach is less effective, staff should think about how previous educational experiences could be leveraged in U.S. classrooms, as well as how to support students in adjusting to new school norms and routines that are unfamiliar.

It is recommended to pay special attention to Question 5.3: “What grade were you in when you were __ years old? (Ask this question for all school-aged years, age 5 through their current age.)” This may be filled out as a chart as shown in the worksheet in Appendix 2. By asking what grade students were in at each age, interviewers can identify repeated grades, skipped grades, and gaps in education. The interviewer may begin by asking, “How old were you when you first started school?” Then, for each subsequent year up to the student’s current age, the interviewer may ask, “What grade were you in when you were __ years old?”

Purpose: These questions help staff better understand students’ previous school experiences outside of the U.S. The questions help identify the content knowledge and experiential learning that students bring and identify schooling patterns that may indicate if the student experienced limited or interrupted

formal education. If the student attended school consistently, the Supplemental Questions may be skipped.

If responses to the priority questions in this section indicate potential interrupted or inconsistent schooling, the supplemental questions about the typical school day and setting can garner useful contextual information about the student's school experience. This supplemental information can inform educators about the U.S. school routines to which newcomers or SLIFE may need assistance adapting.

Interpretation: Interpretation of the questionnaire responses should integrate all available information to create a comprehensive profile of the student and support well-informed recommendations. There is no minimum threshold of answers that indicates an inconsistency or limitation in education or an algorithm that generates an automatic placement recommendation. Careful and insightful recommendations must come from qualified, cross-culturally aware educators who are knowledgeable of the district's programs and services to creatively envision a placement that meets the unique needs of newcomers and/or SLIFE. If transcripts confirm a continuous schooling experience and give information about what courses were taken, the information from the supplemental questions might not be needed. In other cases, careful interpretation of the answers will inform the type of supports that can benefit newcomers and SLIFE.



Note that all students were affected by COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures. Pandemic-based disruptions should not be considered qualifiers for SLIFE status unless an individual student experienced dramatically different school interruptions as compared to peers.

Supporting Students and Families:



Placement: Students should be placed in grade levels with peers around the same age. Older teenagers should not be placed in middle school, for example. The subjects students have studied and shown interest in can be leveraged to help them feel successful in the classroom. Especially if they have limited experience with extracurricular activities, staff can orient and encourage them to join activities or choose electives aligned with their interests.



Support: Consider the severity of interrupted schooling and determine if existing district programs and supports are sufficient or if additional services would be needed. For example, for students who have been out of school for an extended time, or whose typical school day was very short, how will the district support the transition to the length of a typical U.S. school day? Document the number of students showing similar needs to plan accordingly, including for the allocation of resources.

Section 6: Out-of-School Activities & Wraparound Supports

6. Out-of-School Activities & Wraparound Supports

Supplemental Questions

- (6.1.) Before you came to the U.S., did you have other activities that you had to do instead of going to school or studying, like working or taking care of siblings?
- (6.2.) Do you still have to do those things, or will you have new things you have to do now that you're in the U.S.?
- (6.3.) What kind of non-academic activities and services did your school provide? (e.g., tutoring, meals, etc.)
- (6.4.) Did you participate in sports, clubs, or volunteer? (These need not be formal clubs.)
- (6.5.) We have services available to all of our students. Would you like to participate in any of these programs?

Purpose: The questions in this section help staff understand students' lives outside the classroom. Understanding the responsibilities that students may have to help the family mitigate income, housing, and/or food insecurity is important to provide timely and targeted support for the family and academic support to ensure the student can succeed in grade-level content.

Interpretation: Understanding how students spend their time out of school, including helping with family activities, can provide important context to guide conversations around time management and uncover important skills and knowledge. Answers to these questions can also serve to inform district staff of student non-academic needs that could be met through district wraparound services, including partnerships with community organizations and affinity groups.

Supporting Students and Families:



Placement: Answers to the questions in this section can help determine whether the student needs a class schedule that supports balancing work and school. The answers can also help determine whether the student would benefit from specific programs, schools, and activities in a general school setting or whether the optimal placement is a more protected, newcomer-focused program/site to assist in this early transition to U.S. schools.



Support: The information gleaned from answers to this section can help determine whether the student and/or family needs housing, food, childcare, work-related supports, or has health-related needs, including mental health. Districts should prepare a list of supports available to all students, or newcomers specifically. The interviewer should describe the supports being offered and ask families if they would like to access any of these supports.

Considerations for Customizing the Questionnaire

The final section of the questionnaire, *Out-of-School Activities & Wraparound Supports*, is a great place to begin the customization process. Many districts already have programs that support students who need dietary or religious accommodations, among other possibilities. The final section of the questionnaire could be a great place to add questions like, “Do you have any food allergies or dietary restrictions?” so that the needs can be met.

Always be sure that additional questions lead to information that will support either the specific student or services for newcomer students as a whole. Some topic areas can be sensitive, such as questions about religion. In these cases, it is helpful to explain the accommodation the school typically provides and inquire if the student would like to participate, rather than ask a question such as “What is your religion?”

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Part VI

Planning to Use an EBQ in a Newcomer Screening Process

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Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

PART VI

Planning to Use an EBQ in a Newcomer Screening Process

Developing and implementing a comprehensive screening process for newcomers and/or SLIFE requires thoughtful, purposeful planning and stable resourcing. The effort is only worthwhile if the process yields actionable information for placement and improves services for newcomer students. Identifying newcomers and SLIFE should not become merely a bureaucratic burden for staff or newcomer families.

The screening process can vary from district to district, contingent on factors such as staffing, resources, and policies, but there are some generally applicable considerations for districts thinking of instituting a newcomer screening process or modifying an existing process. These considerations are as follows:

- **Effective communication with the newcomer students and their families.** Once the EBQ is completed, newcomers and their families need to understand the next steps, including scheduling any follow-up questions, screening, or obtaining documentation such as transcripts.
- **Referral process.** If any part of the EBQ process raises questions about the need for mental health referrals or special needs evaluations, districts should have a process for timely and appropriate follow-up.
- **Student privacy and access to EBQ responses.** Newcomers and their families should be informed where their completed EBQ will be filed (e.g., in the student file) and how they will be used. Designate district and/or school staff who can access the EBQ information to inform placement, understand student progress, and provide services needed.
- **Language of EBQ responses.** School staff may complete the questionnaire as a worksheet on page 77 (Appendix 2) of this document. If a translation is required, it is recommended to have the questions translated in advance. If answers will be recorded in the student's primary language, a plan should be made for the appropriate translation of the answers and data entry and/or secure storage of the questionnaire.
- **Decision-making support for parents.** If the placement recommendation involves a choice among different types of schools or settings—such as a newcomer program, newcomer center, or community school—provide guidance and support to help newcomer parents or guardians make an informed decision.
- **Preparation of receiving schools.** Part of the placement decision for newcomer students is determining the best academic fit for the student's success, but an equally important factor is that the school environment is welcoming for newcomers. Receiving schools should be immediately informed of newcomer students placed in their school and provided an informational sheet to help schedule specials/electives and support services.

Table 11 outlines an example of an initial setup process that should be completed by districts before incorporating an EBQ into intake processes.

Table 11. Preparing to Implement a Newcomer Identification Process

Action	Consideration
Review Parts II–IV of this Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What questions should be asked (including supplemental questions), and how will the information from each question be used? <input type="checkbox"/> What initiates the process for EBQ administration? (See <i>Candidates for Educational Background Questionnaire</i> in Part III.)
Decide Where EBQ Will Be Administered, and Which Staff Will Administer It	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Where will the EBQ be administered? At a district office, welcome center, or school building? <input type="checkbox"/> Who will administer the EBQ? <input type="checkbox"/> Which authorized district/school staff will have access to the data?
Develop Procedures for Data Protection, Management, Use, and Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What is the process for sharing the results of the questionnaire with parents and staff? <input type="checkbox"/> Which staff will see the results, and who will be expected to take action based on the results? <input type="checkbox"/> If the questionnaire responses are initially recorded in a language other than English, what is the process for translating and storing the answers so they are available to all staff who need to access them? <input type="checkbox"/> Who maintains the student EBQ file, and for how long, especially in the absence of a transcript? <input type="checkbox"/> Who is responsible for purging files, and on what schedule? <input type="checkbox"/> Is a summary with program placement recommendations provided? To whom? <input type="checkbox"/> How is the information used to provide instructional support?
Plan Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How will key personnel be trained in administering the EBQ? <input type="checkbox"/> How will key personnel be trained in using EBQ answers to support students? <input type="checkbox"/> What is the plan to make sure any new staff members who will be involved with the EBQ process receive training?
Plan for Interpretation and Translation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How will the EBQ be translated for students? In the moment by an interpreter? Will a worksheet be translated so that the question phrasing will be similar for all students from a given language group? <input type="checkbox"/> In what language will the answers be recorded? Will answers need to be translated, and what is the process for translating answers if needed?

Table 12 outlines an example of a step-by-step process that begins after an EBQ is completed and concludes when a student is placed and provided with services.

Table 12. General Use of Educational Background Questionnaire in the Placement Process

Timeline	Processes
Immediately After EBQ is Administered	Inform Family of Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask follow-up questions and request additional documents (e.g., transcripts). Clarify what happens next in the process. Student Privacy & Access to EBQ Information (FERPA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain where the EBQ responses will be stored (e.g., student file). Clarify how the information will be used (e.g., placement, support services). Share authorized district/school contact for access or questions.
Internal Staff Analysis/Review	Review EBQ Responses for Placement & Referral Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify academic background, language needs, and past schooling. Determine if mental health or special needs referrals are necessary. Determine Best Academic & Social Fit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider academic background, language proficiency, and social-emotional needs. Ensure placement supports long-term student success.
Parent Follow-up	Support Parents in Placement Choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If multiple placement options exist (newcomer program, center, community school, etc.), guide parents/guardians to make an informed decision.
After Placement Decision	Preparing Receiving School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the school immediately about the incoming student. Provide a profile with academic background and information to help schedule electives and support services. Ensure a welcoming environment for the newcomer.
After Services Begin	Monitoring and Family Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progress and provide additional resources as needed. Continue communicating with family regarding the student's adaptation and success.

Welcoming Newcomer Families and Students to School

Tulsa Public Schools provides a comprehensive welcome and planning process for newcomers. Family home visits are conducted by a caseworker, Immigrant Student Services (ISS), and a registered nurse (RN) to provide essential information about school expectations, transportation, and the first day of school. The district offers families a choice of school options, such as Tulsa Virtual Academy (TVA) or in-person schooling. Planning meetings are held with school leadership, English language development (ELD) partners, counselors, and teachers to review newcomer information, set expectations, and plan school visits, while connecting families with available academic and cultural resources. The welcome meeting includes a school tour, introductions to the school and Language and Cultural Services (LCS) team, and interpretation services to support families on the first day. Translated documents are provided to ensure a smooth transition.

Home Visits

- Family + Case Worker + ISS + RN
- School options—TVA and In-Person
- School expectations, transportation, first day of school, etc.
- Welcome meeting

Planning Meetings

- School leadership + ELD Partner + counselor + teacher(s)
- Review information, set expectations, co-plan school visit
- Make connections to resources available for academic and cultural supports

Welcome Meeting

- First day of school at their neighborhood school
- School tour
- School + LCS team + Family + Case Worker
- Interpretation services
- Translated documents

Source: McCoy, G., Mitchell, M., & Grisso, L. (2022, May 13). *Welcoming our refugee students* [PowerPoint slides].

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Appendices

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Considerations for Identifying and
Supporting Newcomer Students

APPENDIX 1

Script for Introducing the Educational Background Questionnaire

The script below is intended as a sample of a way to open the EBQ interview with students. The script should be adapted based on the student's age and comfort level with the interview process. Successful interviewers will have enough familiarity with the script that they are able to speak conversationally, rather than as if reading from a prompt. As the interviewer develops experience, they will become adept at modifying the script based on how the individual student is responding.

Script

Welcome, and thank you for being patient in answering questions that will help us make sure you learn English and are successful in your classes. It's important that you and your family know that you have a right to free public education in the U.S. and that nothing that you say during this interview will take away your chance to be in the public schools. I'd like to ask you some questions to get a better understanding of your previous experiences with school so that we can help you adjust to your school life in the U.S.

For younger students, ask:

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What do you do for fun?

For older school students, ask:

What do you want to do after you finish school?

What are your hopes, dreams, and wishes for your life?

If the parents are answering the interview questions, ask:

What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

NOTE: Spend a minute talking to the student about their goals and interests and what they shared with you. Wrap up with an encouraging statement about helping them reach their goals. Then, proceed to ask the EBQ questions, including any supplemental questions or your own follow-up questions as appropriate.

APPENDIX 2

Educational Background Questionnaire Worksheet

Interview Site: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer Name: _____ Interpreter Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Present for Interview: ____ Yes ____ No

Student Name/ID: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Grade of Matriculation: _____



Priority questions



Supplemental questions

Section 1: Introduction



Purpose: Explain the questionnaire and registration process to newcomer students and their families to put them at ease. Establish a rapport for students and parents to feel more at ease and provide comprehensive and helpful responses. Asking about the student's interests and goals, as outlined in Appendix 1, is a good way to ease into the conversation.

Notes about interests and goals:

Section 2: Language Background Information



Purpose: The purpose of questions in this section is to elicit information about languages the student has used, in both home and school environments prior to coming to the U.S. These questions can help staff identify additional languages that are helpful in successfully communicating with the students and their families, especially in the early days of arriving at school.

2.1. What language(s) do you consider your home/first language?

2.2. In what language were your school lessons taught (orally) prior to arriving in the U.S.?

2.3. What was the language of the textbooks in your school prior to arriving in the U.S.?

(2.4., Supplemental) How comfortable do you feel speaking/understanding/reading/writing in each of the languages you listed above?

Language	Speaking	Understanding	Reading	Writing
Language: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Language: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Language: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
Language: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure

(2.5., Supplemental) What language do the people who live with you prefer to read?

Section 3: Experience with English



Purpose: The questions in this section aim to provide staff with information about students' prior experience with English that is complementary to the results of standardized English language assessments.

3.1. Did you study English in your home country?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

3.2. Do any of the people you live with now speak English? Are they parents/guardians? Siblings? Someone else?

- ☐ Parents/guardians
- ☐ Siblings
- ☐ Others: _____

(3.3., Supplemental) What did your English lessons look like? (e.g., copying English words and phrases from the blackboard, role-playing in English, reading in English, watching videos in English, etc.)

- ☐ Copying English words and phrases from the blackboard
- ☐ Role-playing in English
- ☐ Reading in English
- ☐ Watching videos in English
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

(3.4., Supplemental) How comfortable do you feel reading/writing/listening/speaking in English?

Language	Very Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not Comfortable	Unsure
Reading English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 4: Technology



Purpose: This section helps educators understand the level of familiarity and comfort that students (and their families) have with computers and other devices.

4.1. Are you comfortable using computers, laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(4.2., Supplemental) Do you currently have access to computers or laptops or tablets?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(4.3., Supplemental) Did you have access to computers or laptops or tablets in the last place you lived?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(4.4., Supplemental) Are you comfortable using computers, laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(4.5., Supplemental) Did you use computers, laptops, or tablets in your previous school? How did you use them?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Section 5: Educational History



Purpose: These questions help staff better understand students' previous school experience outside of the U.S. The questions help identify the content knowledge and experiential learning that students bring and identify schooling patterns that may indicate if the student experienced limited or interrupted formal education. If the student attended school consistently, the Supplemental Questions may be skipped.

5.1. What was the last grade you attended? _____

5.2. What was the last grade you completed? _____

5.3. What grade were you in when you were _____ years old? (Ask this question for all school-aged years, age 5 through their current age.)

Age	Grade	Age	Grade	Age	Grade
5		10		15	
6		11		16	
7		12		17	
8		13		18	
9		14		19	

5.4. Have there been months or years that you have not gone to school?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5.5. Do you have access to transcripts from your former school(s) that you can share?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5.6. In what country did you complete most of your schooling?

(5.7., Supplemental) What subjects did you study?

(5.8., Supplemental) What subject do you feel you do your best in?

(5.9., Supplemental) What type(s) of school did you attend?

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Religious
- ☐ International
- ☐ _____

(5.10., Supplemental) What setting did you attend school in?

- ☐ Large school
- ☐ Small school
- ☐ One-room schoolhouse
- ☐ School in refugee camp
- ☐ Homeschool
- ☐ Other: _____

(5.11., Supplemental) What did a typical school day look like?

(5.12., Supplemental) How many hours a day did you attend school?

Section 6: Out-of-School Activities & Wraparound Supports



Purpose: The questions in this section help staff understand students' lives outside the classroom. Understanding the responsibilities that students may have to help the family mitigate income, housing, and/or food insecurity is important to provide timely and targeted support for the family and academic support to ensure the student can succeed in grade-level content.

(6.1., Supplemental) Before you came to the U.S., did you have other activities that you had to do instead of going to school or studying, like working or taking care of siblings?

(6.2., Supplemental) Do you still have to do those things, or will you have new things you have to do now that you're in the U.S.?

(6.3., Supplemental) What kind of non-academic activities and services did your school provide? (e.g., tutoring, meals, etc.)

(6.4., Supplemental) Did you participate in sports, clubs, or volunteer? (These need not be formal clubs.)

(6.5., Supplemental) We have services available to all of our students. Would you like to participate in any of these programs?

Service Name: _____

☐ Yes

☐ No

Service Name: _____

☐ Yes

☐ No

Service Name: _____

☐ Yes

☐ No

COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICTS

Albuquerque, Anchorage, Arlington, Atlanta, Aurora, Austin, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), Buffalo, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cincinnati, Clark County (Las Vegas), Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas, Dayton, Denver, Des Moines, Detroit, Durham, Duval County (Jacksonville), El Paso, Fayette County (Lexington), Fort Worth, Fresno, Guilford County (Greensboro, N.C.), Hawaii, Hillsborough County (Tampa), Houston, Indianapolis, Jackson, Jefferson County (Louisville), Jersey City, Kansas City, Long Beach, Madison, Miami-Dade County, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, New Orleans, New York City, Newark, Norfolk, Oakland, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orange County (Orlando), Palm Beach County, Philadelphia, Pinellas County (St. Petersburg), Pittsburgh, Phoenix Union, Portland, Providence, Puerto Rico, Richmond, Rochester, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Ana, Shelby County (Memphis) Seattle, St. Louis, St. Paul, Toledo, Tulsa, Washington, D.C., Washoe County (Reno), Wichita, and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County

Notes

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EL SURVEY

ENGLISH LEARNERS IN AMERICA'S GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

Project Overview and Preliminary Analyses

Working Draft: All analyses and calculations are preliminary and subject to final verification.



Council of the Great City Schools
March 2025

Project Overview and Timeline

In 2019, the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) published a 6-year follow-up report on English learners (ELs) enrolled in member districts that provided an in-depth view of the scale of EL enrollment, achievement, and services provided amongst its members.

Key indicators examined included EL enrollment, top languages spoken, student performance, staffing, and professional development. The 2024 update will re-examine these topics in addition to newer topics, reflecting the greater availability of EL-related data from the Council's Academic Key Performance Indicators project and federal data sources.

The timeline for the project in SY 2024-25 is as follows:



October: The Council will reach out to its member districts to update contacts



November: The Council will remind districts of the upcoming survey as well as conduct a pilot of the survey instrument



December: The finalized survey will be launched and sent to lead EL contacts in member districts



January-April: Responses will be tracked/analyzed and reminders to complete the survey will be sent



May: Preliminary data presented to EL program directors

Project Contact: De'Aysia Barner, English Learners Policy Fellow, dbarner@cgcs.org

Scan to access the
2019 EL Report



<https://bit.ly/4eC0aqT>

English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools

Demographics, Achievement, and Staffing



Data Sources

This report uses a variety of federal and Council data sources.

Council of the Great City Schools Academic Key Performance Indicators. In 2014, the Council began a multi-year project to develop a set of Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that could be collected across the Council membership to allow districts to benchmark their progress in improving academic achievement. Teams of educators from Council-member districts and Council staff jointly developed specifications for indicators in general instruction, special education, and EL programming. The Council refined and narrowed a set of KPIs that were piloted in 2015 and 2016. The data regarding ELs were collected as one of the disaggregated student groups for virtually all the final Academic KPIs, providing important information about the academic experience of ELs in member districts. The Academic KPI EL-related data used in this report are from the Academic KPI data collection for SY 2020-21, SY 2021-22, and SY 2022-23.

Council of the Great City Schools Survey on EL Staffing and Professional Development and Staffing. The Council administered a survey to EL program directors of Council-member districts in January 2025. Survey topics included: requirements for teaching ELs, teacher recruit strategies, instructional assistants deployed to support ELs, and professional development from SY 2020-21 through SY 2022-23.

ED Data Express. ED Data Express is a U.S. Department of Education platform that offers access to a variety of educational data. The platform includes Title III indicators, which capture data such as total EL enrollment in public schools, the number and percentage of ELs served by Title III programs, the number and percentage of ELs who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for five or more years without reaching English proficiency, the most commonly spoken languages among ELs, ELs' progress toward English proficiency as measured by state English language proficiency assessments, and the number and percentage of former ELs who have exited EL status.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Elementary/Secondary Information System (EISi). NCES is a federal statistical agency that has been reporting U.S. education data since 1867. The platform includes indicators of total student enrollment and total EL enrollment in public schools.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Data Explorer provides national, state, and district-level data on student performance in subjects like reading and mathematics, offering insights into both public and private schools. For this report, large city (LC) sample data from NAEP serves as a proxy for understanding the achievement levels and trends of ELs in Council-member districts, as opposed to relying on the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) data, which represents less than 40 percent of Council membership.

United States Census Bureau American Community Survey. The American Community Survey (ACS) is a yearly survey by the U.S. Census Bureau that collects information on the U.S. population. It provides estimates on a wide range of topics, including income, education, employment, and housing.

Historical Background

History of Linguistic Diversity

Today, roughly 350 languages are spoken in the United States.¹ The presence of many languages in the United States has been part of the history of the Americas, even before explorers and colonists arrived. Formal tracking of languages spoken by the U.S. Census Bureau began in 1890. It was not until the 1980 census, however, that a standard set of questions was asked of everyone aged five and over. Data from these questions indicated that about 20 percent of the U.S. population aged five and above spoke a language other than English at home. Table 1 shows the numbers and percentage share in 2013 and 2023.

Table 1. Population Five Years and Older Who Spoke a Language Other Than English in 2013 and 2023		
Population Characteristic	2013	2023
Population five years and older	296 million	317 million
Spoke a language other than English	62 million	71 million
Percentage share of total five years and older	21%	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). 2013 & 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates: Language Spoken at Home. U.S. Census Bureau.

U.S.-born Speakers of Languages Other Than English

This increase in the total percentage of the population five years and older who speak a language other than English at home is related to the inflow of immigrants and the expected population growth of immigrant families already living in the United States. In fact, the majority of individuals under the age of 18 who live with one or two immigrant parents are U.S.-born, according to the 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.² Of all children under 18, 66.2 million or 96 percent are U.S.-born, while 2.6 million or four percent are foreign-born.³ (See Table 2.) Overall, data show that the majority of English learners enrolled in school are U.S.-born.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015, November 3). *Census Bureau reports at least 350 languages spoken in U.S. homes*. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/archives/2015-pr/cb15-185.html>

² Language Spoken at Home. 2013 & 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. (Table S1601)

³ Age and Nativity of Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies by Number and Nativity of Parents. 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. (Table B05009)

Table 2. Nativity of Children by Age in 2023		
Population Characteristic	Population	Percentage of Age Group
Children under 6	21,177,904	100.0%
U.S.-born	20,775,697	98.1%
Foreign-born	402,207	1.9%
Children 6-17	47,673,073	100.0%
U.S.-born	45,463,171	95.4%
Foreign-born	2,209,902	4.6%
Children under 18	68,850,977	100.0%
U.S.-born	66,238,868	96.2%
Foreign-born	2,612,109	3.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates: Age and nativity of own children under 18 years in families and subfamilies by number and nativity of parents.

Defining English Language Learners

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) retained the definition of Limited English Proficient (LEP) but replaced the term with *English learner*. Under ESEA, the definition of English learner—formerly called LEP—is a complex combination of objective and subjective criteria that states and local education agencies must apply to identify students who need English language instructional programs and are eligible to receive federally funded supplemental services.

As noted in the 2013 and 2019 Council EL reports, the complexity of the definition, coupled with the discretion given to states, led to substantial variability in school districts' ability to identify students as English learners. The ESSA amendments to ESEA attempted to reduce this variability by requiring states to establish standardized entrance and exit procedures for ELs, thereby diminishing school district discretion. EL data reported by member districts is, therefore, presumed to reflect their respective state procedures. Given the state discretion in the initial identification of ELs and their subsequent exiting from EL programs, we acknowledge the inherent variability of the data.

Definition of English Learner in ESSA

The term "English learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual:

- A. who is aged 3 through 21;
- B. who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- C.(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
(ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
(II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
(iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- D. whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual —
 - (i) the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3);
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

English Learners Enrollment

This section presents enrollment data on ELs in 77 Council-member districts.⁴ To provide an estimate on EL enrollment in Council-member districts, this section uses publicly available data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Elementary/Secondary Information System (ELSi)⁵ and the U.S. Department of Education ED Data Express.

Enrollment of ELs in Urban Districts from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N=77 Districts)

This report also looks at a three-year EL data set spanning SY 2020-21 through SY 2022-23 for 77 districts that comprise the Council's membership today. The 2019 publication of *English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools* covered three years—SY 2013-14 through SY 2015-16—for the 74 districts that were Council members in 2017. Notwithstanding the additional three districts in the Council's membership, we provide general observations about changes in the overall EL enrollment in the Council membership between the two endpoints of data for the nine-year period between SY 2013-14 and SY 2022-23.

Above a 5 percent increase over a nine-year period. In SY 2013-14, a total of 7.51 million students were enrolled in Council-member districts,⁶ and 1.25 million were identified as ELs. By SY 2022-23, a total of 6.84 million students were enrolled in Council-member districts, and 1.24 million were identified as ELs, accounting for 22 percent of the nation's 5.56 million ELs. Over these nine years, Council membership experienced a decrease of 675,913 students, or nine percent, in overall enrollment and an increase of 75,144 ELs, or six percent, in EL enrollment. Non-EL enrollment decreased during this period by 666,153 students or 10.6 percent.

A slight increase in the most recent three-year period. Table 3 shows the most recent three-year trend from NCES and ED Data Express.⁷ The trend shows annually a slight decline in K-12 overall enrollment and an increase in EL enrollment in Council-member districts from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. The drop of 148,026 students in overall K-12 enrollment occurred between SY 2020-21 and SY 2021-22, representing less than a 2.1 percent change, while the 48,461 EL increase between SY 2020-21 and SY 2021-22 represented a 4.2 percent change in Council-member district enrollment.

⁴ Puerto Rico is excluded due to unique educational contexts compared to other Council-member school districts related to educational services and data collection for ELs.

⁵ ELSi includes Common Core of Data files from which the total student enrollment figures were extracted. National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). Elementary/Secondary Information System. Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/>. The enrollment figures for ELs reflect all students served in language instruction programs, as reported by NCES, which includes ungraded and pre-kindergarten to 13th grade students.

⁶ SY 2013-14 enrollment figures are for 73 of 74 districts. See the 2019 CGCS EL report for a member-district listing.

⁷ NCES was used in order to calculate total enrollment, while ED Data Express was used to calculate total number of ELs.

Table 3. Total Students and ELs in Council-member Districts, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23						
	SY 2020-21		SY 2021-22		SY 2022-23	
	Total	EL	Total	EL	Total	EL
Total	7,035,043	1,153,935	6,887,017	1,202,396	6,836,837	1,243,840
ELs as % of Total	16.4%		17.5%		18.2%	

Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

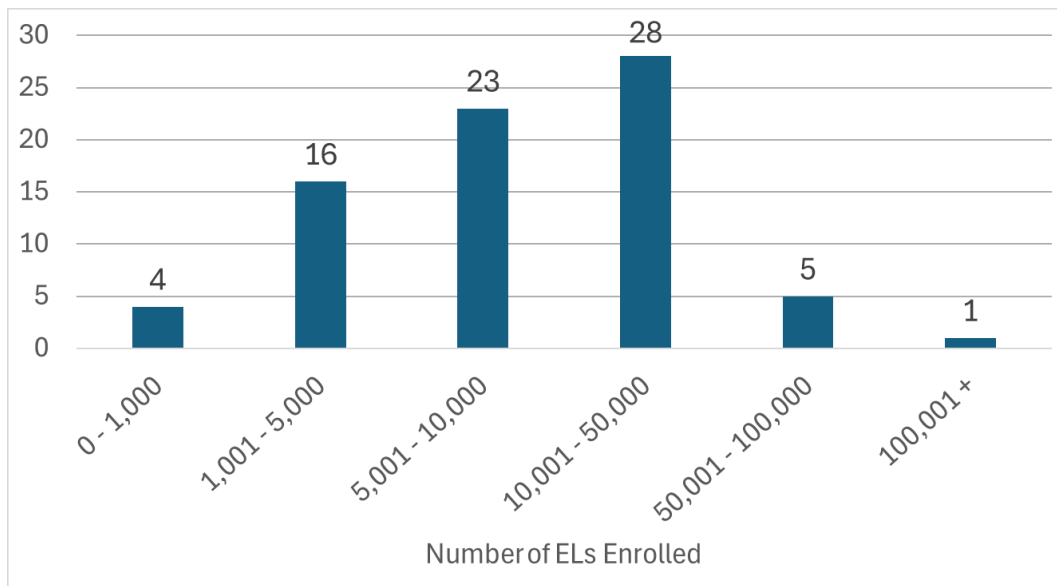
Number of ELs in Member Districts in SY 2022-23 (N=77 Districts)

The proportion of Council-member districts with relatively low EL enrollment (5,000 or fewer ELs) has declined in recent years as EL enrollment has risen in Council-member districts. In SY 2022-23, about one-quarter (26 percent, or 20 out of 77) of Council-member districts enrolled 5,000 or fewer ELs. This reflects a slight decrease from SY 2015-16 when 30 percent (22 of 73 districts) had relatively low EL enrollment. (See Figure 1.)

In contrast, an additional seven Council-member districts appeared in one of two categories—

- ***Districts that enroll between 5,000 and 10,000 ELs.*** In SY 2015-16, 25 percent of Council-member districts (18 of 73) reported between 5,000 and 10,000 ELs. In SY 2022-23, 30 percent (23 of 77) had such enrollment.
- ***Districts that enroll between 10,001 and 50,000 ELs.*** In SY 2015-16, 36 percent (26 of 73) of Council-member districts enrolled between 10,001 and 50,000 ELs. In SY 2022-23, consistently 36 percent (28 of 77) had such enrollment.

Figure 1. Number of Districts by Range of EL Enrollment, SY 2022-23



Source: Council analysis of data from ED Data Express.

Table 4 provides individual district EL enrollment figures, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education, ranked by the total number of ELs and grouped along six bands of enrollment. New

York City Public Schools enrolled the largest number of ELs at 129,759 and New Orleans Public Schools had the lowest number at only 38 ELs.

Table 4. Council-member Districts by Range of Total EL Enrollment, SY 2022-23 <i>Sorted by Total EL Enrollment</i>				
SY 2022-23				
District	Total Enrollment	EL Enrollment	ELs as Percentage of Total Enrollment	Bands by Number
New York	847,030	129,759	15.32%	100,001 +
Los Angeles	427,795	91,071	21.29%	50,001 – 100,000
Chicago	321,666	69,075	21.47%	
Miami-Dade County	334,090	67,967	20.34%	
Houston	189,934	64,654	34.04%	
Dallas	141,169	63,889	45.26%	
Clark County	309,787	47,151	15.22%	10,001 – 50,000
Broward County	254,732	30,483	11.97%	
Palm Beach County	188,843	29,910	15.84%	
Orange County	207,561	29,055	14.00%	
Fort Worth	72,783	26,661	36.63%	
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	144,197	25,980	18.02%	
Hillsborough County	224,538	22,914	10.20%	
Denver	87,883	21,722	24.72%	
Philadelphia	118,335	20,845	17.62%	
Austin	73,384	20,329	27.70%	
Metropolitan Nashville	80,651	18,288	22.68%	
Jefferson County	95,230	17,630	18.51%	
El Paso	50,031	17,219	34.42%	
Albuquerque	79,805	17,048	21.36%	
Hawaii	170,209	16,690	9.81%	
Santa Ana	39,935	16,558	41.46%	
San Diego	93,893	16,134	17.18%	
Arlington (TX)	56,167	15,961	28.42%	
Fresno	69,668	14,216	20.41%	
San Francisco	48,785	13,676	28.03%	
Aurora	38,135	13,509	35.42%	
Boston	46,367	13,094	28.24%	
Oklahoma City	33,245	12,261	36.88%	
Oakland	34,149	11,791	34.53%	
Shelby County	109,797	10,901	9.93%	
Long Beach	65,554	10,846	16.55%	
Omaha	51,754	10,795	20.86%	
Newark	41,672	10,232	24.55%	
Milwaukee	67,500	9,768	14.47%	5,001 – 10,000
San Antonio	45,255	9,515	21.03%	

Table 4. Council-member Districts by Range of Total EL Enrollment, SY 2022-23, continued

SY 2022-23				
District	Total Enrollment	EL Enrollment	ELs as Percentage of Total Enrollment	Bands by Number
Washoe County	64,443	9,108	14.13%	5,001 – 10,000
Tulsa	33,871	9,062	26.75%	
Duval	128,657	8,952	6.96%	
St. Paul	32,316	8,944	27.68%	
Baltimore	75,995	8,893	11.70%	
Columbus	45,338	8,201	18.09%	
Providence	20,725	7,875	38.00%	
Winston Salem	52,717	7,774	14.75%	
Wichita	46,796	7,624	16.29%	
Sacramento	38,821	7,599	19.57%	
Guilford County	68,894	7,589	11.02%	
Fayette County	41,422	7,187	17.35%	
Des Moines	30,739	7,065	22.98%	
District of Columbia	49,687	6,861	13.81%	
Seattle	51,238	6,859	13.39%	
Anchorage	43,727	6,625	15.15%	
Pinellas County	93,702	6,109	6.52%	
Indianapolis	22,027	5,938	26.96%	
Detroit	48,548	5,863	12.08%	
Bridgeport	19,337	5,672	29.33%	
Minneapolis	29,205	5,154	17.65%	1,001 – 5,000
Buffalo	30,124	5,068	16.82%	
East Baton Rouge	43,253	4,158	9.61%	
Phoenix Union	27,900	4,059	14.55%	
Portland	44,740	4,014	8.97%	
Charleston	49,929	3,934	7.88%	
Richmond	21,130	3,679	17.41%	
Cleveland	33,998	3,663	10.77%	
Rochester	22,820	3,263	14.30%	
Cincinnati	35,585	3,214	9.03%	
Kansas City	14,413	3,078	21.36%	
Little Rock	21,456	2,848	13.27%	
St. Louis	18,321	1,908	10.41%	
Atlanta	50,325	1,846	3.67%	
Dayton	12,075	1,795	14.87%	
Birmingham	21,130	1,382	6.54%	0 – 1,000
Norfolk	27,306	1,369	5.01%	
Pittsburgh	20,034	1,197	5.97%	
Jackson	18,710	414	2.21%	
Toledo	21,814	362	1.66%	0 – 1,000
New Orleans	2,040	38	1.86%	

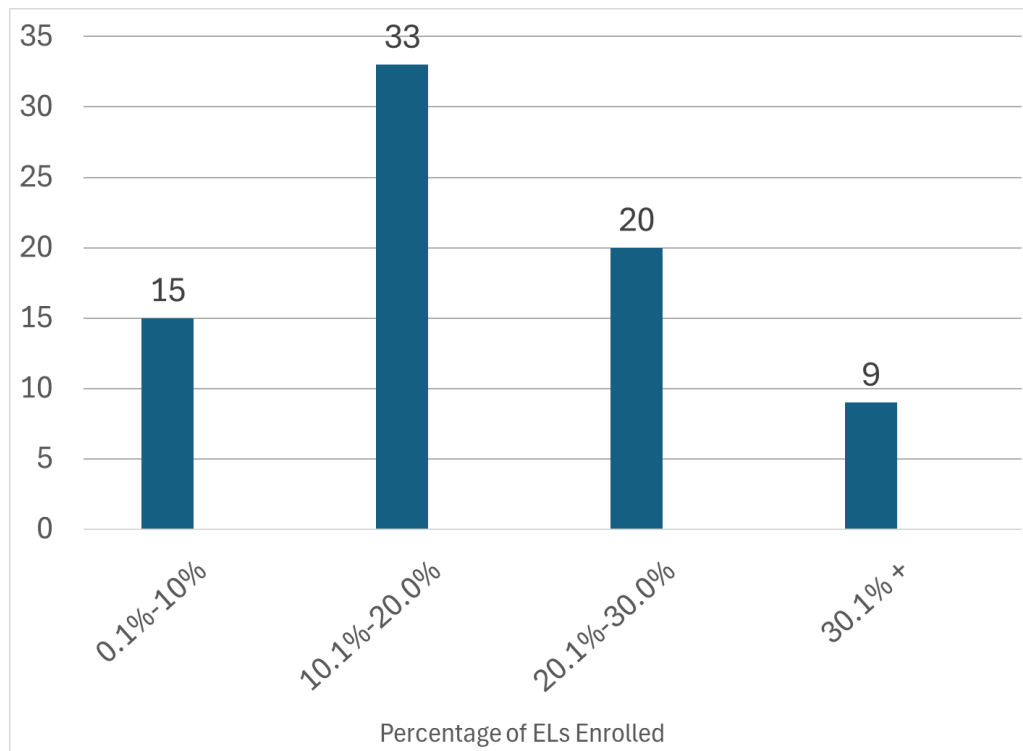
Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

ELs as a Percentage of Student Enrollment in SY 2022-23 (N=77 Districts)

Figure 2 shows the distribution of districts in categories based on the percentage of ELs in SY 2022-23. Comparisons between the distribution in SY 2022-23 (out of 77 districts) and SY 2015-16 (out of 73 districts) are as follows:

- ***EL enrollment constituting less than 10 percent of total district enrollment.*** The number and percentage of Council-member districts with EL enrollments less than 10 percent dropped by 40 percent between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23. In SY 2015-16, 34 percent of reporting districts (25 of 73) had EL enrollment that accounted for less than 10 percent of total enrollment. In SY 2022-23, this percentage dropped to 19 percent of reporting districts (15 of 77) with EL enrollments that are less than 10 percent of a district's enrollment.
- The percentage of Council-member districts with enrollments over 30.1% nearly doubled between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23.
- ***EL enrollment constituting between 10.1 and 20 percent of total district enrollment.*** The percentage of Council-member districts with enrollments between 10.1 and 20 percent increased by a third between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23. In SY 2015-16, 34 percent of reporting districts (25 of 73) had EL enrollment that accounted for between 10.1 percent and 20 percent of the total enrollment. In SY 2022-23, the percentage increased to 43 percent of reporting districts (33 of 77) that were in this percentage range.
 - ***EL enrollment constituting between 20.1 and 30 percent of total district enrollment.*** The percentage of Council-member districts with enrollments between 10.1 and 20 percent remained consistent between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23. In SY 2015-16, 25 percent (18 of 73) districts had EL enrollments that accounted for between 20.1 and 30 percent of total enrollment. In SY 2022-23, the percentage slightly increased to 26 percent of reporting districts (20 of 77) that were in this percentage range.
 - ***EL enrollment constituting less than 30 percent of total district enrollment.*** The number and percentage of Council-member districts with EL enrollments greater than 30 percent nearly doubled between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23. In SY 2015-16, 6.8 percent of reporting districts (5 of 73) had EL enrollment that accounted for more than 30 percent of total enrollment. In SY 2022-23, this percentage increased to 11.7 percent of reporting districts (9 of 77) with EL enrollments that are more than 30 percent of a district's enrollment.

Figure 2. Number of Districts by Range of ELs as a Percentage of Total Student Enrollment, SY 2022-23



Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

Table 5 provides EL enrollment figures on individual districts as percentages of total district enrollment. Districts are ranked by the total percentage of ELs and organized within the four bands of enrollment shown in Figure 2. Dallas ISD showed the highest share of EL enrollment at 45 percent of its total enrollment, while Toledo Public Schools showed the smallest percentage of EL enrollment, at just under 2 percent.

Table 5. Council-member Districts by Range of Total EL Enrollment, SY 2022-23
Sorted by Total Percentage of ELs

SY 2022-23				
District	Total Enrollment	EL Enrollment	ELs as Percentage of Total Enrollment	Bands by Number
Dallas	141,169	63,889	45.26%	30.1% +
Santa Ana	39,935	16,558	41.46%	
Providence	20,725	7,875	38.00%	
Oklahoma City	33,245	12,261	36.88%	
Fort Worth	72,783	26,661	36.63%	
Aurora	38,135	13,509	35.42%	
Oakland	34,149	11,791	34.53%	
El Paso	50,031	17,219	34.42%	
Houston	189,934	64,654	34.04%	
Bridgeport	19,337	5,672	29.33%	20.1%-30.0%
Arlington	56,167	15,961	28.42%	
Boston	46,367	13,094	28.24%	
San Francisco	48,785	13,676	28.03%	
Austin	73,384	20,329	27.70%	
St. Paul	32,316	8,944	27.68%	
Indianapolis	22,027	5,938	26.96%	
Tulsa	33,871	9,062	26.75%	
Denver	87,883	21,722	24.72%	
Newark	41,672	10,232	24.55%	
Des Moines	30,739	7,065	22.98%	
Metropolitan Nashville	80,651	18,288	22.68%	
Chicago	321,666	69,075	21.47%	
Albuquerque	79,805	17,048	21.36%	
Kansas City	14,413	3,078	21.36%	
Los Angeles	427,795	91,071	21.29%	
San Antonio	45,255	9,515	21.03%	
Omaha	51,754	10,795	20.86%	
Fresno	69,668	14,216	20.41%	
Miami-Dade County	334,090	67,967	20.34%	10.1%-20.0%
Sacramento	38,821	7,599	19.57%	
Jefferson County	95,230	17,630	18.51%	
Columbus	45,338	8,201	18.09%	
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	144,197	25,980	18.02%	
Minneapolis	29,205	5,154	17.65%	
Philadelphia	118,335	20,845	17.62%	
Richmond	21,130	3,679	17.41%	
Fayette County	41,422	7,187	17.35%	
San Diego	93,893	16,134	17.18%	
Buffalo	30,124	5,068	16.82%	
Long Beach	65,554	10,846	16.55%	
Wichita	46,796	7,624	16.29%	
Palm Beach County	188,843	29,910	15.84%	

Table 5. Council-member Districts by Range of Total EL Enrollment, SY 2022-23, continued

SY 2022-23				
District	Total Enrollment	EL Enrollment	ELs as Percentage of Total Enrollment	Bands by Number
New York City	847,030	129,759	15.32%	10.1%-20.0%
Clark County	309,787	47,151	15.22%	
Anchorage	43,727	6,625	15.15%	
Dayton	12,075	1,795	14.87%	
Winston Salem	52,717	7,774	14.75%	
Phoenix Union	27,900	4,059	14.55%	
Milwaukee	67,500	9,768	14.47%	
Rochester	22,820	3,263	14.30%	
Washoe County	64,443	9,108	14.13%	
Orange	207,561	29,055	14.00%	
District of Columbia	49,687	6,861	13.81%	
Seattle	51,238	6,859	13.39%	
Little Rock	21,456	2,848	13.27%	
Detroit	48,548	5,863	12.08%	
Broward County	254,732	30,483	11.97%	
Baltimore	75,995	8,893	11.70%	
Guilford County	68,894	7,589	11.02%	
Cleveland	33,998	3,663	10.77%	
St. Louis	18,321	1,908	10.41%	
Hillsborough County	224,538	22,914	10.20%	
Shelby County	109,797	10,901	9.93%	0.1%-10.0%
Hawaii	170,209	16,690	9.81%	
East Baton Rouge	43,253	4,158	9.61%	
Cincinnati	35,585	3,214	9.03%	
Portland	44,740	4,014	8.97%	
Charleston	49,929	3,934	7.88%	
Duval	128,657	8,952	6.96%	
Birmingham	21,130	1,382	6.54%	
Pinellas County	93,702	6,109	6.52%	
Pittsburgh	20,034	1,197	5.97%	
Norfolk	27,306	1,369	5.01%	
Atlanta	50,325	1,846	3.67%	
Jackson	18,710	414	2.21%	
New Orleans	2,040	38	1.86%	
Toledo	21,814	362	1.66%	

Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs from SY 2015-16 to 2022-23 (N=77 Districts)

Figure 3 shows the percentage change of EL and non-EL enrollment between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23. The graph shows the percentage change for both ELs and non-ELs, displayed in horizontal bars. Districts are ranked in descending order by their percentage change of EL enrollment between the selected years.

- ***Districts with positive EL Enrollment change.*** Compared to SY 2015-16, the EL Enrollment in 50 out of 77 districts (65 percent) was greater in SY 2022-23. The percentage change of ELs ranged from 1.2 percent to 263.2 percent in these districts. Of the 50 districts that experienced positive EL Enrollment, 45 (90 percent) experienced negative non-EL enrollment. EL enrollment in these districts helps to buffer potentially larger declines in overall enrollment.
- ***Districts with negative EL Enrollment change.*** The remaining 27 out of 77 districts (35 percent) experienced negative EL enrollment. The percentage change of ELs ranged from -0.25 percent to -95.7 percent. Of the 27 districts that experienced negative EL enrollment, only 1 experienced positive non-EL enrollment.
- ***Districts with positive non-EL enrollment change.*** On the other hand, non-EL enrollment increased in only 6 of the 77 districts (8 Percent) during the same period. The percentage change of non-ELs in these districts ranged from 0.5 percent to 8 percent.
- ***Districts with negative non-EL enrollment change.*** The remaining 71 out of 77 districts (92 percent) had negative non-EL enrollment change. The percentage change of non-ELs in these districts ranged from -0.3 percent to -40.4 percent.

Figure 3. Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs Between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23

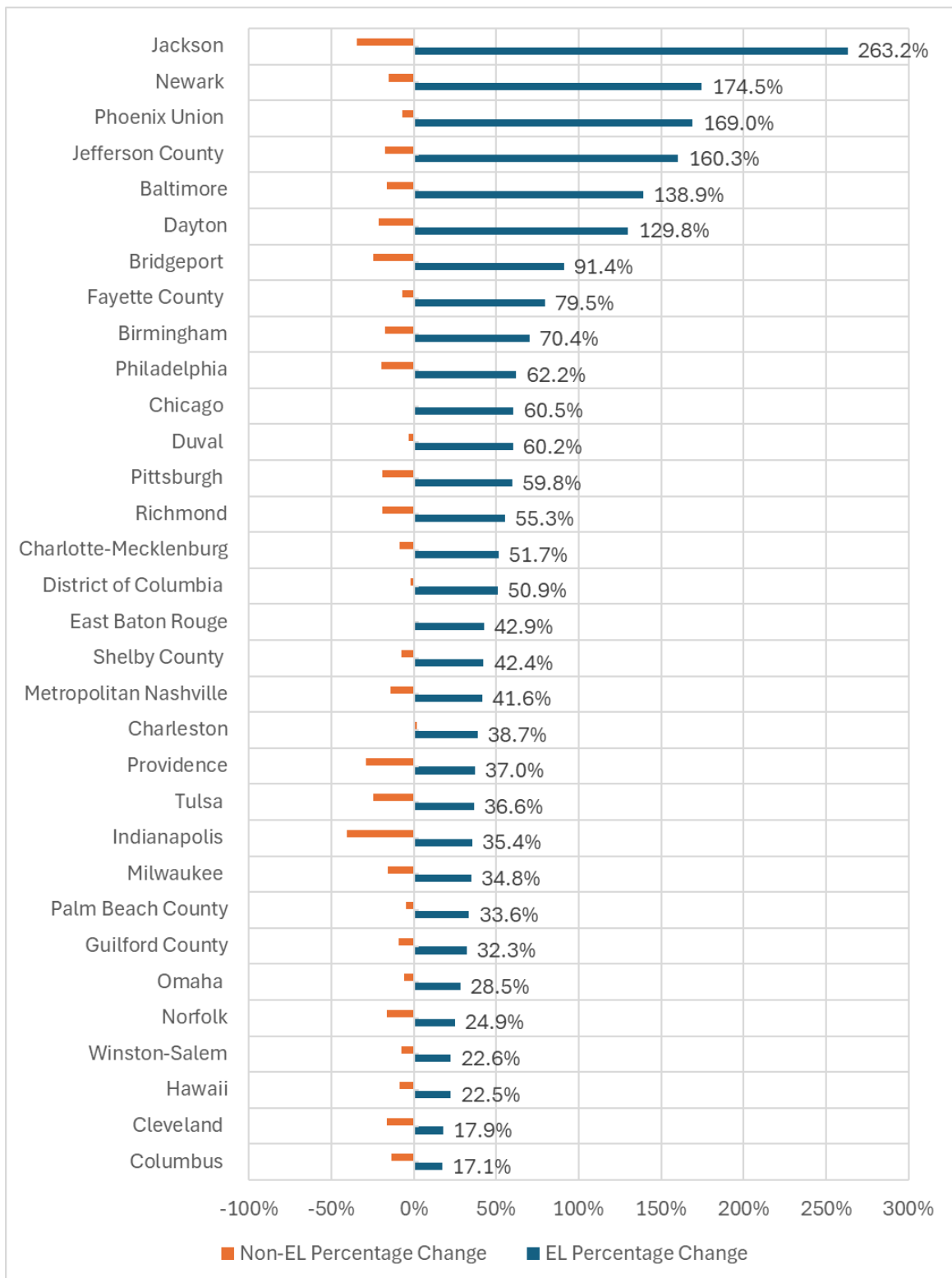


Figure 3. Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs Between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23, continued

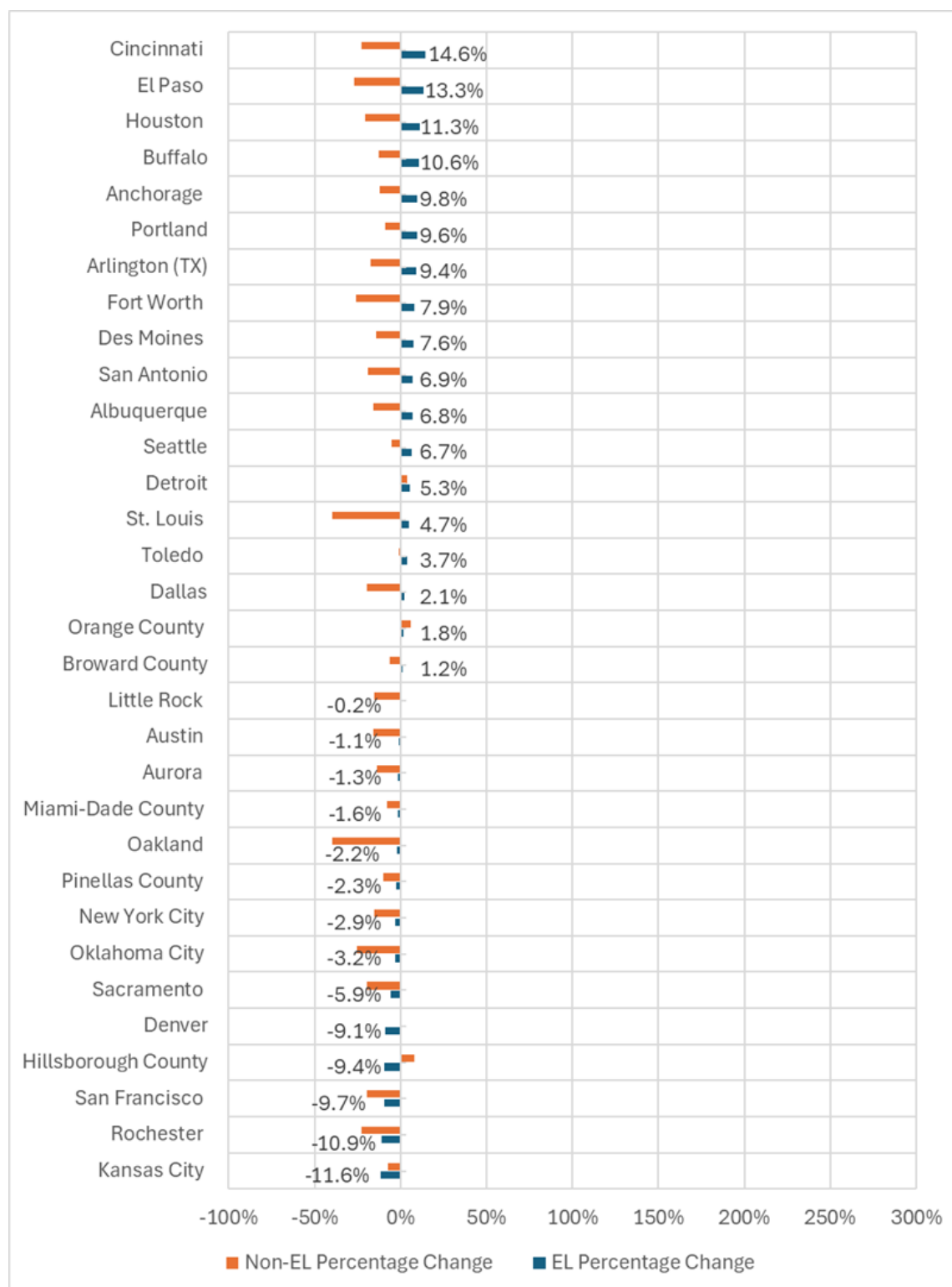
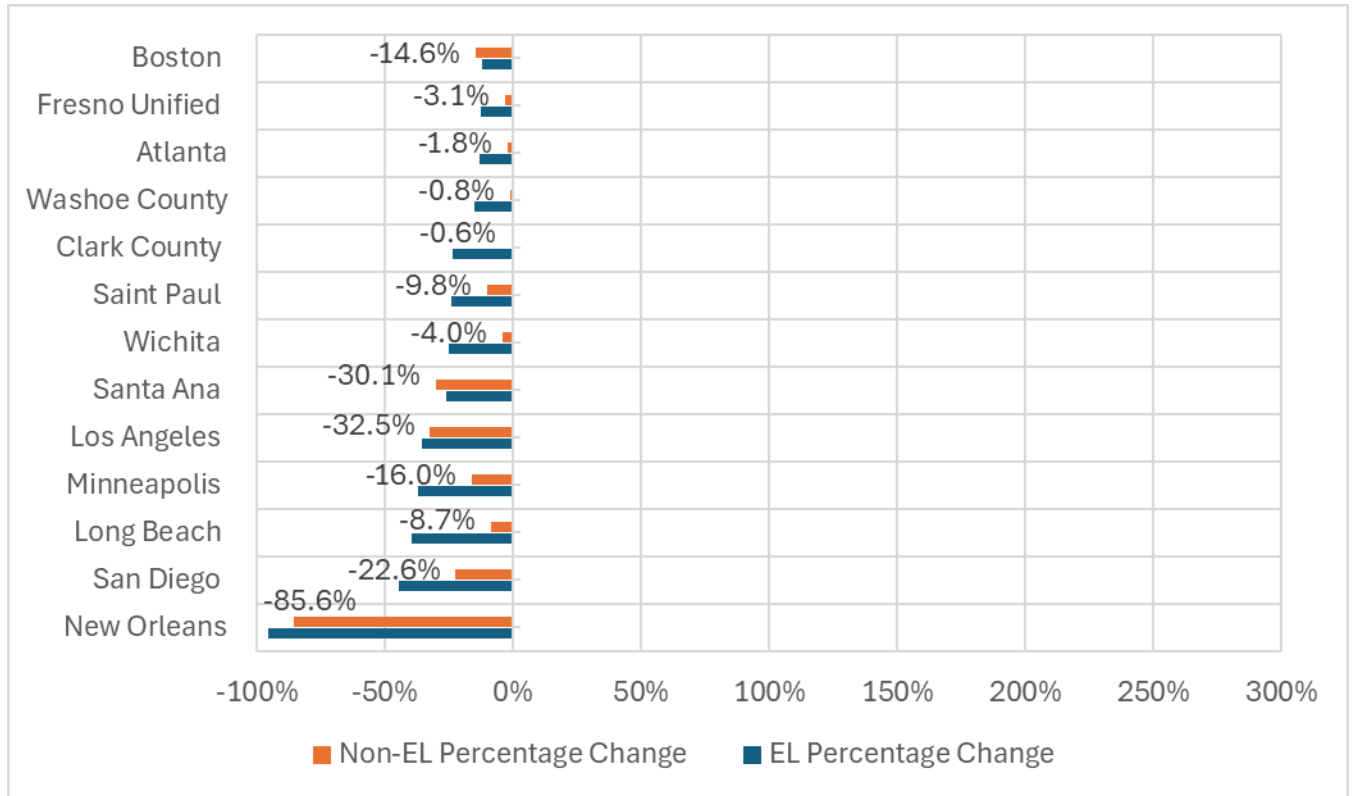


Figure 3. Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs Between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23, continued



Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

Table 6. Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs Between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23
Sorted by Percentage Change of ELs

District	SY 2015-16		SY 2022-23		Percentage Change	
	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL
Jackson	114	27,905	414	18,296	263.2%	-34.4%
Newark	3,728	37,161	10,232	31,440	174.5%	-15.4%
Phoenix Union	1,509	25,600	4,059	23,841	169.0%	-6.9%
Jefferson County	6,772	94,005	17,630	77,600	160.3%	-17.5%
Baltimore	3,722	79,944	8,893	67,102	138.9%	-16.1%
Dayton	781	13,065	1,795	10,280	129.8%	-21.3%
Bridgeport	2,964	18,051	5,672	13,665	91.4%	-24.3%
Fayette County	4,004	36,833	7,187	34,235	79.5%	-7.1%
Birmingham	811	23,882	1,382	19,748	70.4%	-17.3%
Philadelphia	12,852	121,192	20,845	97,490	62.2%	-19.6%
Cincinnati	2,002	32,225	3,214	32,371	60.5%	0.5%

Table 6. Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs Between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23
Sorted by Percentage Change of ELs

District	SY 2015-16		SY 2022-23		Percentage Change	
	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL
Duval	5,589	123,603	8,952	119,705	60.2%	-3.2%
Pittsburgh	749	23,334	1,197	18,837	59.8%	-19.3%
Richmond	2,369	21,611	3,679	17,451	55.3%	-19.2%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	17,127	129,084	25,980	118,217	51.7%	-8.4%
District of Columbia	4,548	43,788	6,861	42,826	50.9%	-2.2%
East Baton Rouge	2,910	38,707	4,158	39,095	42.9%	1.0%
Shelby County	7,655	106,832	10,901	98,896	42.4%	-7.4%
Metropolitan Nashville	12,913	72,685	18,288	62,363	41.6%	-14.2%
Charleston	2,837	45,247	3,934	45,995	38.7%	1.7%
Providence	5,747	18,120	7,875	12,850	37.0%	-29.1%
Tulsa	6,633	32,822	9,062	24,809	36.6%	-24.4%
Indianapolis	4,386	26,985	5,938	16,089	35.4%	-40.4%
Milwaukee	7,246	68,503	9,768	57,732	34.8%	-15.7%
Palm Beach County	22,391	166,931	29,910	158,933	33.6%	-4.8%
Guilford County	5,738	67,413	7,589	61,305	32.3%	-9.1%
Omaha	8,400	43,566	10,795	40,959	28.5%	-6.0%
Norfolk	1,096	31,052	1,369	25,937	24.9%	-16.5%
Winston-Salem	6,343	48,641	7,774	44,943	22.6%	-7.6%
Hawaii	13,619	168,376	16,690	153,519	22.5%	-8.8%
Cleveland	3,107	36,303	3,663	30,335	17.9%	-16.4%
Columbus	7,003	43,025	8,201	37,137	17.1%	-13.7%
Chicago	60,257	327,054	69,075	252,591	14.6%	-22.8%
El Paso	15,202	44,845	17,219	32,812	13.3%	-26.8%
Houston	58,067	157,560	64,654	125,280	11.3%	-20.5%
Buffalo	4,582	28,763	5,068	25,056	10.6%	-12.9%
Anchorage	6,032	42,292	6,625	37,102	9.8%	-12.3%
Portland	3,664	44,681	4,014	40,726	9.6%	-8.9%
Arlington (TX)	14,592	48,618	15,961	40,206	9.4%	-17.3%
Fort Worth	24,711	62,369	26,661	46,122	7.9%	-26.0%
Des Moines	6,567	27,652	7,065	23,674	7.6%	-14.4%
San Antonio	8,905	44,164	9,515	35,740	6.9%	-19.1%
Albuquerque	15,960	74,606	17,048	62,757	6.8%	-15.9%
Seattle	6,426	46,891	6,859	44,379	6.7%	-5.4%
Detroit	5,569	41,047	5,863	42,685	5.3%	4.0%
St. Louis	1,823	27,137	1,908	16,413	4.7%	-39.5%
Toledo	349	21,704	362	21,452	3.7%	-1.2%

Table 6. Percentage Change of ELs and Non-ELs Between SY 2015-16 and SY 2022-23
Sorted by Percentage Change of ELs

District	SY 2015-16		SY 2022-23		Percentage Change	
	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL
Dallas	62,575	96,029	63,889	77,280	2.1%	-19.5%
Orange County	28,537	168,414	29,055	178,506	1.8%	6.0%
Broward County	30,130	238,968	30,483	224,249	1.2%	-6.2%
Little Rock	2,855	21,942	2,848	18,608	-0.2%	-15.2%
Austin	20,561	63,087	20,329	53,055	-1.1%	-15.9%
Aurora	13,684	28,565	13,509	24,626	-1.3%	-13.8%
Miami-Dade County	69,102	288,477	67,967	266,123	-1.6%	-7.7%
Oakland	12,058	37,040	11,791	22,358	-2.2%	-39.6%
Pinellas County	6,255	97,240	6,109	87,593	-2.3%	-9.9%
New York City	133,675	847,992	129,759	717,271	-2.9%	-15.4%
Oklahoma City	12,668	28,155	12,261	20,984	-3.2%	-25.5%
Sacramento	8,076	38,767	7,599	31,222	-5.9%	-19.5%
Denver	23,895	66,340	21,722	66,161	-9.1%	-0.3%
Hillsborough County	25,290	186,633	22,914	201,624	-9.4%	8.0%
San Francisco	15,142	43,723	13,676	35,109	-9.7%	-19.7%
Rochester	3,662	25,224	3,263	19,557	-10.9%	-22.5%
Kansas City	3,483	12,241	3,078	11,335	-11.6%	-7.4%
Boston	14,907	38,978	13,094	33,273	-12.2%	-14.6%
Fresno Unified	16,229	57,231	14,216	55,452	-12.4%	-3.1%
Atlanta	2,123	49,377	1,846	48,479	-13.0%	-1.8%
Washoe County	10,725	55,779	9,108	55,335	-15.1%	-0.8%
Clark County	61,688	264,302	47,151	262,636	-23.6%	-0.6%
Saint Paul	11,792	25,906	8,944	23,372	-24.2%	-9.8%
Wichita	10,135	40,808	7,624	39,172	-24.8%	-4.0%
Santa Ana	22,444	33,465	16,558	23,377	-26.2%	-30.1%
Los Angeles	140,816	498,521	91,071	336,724	-35.3%	-32.5%
Minneapolis	8,161	28,632	5,154	24,051	-36.8%	-16.0%
Long Beach	17,879	59,933	10,846	54,708	-39.3%	-8.7%
San Diego	28,963	100,417	16,134	77,759	-44.3%	-22.6%
New Orleans	883	13,912	38	2,002	-95.7%	-85.6%

Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

CGCS ELs as a Percentage of State Total EL Enrollment in SY 2021-22 and SY 2022-23 (N= 77 Districts)

Table 7 provides district specific EL enrollment figures grouped by respective state for which subtotals are provided. 40 total states are represented by the member districts listed in the table. In 17 of these 40 states, Council-member districts are responsible for educating one-quarter or more of the state's ELs.

- ***Enrolling at least 50 percent of all ELs in a state.*** In five states during SY 2022-23, Council-member districts enrolled at least 50 percent of all ELs in their state (HI, NV, DC, KY, FL, ranked by percentage of statewide ELs).
- ***Enrolling between 25.1 and 49.9 percent of all ELs in a state.*** In 12 states during SY 2021-22, Council-member districts enrolled between 25.1 and 49.9 percent of all ELs in their state (AK, RI, TN, NE, CO, NY, OK, NM, NC, IL, PA, OH, ranked by percentage of statewide ELs).
- ***Enrolling between 10 and 25 percent of all ELs in a state.*** In 11 states during SY 2021-22, Council-member districts enrolled between 10 and 25 percent of all ELs in their state (KS, IA, WI, MN, TX, CA, MO, LA, MA, CT, NJ, ranked by percentage of statewide ELs).
- ***Enrolling less than 10 percent of all ELs in a state.*** In 12 states during SY 2021-22, Council-member districts enrolled less than 10 percent of all ELs in their state (MD, IN, SC, OR, MI, AZ, WA, AR, AL, VA, MS, GA, ranked by percentage of statewide ELs).

Table 7. ELs in Council Member Districts as a Percentage of Total ELs in Respective State, SY 2021-22 and SY 2022-23

Sorted by District-level EL Enrollment in SY 2022-23

State and District	CGCS EL Enrollment		State Total EL Enrollment		CGCS ELs as % -age of State Total ELs	
	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
Alabama	1,274	1,382	34,965	38,203	3.60%	3.62%
Birmingham	1,274	1,382				
Alaska	7,129	6,625	14,017	14,089	50.90%	47.02%
Anchorage	7,129	6,625				
Arizona	3,919	4,059	93,379	97,466	4.20%	4.16%
Phoenix Union	3,919	4,059				
Arkansas	2,822	2,848	39,763	68,628	7.10%	4.15%
Little Rock	2,822	2,848				
California	185,245	181,891	1,127,627	1,160,743	16.40%	15.67%
Los Angeles	92,920	91,071				
Santa Ana	16,867	16,558				
San Diego	18,138	16,134				
Fresno	13,937	14,216				
San Francisco	13,508	13,676				
Oakland	11,627	11,791				
Long Beach	10,496	10,846				
Sacramento	7,792	7,599				
Colorado	35,785	35,231	91,907	100,496	38.90%	35.06%
Denver	22,917	21,722				
Aurora	12,868	13,509				
Connecticut	4,804	5,672	47,740	53,037	10.10%	10.69%
Bridgeport	4,804	5,672				
District of Columbia	6,982	6,861	10,035	10,319	69.60%	66.49%
District of Columbia	6,982	6,861				
Florida	176,289	195,390	269,534	379,814	65.40%	51.44%
Miami-Dade County	57,028	67,967				
Broward County	28,773	30,483				
Palm Beach County	28,547	29,910				
Orange County	27,553	29,055				
Hillsborough County	20,901	22,914				
Duval County	7,713	8,952				
Pinellas County	5,774	6,109				

Table 7. ELs in Council Member Districts as a Percentage of Total ELs in Respective State, SY 2021-22 and SY 2022-23, continued

State and District	CGCS EL Enrollment		State Total EL Enrollment		CGCS ELs as % -age of State Total ELs	
	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
Georgia	1,769	1,846	133,754	72,360	1.30%	2.55%
Atlanta	1,769	1,846				
Hawaii	17,353	16,690	17,353	16,583	100.00%	100.65%
Hawaii	17,353	16,690				
Illinois	64,102	69,075	239,519	253,242	26.80%	27.28%
Chicago	64,102	69,075				
Indiana	5,512	5,938	72,250	77,908	7.60%	7.62%
Indianapolis	5,512	5,938				
Iowa	7,113	7,065	31,681	36,705	22.50%	19.25%
Des Moines	7,113	7,065				
Kansas	7,383	7,624	38,757	37,452	19.00%	20.36%
Wichita	7,383	7,624				
Kentucky	19,001	24,817	35,434	40,875	53.60%	60.71%
Jefferson County	12,982	17,630				
Fayette County	6,019	7,187				
Louisiana	3,922	4,196	33,284	30,286	11.80%	13.85%
East Baton Rouge	3,884	4,158				
New Orleans	38	38				
Maryland	8,126	8,893	98,566	106,420	8.20%	8.36%
Baltimore City	8,126	8,893				
Massachusetts	12,649	13,094	97,154	112,677	13.00%	11.62%
Boston	12,649	13,094				
Michigan	5,438	5,863	91,932	100,776	5.90%	5.82%
Detroit	5,438	5,863				
Minnesota	14,574	14,098	76,664	78,774	19.00%	17.90%
St. Paul	9,495	8,944				
Minneapolis	5,079	5,154				
Mississippi	430	414	13,597	11,580	3.20%	3.58%
Jackson	430	414				
Missouri	4,692	4,986	34,159	33,779	13.70%	14.76%
Kansas City	2,889	3,078				
St. Louis	1,803	1,908				

Table 7. ELs in Council Member Districts as a Percentage of Total ELs in Respective State, SY 2021-22 and SY 2022-23, continued

State and District	CGCS EL Enrollment		State Total EL Enrollment		CGCS ELs as % -age of State Total ELs	
	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
Nebraska	10,059	10,795	23,928	28,318	42.00%	38.12%
Omaha	10,559	10,795				
Nevada	58,497	56,259	67,003	64,884	87.30%	86.71%
Clark County	49,183	47,151				
Washoe County	9,314	9,108				
New Jersey	9,015	10,232	112,939	98,286	8.00%	10.41%
Newark	9,015	10,232				
New Mexico	17,143	17,048	59,564	57,268	28.80%	29.77%
Albuquerque	17,143	17,048				
New York	144,335	138,090	246,985	232,664	58.40%	34.97%
New York City	135,374	129,759				
Buffalo	5,346	5,068				
Rochester	3,615	3,263				
North Carolina	34,896	41,343	121,496	150,116	28.70%	27.54%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	21,558	25,980				
Guilford County	6,700	7,589				
Winston Salem	6,638	7,774				
Ohio	16,160	17,235	63,879	67,693	25.30%	25.46%
Columbus	7,775	8,201				
Cleveland	3,612	3,663				
Cincinnati	3,032	3,214				
Dayton	1,409	1,795				
Toledo	332	362				
Oklahoma	20,825	21,323	64,940	61,694	32.10%	34.56%
Oklahoma City	12,155	12,261				
Tulsa	8,670	9,062				
Oregon	4,058	4,014	54,954	59,011	7.40%	6.80%
Portland	4,058	4,014				
Pennsylvania	18,794	22,042	77,617	85,226	24.20%	25.86%
Philadelphia	17,784	20,845				
Pittsburgh	1,010	1,197				
Rhode Island	7,796	7,875	17,289	18,957	45.10%	41.54%
Providence	7,796	7,875				

Table 7. ELs in Council Member Districts as a Percentage of Total ELs in Respective State, SY 2021-22 and SY 2022-23, continued

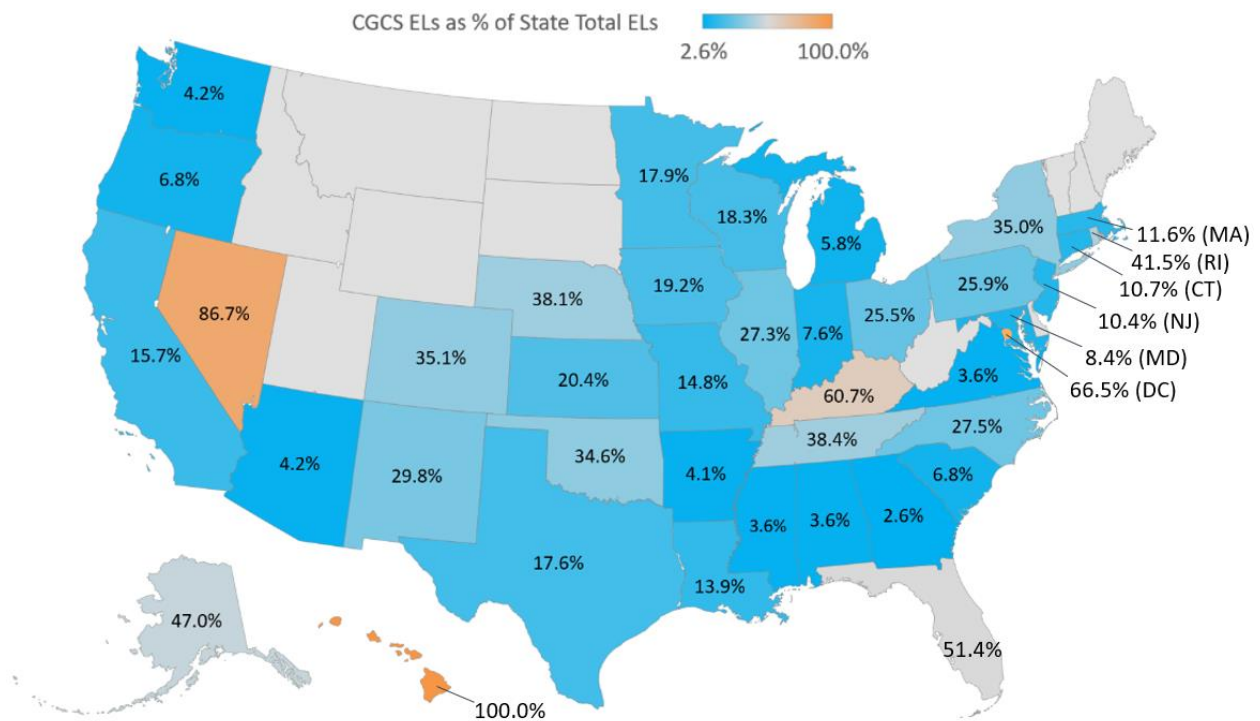
Sorted by District-level EL Enrollment in SY 2022-23

State and District	CGCS EL Enrollment		State Total EL Enrollment		CGCS ELs as % -age of State Total ELs	
	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
South Carolina	3,406	3,934	45,620	57,774	7.50%	6.81%
Charleston	3,406	3,934				
Tennessee	27,130	27,130	57,799	70,711	46.90%	38.37%
Metropolitan Nashville	17,141	18,288				
Shelby County	9,989	10,901				
Texas	214,000	218,228	1,093,968	1,239,925	19.60%	17.60%
Houston	62,821	64,654				
Dallas	63,586	63,889				
Fort Worth	26,268	26,661				
Austin	19,921	20,329				
El Paso	16,763	17,219				
Arlington (TX)	15,670	15,961				
San Antonio	8,971	9,515				
Virginia	4,252	5,048	117,417	140,498	3.60%	3.59%
Richmond	3,129	3,679				
Norfolk	1,123	1,369				
Washington	6,612	6,859	123,785	164,703	5.30%	4.16%
Seattle	6,612	6,859				
Wisconsin	9,105	9,768	49,303	53,273	18.50%	18.34%
Milwaukee	9,105	9,768				
Grand Total	1,202,396	1,241,781	5,141,557	5,583,213	23.40%	22.24%

Source: Council analysis of data from NCES data and ED Data Express.

Figure 4 shows ELs in CGCS districts as a percentage of total EL enrollment in their respective states during SY 2022-23. The figure only depicts states in which the Council has member districts. In 17 states, member districts enrolled more than one-quarter of the ELs in the respective state. In these states, to be sure, the state's overall progress in improving the achievement of ELs is closely tied to how well the Council-member districts serve such students.

Figure 4. ELs in Council Member Districts as a Percentage of Total ELs in Respective State, SY 2022-23



Languages Spoken by ELs

Using ED Data Express, we gathered data on the five most commonly spoken languages (other than English) in each Council-member district, along with the number of ELs who speak each language. It is important to note that these figures do not represent the total number of speakers of each language across all Council-member districts. In fact, the Council-wide totals (Table 8), based on district-level top five languages, are likely undercounts, as speakers of these languages may appear in other districts—but not in large enough numbers to rank among that district’s top five.

Number of Languages and Number of ELs Speaking Top Five Languages (N=77 Districts)

Over 75 districts⁸ reported language data for SY 2022-23, and in the aggregate, 45 languages were listed among the five most frequently spoken languages—other than English—with a total of 1,067,169 ELs speaking one of these languages. Most of these students (83.9 percent) spoke Spanish, which was listed by 75 districts⁹ as the top language spoken by ELs. Of the ELs who speak one of the 45 languages identified as being in the top five languages, approximately 91.8 percent speak Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. (See Table 8.)

Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese appear among the top languages in districts.

Language	Number of Speakers Reported in Top Five Languages	Number of Speakers as % of ELs Reported in Top Five Languages	Number of Districts with EL Speakers of Top Five Language ¹⁰
Spanish	895,764	83.938%	77
Chinese	27,186	2.547%	19
Arabic	25,148	2.357%	45
Haitian Creole ¹¹	16,390	1.536%	9
Portuguese	15,084	1.413%	16
Bengali	13,026	1.221%	4
Urdu	8,437	0.791%	2
Hmong	7,347	0.688%	7

⁸ Puerto Rico is excluded due to unique educational contexts compared to other Council-member school districts related to educational services and data collection for ELs. Spanish is the language of instruction in Puerto Rico; the language minority equivalent to ELs is classified SLL (Spanish Language Learners).

⁹ Of reporting districts, Hawaii was the only district where the top language was not Spanish but instead Chuukese.

¹⁰ Districts that reported a specific language without an exact number of speakers are excluded from the district count.

¹¹ Reports of “Pidgins and Creoles” from Broward, Orange, and Bridgeport are grouped under Haitian Creole.

Table 8. Number and Percentage of ELs Speaking Top Five Languages in School Districts, SY 2022-23

Language	Number of Speakers Reported in Top Five Languages	Number of Speakers as % of ELs Reported in Top Five Languages	Number of Districts with EL Speakers of Top Five Language ¹⁰
Somali ¹²	6,198	0.581%	12
Vietnamese	6,171	0.578%	22
Swahili	5,960	0.558%	22
Russian	4,426	0.415%	8
Karen	3,781	0.354%	4
Pushto; Pashto	3,415	0.320%	18
Chuukese	3,252	0.305%	2
Iloko ¹³	3,009	0.282%	1
Tagalog	2,445	0.229%	6
Marshallese	2,253	0.211%	3
Mayan ¹⁴	1,846	0.173%	4
Armenian	1,639	0.154%	1
Amharic	1,530	0.143%	5
Burmese	1,476	0.138%	5
Filipino; Pilipino	1,472	0.138%	2
French	1,463	0.137%	14
Samoan	1,435	0.134%	1
Kinyarwanda	1,319	0.124%	3
Nepali	1,100	0.103%	6
Cape Verdean Creole ¹⁵	793	0.074%	1
Central Khmer	649	0.061%	4
Yupik	443	0.042%	1
Navajo; Navaho	441	0.041%	1
Kurdish	362	0.034%	1
Oromo	350	0.033%	2
Nilo-Saharan ¹⁶	303	0.028%	1
Hindi	283	0.027%	3

¹² Reports of “Cushitic languages” from Minneapolis and St. Paul are grouped under Somali.

¹³ The term Iloko is interchangeable with Ilocano, Ilokano, Iloco, and Iluko.

¹⁴ Reported “Central American Indian” from Birmingham is grouped under Mayan.

¹⁵ Reported “Portuguese-based Creole” from Boston is grouped under Cape Verdean Creole.

¹⁶ The Nilo-Saharan language family contains over 200 African languages, most notably Fur, Kanuri, and Songhai.

Table 8. Number and Percentage of ELs Speaking Top Five Languages in School Districts, SY 2022-23			
Language	Number of Speakers Reported in Top Five Languages	Number of Speakers as % of ELs Reported in Top Five Languages	Number of Districts with EL Speakers of Top Five Language¹⁰
Iranian ¹⁷	273	0.026%	1
Persian	246	0.023%	4
Panjabi; Punjabi	125	0.012%	1
Sino-Tibetan ¹⁸	72	0.007%	1
Turkish	72	0.007%	1
Fulah	69	0.006%	1
Mandingo	62	0.006%	1
Korean	32	0.003%	1
Yoruba	18	0.002%	1
Kosraean	4	0.000%	1
Grand Total	1,067,169	100.000%	

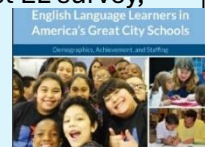
Three-Year Trends for Five Most Prevalent Languages from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N=77 Districts)

Council-member data shows variation in Spanish-speaking enrollment from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23: 857,615 students in SY 2020-21, 909,063 in SY 2021-22, and 895,764 in SY 2022-23.

The number of ELs who spoke languages other than Spanish among the top five also showed pronounced changes between SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. Figure 5 shows trends in the number of speakers for languages identified by Council-member districts as being among the five most prevalent languages, after Spanish, from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. The number of Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese speakers increased, while the number of Chinese speakers declined.

In SY 2016-17, 62 respondents indicated these numbers of speakers for the five most prevalent languages in the latest EL survey, other than Spanish—

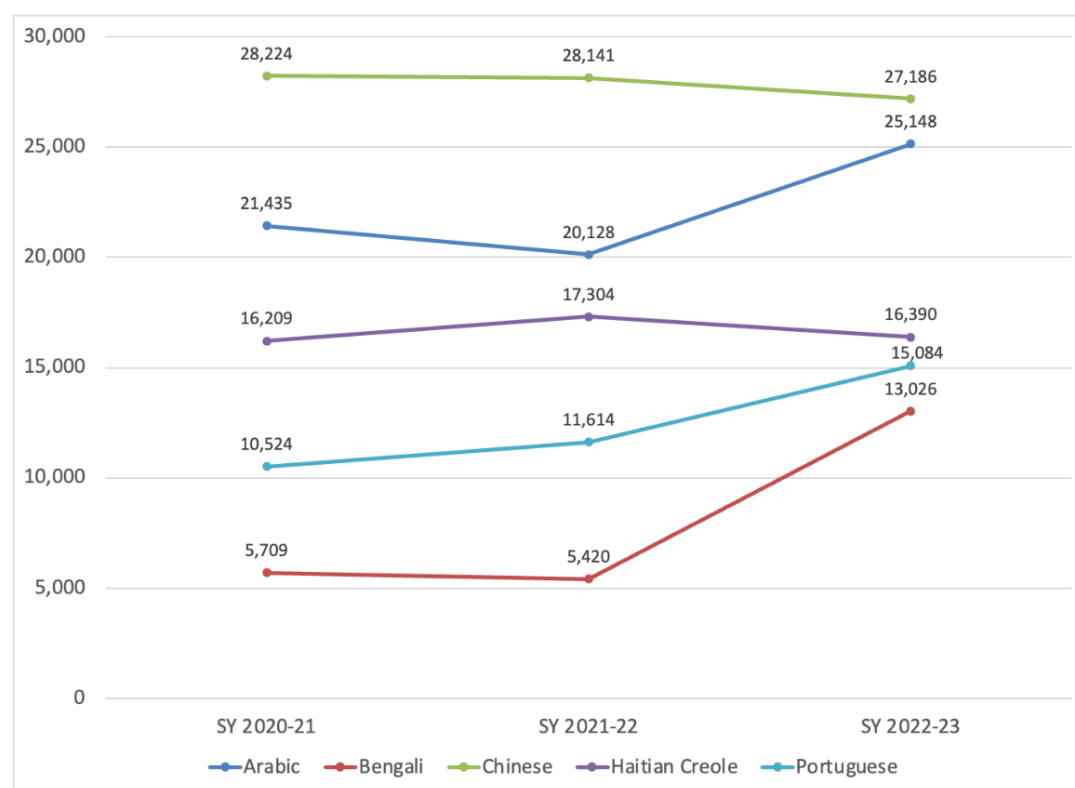
- **Arabic:** 27,502
- **Bengali:** 6,247
- **Chinese:** 22,732
- **Haitian Creole:** 18,182
- **Portuguese:** 6,682



¹⁷ Most Iranian languages today are dialects of larger language groups such as Persian, Pashto, Kurdish, and Caspian.

¹⁸ The Sino-Tibetan language family contains over 400 languages, most notably Chinese, Tibetan, and Burmese.

Figure 5. Number of Speakers for Top Five Languages Other Than Spanish, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23



EL Enrollment in Districts Reporting Top Five Languages (N=77 Districts)

Table 9 shows select districts with the largest number of ELs speaking their respective top five languages in SY 2022-23. The languages are listed in order of prevalence, with the language garnering the largest number of speakers (Spanish) first and the language garnering the fewest number of speakers (Kosraean) last. The combined total number of ELs that speak a language in districts that reported a specific language within its top five is provided next to the language name. The totals in Table 9 reflect the number of ELs speaking a specific language in districts reporting this language as being among the top five. Under each language, the five districts with the highest number of speakers are listed. Where fewer than five districts reported a language, all reporting districts that provided a specific number of speakers are listed.

Table 9. Districts with the Highest Number of ELs Speaking Reported Top Five Languages, SY 2022-23

Language	EL #	Language	EL #	Language	EL #
Spanish	895,764	Bengali	13,026	Russian	4,426
Los Angeles	82,943	New York	12,130	Los Angeles	1,139
Dallas	61,875	Buffalo	473	Miami-Dade	859
Miami-Dade County	61,746	Detroit	397	Philadelphia	828
Houston	58,871	Bridgeport	26	Broward County	725
Chicago	57,998	Urdu	8,437	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	429
Chinese	27,186	New York	7,728	Karen	3,781
New York	16,909	Chicago	709	St. Paul	1,741
San Francisco	4,223	Hmong	7,347	Omaha	1,036
Philadelphia	1,441	St. Paul	2,994	Milwaukee	558
Chicago	1,297	Fresno	1,592	Des Moines	446
Seattle	697	Anchorage	904	Pushto; Pashto	3,419
Arabic	25,148	Sacramento	808	Houston	992
New York	11,357	Milwaukee	613	Austin	491
Chicago	1,394	Somali	6,198	Sacramento	329
Jefferson County	1,086	Minneapolis	1,393	Wichita	256
Metropolitan Nashville	1,016	Seattle	801	Fort Worth	236
Philadelphia	882	Columbus	782	Chuukese	3,252
Haitian Creole	16,390	Jefferson County	756	Hawaii	3,050
Broward County	5,230	St. Paul	721	Tulsa	202
Palm Beach County	4,712	Vietnamese	6,171	Iloko	3,009
Miami-Dade County	3,306	Arlington (TX)	1,101	Hawaii	3,009
Orange County	1,510	San Diego	826	Tagalog	2,445
Boston	743	Seattle	454	Hawaii	1,294
Portuguese	15,084	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	352	Los Angeles	531
Orange County	3,485	Wichita	348	San Diego	349
Philadelphia	2,782	Swahili	5,960	Long Beach	156
Broward County	1,768	Jefferson County	1,032	Washoe County	76
Newark	1,762	Fayette County	663	Marshallese	2,253
Palm Beach County	1,554	Des Moines	440	Hawaii	2,081
		Fort Worth	426	Tulsa	95
		Buffalo	415	Birmingham	77

Table 9. Districts with the Highest Number of ELs Speaking Reported Top Five Languages, SY 2022-23, continued

Language	EL #	Language	EL #	Language	EL #
Mayan	1,846	Kinyarwanda	1,319	Hindi	283
Palm Beach County	1,361	Jefferson County	1,021	Guilford County	265
Omaha	266	Dayton	255	Little Rock	18
Providence	183	Indianapolis	43	Iranian	273
Birmingham	36	Nepali	1,100	Aurora	273
Armenian	1,639	Omaha	256	Persian	246
Los Angeles	1,639	Fayette County	242	Duval County	147
Amharic	1,530	Columbus	229	Baltimore	62
Aurora	359	Des Moines	199	San Antonio	26
Seattle	344	Rochester	88	Santa Ana	11
Clark County	298	Cape Verdean Creole	793	Panjabi; Punjabi	125
Denver	297	Boston	793	Fresno	125
District of Columbia	232	Central Khmer	649	Sino-Tibetan	72
Burmese	1,476	Long Beach	455	Winston Salem	72
Milwaukee	830	Fresno	350	Turkish	72
Dallas	221	Providence	58	Dayton	72
Aurora	195	Santa Ana	31	Fulah	69
Kansas City	172	Yupik	443	Memphis	69
Oklahoma	58	Anchorage	443	Mandingo	62
Filipino; Pilipino	1,472	Navajo; Navaho	441	Atlanta	62
Anchorage	904	Albuquerque	441	Korean	32
Clark County	568	Kurdish	362	El Paso	32
French	1,463	Metropolitan Nashville	362	Yoruba	18
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	391	Oromo	350	Newark	18
Fayette County	275	Minneapolis	89	Kosraean	4
Miami-Dade	230	St. Paul	261	Birmingham	4
District of Columbia	137	Nilo-Saharan	303		
Cincinnati	94	Des Moines	303		
Samoan	1,435				
Anchorage	1,435				

Source: Council analysis of data from Ed Data Express.

Long-Term-ELs

Students identified as ELs receive language acquisition instruction and remain in this category for accountability and reporting purposes until the school district determines that the student has met the criteria to deem them proficient in English, and thus, able to exit the EL classification. Criteria used to exit from the EL classification may include more than scores on the English language proficiency assessment and can vary significantly across school districts and states, though states are now required to establish standardized procedures for exiting under ESSA. The numbers reported by responding districts, accordingly, reflect varying contexts and criteria that preclude generalizing across districts. Nonetheless, the data comparison between school years provides an interesting look at district-specific trends and the overall trend during that period.

ELs Enrolled in EL Programs for 6+ Years for SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22 (N=77 Districts)

For the purposes of the Council's data collection and report, we classify Long-term ELs (L-TELS) as students who remain in EL programs for six or more years. Table 10 displays the total enrollment of L-TELS and ELs in SY 2020-21 and SY 2021-22, the percentage of L-TELS within the total number of ELs, and the percentage change of L-TELS and ELs between SY 2020-21 and SY 2021-22 by district. Of the 77 Council-member districts in the analysis, 19 districts show decreases in the number of L-TELS from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22.

We identify Long-Term ELs (L-TELS) as students who remain in EL programs for six or more years.

Table 10. ELs Enrolled in English Learner Program for 6+ Years, SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22
Sorted by L-TELS % Change from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22

	SY 2020-21			SY 2021-22			Percentage Change	
	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of of ELs	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of ELs	L-TEL % Change	EL % Change
Des Moines ¹⁹	2,493	6,939	35.9%	627	7,113	8.8%	-74.8%	2.5%
Richmond ²⁰	1,103	4,056	27.2%	596	3,129	19.0%	-46.0%	-22.9%
District of Columbia	2,343	6,623	35.4%	1,573	6,982	22.5%	-32.9%	5.4%
Metropolitan Nashville	1,239	15,592	7.9%	889	17,141	5.2%	-28.2%	9.9%
Jackson	37	452	8.2%	28	430	6.5%	-24.3%	-4.9%
Guilford County	3,030	6,849	44.2%	2,536	6,700	37.9%	-16.3%	-2.2%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	7,668	18,674	41.1%	6,481	21,558	30.1%	-15.5%	15.4%

¹⁹ SY 2020-21 L-TEL and EL data sourced from CGCS KPI due to no reporting of L-TEL data in ED Data Express.

²⁰ SY 2020-21 L-TEL and EL data sourced from CGCS KPI due to a large discrepancy between the SY 2020 -21 and SY 2021-22 data in ED Data Express.

Table 10. ELs Enrolled in English Learner Program for 6+ Years, SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22, continued

	SY 2020-21			SY 2021-22			Percentage Change	
	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of ELs	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of ELs	L-TEL % Change	EL % Change
Miami-Dade County	10,507	56,536	18.6%	9,197	57,028	16.1%	-12.5%	0.9%
Omaha	917	9,340	9.8%	814	1,0059	8.1%	-11.2%	7.7%
Winston-Salem	3,606	6,615	54.5%	3,208	6,638	48.3%	-11.0%	0.3%
Minneapolis	2,344	5,674	41.3%	2,133	5,079	42.0%	-9.0%	-10.5%
Shelby County	726	8,918	8.1%	670	9,989	6.7%	-7.7%	12.0%
Atlanta	871	1,839	47.4%	804	17,69	45.4%	-7.7%	-3.8%
Columbus	979	7,829	12.5%	942	7,775	12.1%	-3.8%	-0.7%
Denver	12,126	23,932	50.7%	11,707	22,917	51.1%	-3.5%	-4.2%
Orange County	3,502	28,944	12.1%	3,448	27,553	12.5%	-1.5%	-4.8%
Providence	854	7,959	10.7%	845	7,796	10.8%	-1.1%	-2.0%
Chicago	39,732	54,437	73.0%	39,575	64,102	61.7%	-0.4%	17.8%
Austin	9,822	19,307	50.9%	9,808	19,921	49.2%	-0.1%	3.2%
Palm Beach County	8,103	27,314	29.7%	8,185	28,547	28.7%	1.0%	4.5%
Dallas	37,833	63,348	59.7%	38,285	63,586	60.2%	1.2%	0.4%
Hillsborough County	4,475	21,056	21.3%	4,529	20,901	21.7%	1.2%	-0.7%
Detroit	3,360	5,603	60.0%	3,423	5,438	62.9%	1.9%	-2.9%
St. Paul	3,655	9,726	37.6%	3,729	9,495	39.3%	2.0%	-2.4%
Fort Worth	15,819	25,964	60.9%	16,179	26,268	61.6%	2.3%	1.2%
Broward County	4,848	28,874	16.8%	4,973	28,773	17.3%	2.6%	-0.3%
Fresno Unified	2,059	12,918	15.9%	2,114	13,937	15.2%	2.7%	7.9%
Toledo	35	336	10.4%	36	332	10.8%	2.9%	-1.2%
Pinellas County	2,301	5,833	39.4%	2,367	5,774	41.0%	2.9%	-1.0%
San Antonio	4,778	8,763	54.5%	4,919	8,971	54.8%	3.0%	2.4%
Newark	1,094	6,871	15.9%	1,127	9,015	12.5%	3.0%	31.2%
Cleveland	551	3,449	16.0%	573	3,612	15.9%	4.0%	4.7%
Arlington (TX)	8,983	15,547	57.8%	9,366	1,5670	59.8%	4.3%	0.8%
Oakland	1,606	10,771	14.9%	1,681	1,1627	14.5%	4.7%	7.9%
Oklahoma City	7,998	11,727	68.2%	8,374	12,155	68.9%	4.7%	3.6%
Indianapolis	2,043	4,976	41.1%	2,145	5,512	38.9%	5.0%	10.8%
Houston	29,380	60,517	48.5%	30,964	62,821	49.3%	5.4%	3.8%
Los Angeles	13,459	86,082	15.6%	14,237	92,920	15.3%	5.8%	7.9%
El Paso	8,129	16,035	50.7%	8,699	16,763	51.9%	7.0%	4.5%
Duval	1,576	7,737	20.4%	1,690	7,713	21.9%	7.2%	-0.3%
San Francisco	1,723	12,627	13.6%	1,849	13,508	13.7%	7.3%	7.0%

Table 10. ELs Enrolled in English Learner Program for 6+ Years, SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22, continued

	SY 2020-21			SY 2021-22			Percentage Change	
	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of ELs	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of ELs	L-TEL % Change	EL % Change
Kansas City	784	2,926	26.8%	843	2,889	29.2%	7.5%	-1.3%
Rochester	1,839	3,787	48.6%	1,981	3,615	54.8%	7.7%	-4.5%
Sacramento	1,112	7,018	15.8%	1,206	7,792	15.5%	8.5%	11.0%
Tulsa	4,762	8,064	59.1%	5,166	8,670	59.6%	8.5%	7.5%
New York City	41,067	13,4937	30.4%	44,944	13,5374	33.2%	9.4%	0.3%
Little Rock	676	2,839	23.8%	740	2,822	26.2%	9.5%	-0.6%
Pittsburgh	262	945	27.7%	287	1,010	28.4%	9.5%	6.9%
Boston	2,891	12,692	22.8%	3,179	12,649	25.1%	10.0%	-0.3%
Buffalo	2,646	5,364	49.3%	2,911	5,346	54.5%	10.0%	-0.3%
Portland	953	3,924	24.3%	1,052	4,058	25.9%	10.4%	3.4%
Philadelphia	4,716	16,530	28.5%	5,217	17,784	29.3%	10.6%	7.6%
Anchorage	3,305	6,563	50.4%	3,666	7,129	51.4%	10.9%	8.6%
Jefferson County	3,966	11,696	33.9%	4,418	12,982	34.0%	11.4%	11.0%
San Diego	2,225	17,001	13.1%	2,496	18,138	13.8%	12.2%	6.7%
Aurora	4,454	12,173	36.6%	5,027	12,868	39.1%	12.9%	5.7%
Washoe County	2,517	9,154	27.5%	2,859	9,314	30.7%	13.6%	1.7%
Dayton	104	1,255	8.3%	120	1,409	8.5%	15.4%	12.3%
East Baton Rouge	2,339	3,311	70.6%	2,701	3,884	69.5%	15.5%	17.3%
Milwaukee	3,293	9,011	36.5%	3,813	9,105	41.9%	15.8%	1.0%
Birmingham	448	1,158	38.7%	519	1,274	40.7%	15.8%	10.0%
Charleston	1,080	3,144	34.4%	1,255	3,406	36.8%	16.2%	8.3%
Seattle	1,573	6,831	23.0%	1,848	7,255	25.5%	17.5%	6.2%
Santa Ana	2,416	15,321	15.8%	2,842	16,827	16.9%	17.6%	9.8%
Phoenix Union	1,708	3,217	53.1%	2,038	3,919	52.0%	19.3%	21.8%
Wichita	1,729	8,181	21.1%	2,070	7,383	28.0%	19.7%	-9.8%
Long Beach	1,295	9,835	13.2%	1,575	10,496	15.0%	21.6%	6.7%
St. Louis	515	1,884	27.3%	628	1,803	34.8%	21.9%	-4.3%
Hawaii	4,843	16,769	28.9%	5,938	17,353	34.2%	22.6%	3.5%
Fayette County	1,670	5,377	31.1%	2,060	6,019	34.2%	23.4%	11.9%
Bridgeport	1,069	3,585	29.8%	1,354	4,804	28.2%	26.7%	34.0%
Baltimore	1,119	7,114	15.7%	1,453	8,126	17.9%	29.8%	14.2%
Clark County	11,768	47,719	24.7%	16,062	49,183	32.7%	36.5%	3.1%
Cincinnati	294	2,362	12.4%	402	3,032	13.3%	36.7%	28.4%
Norfolk	148	1,267	11.7%	211	1,123	18.8%	42.6%	-11.4%

Table 10. ELs Enrolled in English Learner Program for 6+ Years, SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22, continued

	SY 2020-21			SY 2021-22			Percentage Change	
	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of of ELs	L-TELS	ELs	L-TELS as % of ELs	L-TEL % Change	EL % Change
New Orleans	8	68	11.8%	18	38	47.4%	125.0%	-44.1%
Albuquerque ²¹	--	13,740	--	9,165	17,143	53.5%	--	24.8%

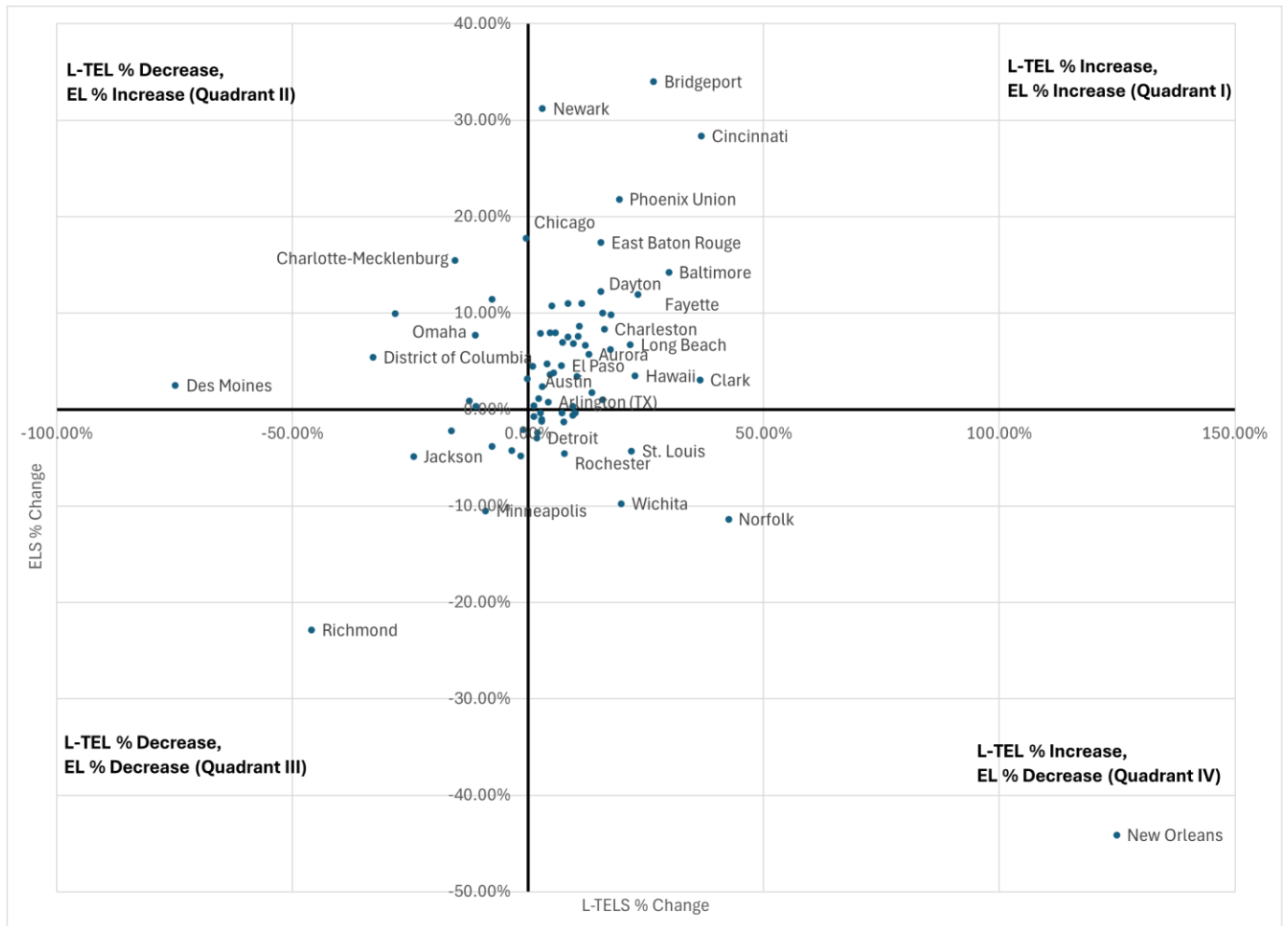
Source: Council analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education.

²¹ L-TEL number for SY 2020-21 unavailable in ED Data Express and CGCS KPI.

Figure 6 shows the percentage change of L-TELS versus the percentage change of ELs between SY 2020-21 and SY 2021-22 for all Council-member districts. The plotted data points fall into four quadrants (or categories)—

- **Quadrant I.** Districts in Quadrant I are those where *both the percentage change of L-TELS and the percentage change of ELs increased*.
- **Quadrant II.** Districts in Quadrant II are those where *the percentage change of L-TELS decreased* and the *percentage change of ELs increased*.
- **Quadrant III.** Districts in Quadrant III are those where the *percentage change of L-TELS decreased* and the *percentage change of ELs decreased*.
- **Quadrant IV.** Districts in Quadrant IV are those where the *percentage change of L-TELS increased* and the *percentage change of ELs decreased*.

Figure 6. L-TEL % Change vs. ELs % Change, SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22



The subsequent sections focus on the quadrants individually.

L-TEL Percentage Change Increase (Quadrants I and IV)

Table 11 lists the 56 districts that experienced an increase in L-TELEs from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22. In roughly three-quarters of these districts, the total EL enrollment also increased. On the other hand, in 15 districts, the increase in L-TELEs was accompanied by a decrease in total EL enrollment. Figures 7 and 8 display scatterplots for districts with increased total EL enrollment and those with decreased total EL enrollment, respectively.

Table 11. Districts with L-TEL % Change Increase by % Change of ELs from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22

Sorted Alphabetically

L-TEL % Change Increase – 56 Districts		
EL % Change Increase – 41 Districts (Figure 7)		
Anchorage	Fayette County	Palm Beach County
Arlington (TX)	Fort Worth	Philadelphia
Aurora	Fresno Unified	Phoenix Union
Baltimore	Hawaii	Pittsburgh
Birmingham	Houston	Portland
Bridgeport	Indianapolis	Sacramento
Charleston	Jefferson County	San Antonio
Cincinnati	Long Beach	San Diego
Clark County	Los Angeles	San Francisco
Cleveland	Milwaukee	Santa Ana
Dallas	New York City	Seattle
Dayton	Newark	Tulsa
East Baton Rouge	Oakland	Washoe
El Paso	Oklahoma City	
EL % Change Decrease – 15 Districts (Figure 8)		
Boston	Hillsborough County	Rochester
Broward County	Kansas City	St. Louis
Buffalo	Little Rock	St. Paul
Detroit	Norfolk	Toledo
Duval	Pinellas County	Wichita

Figure 7. L-TELS vs. ELs: L-TEL % Change INCREASE and EL % Change INCREASE from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22 (Quadrant I)

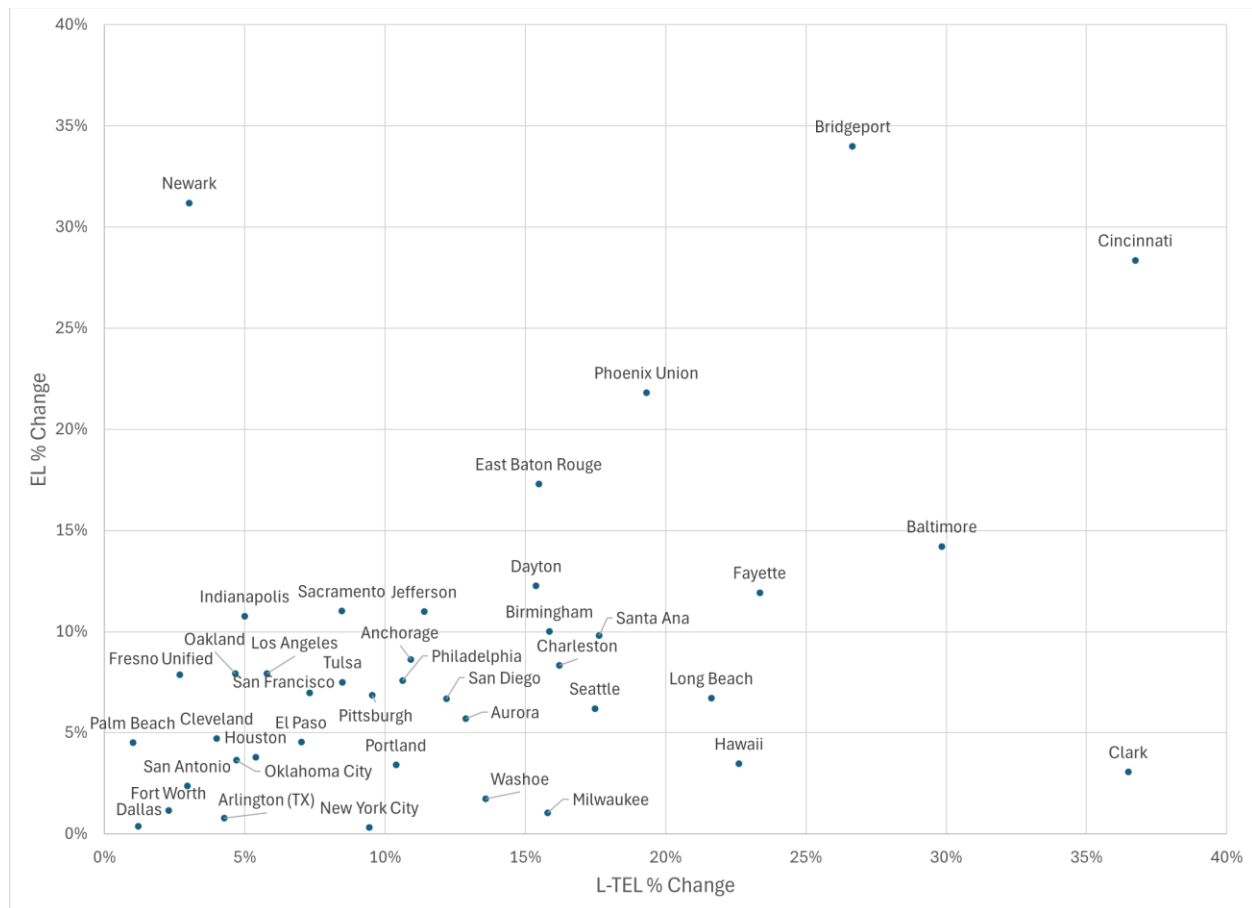
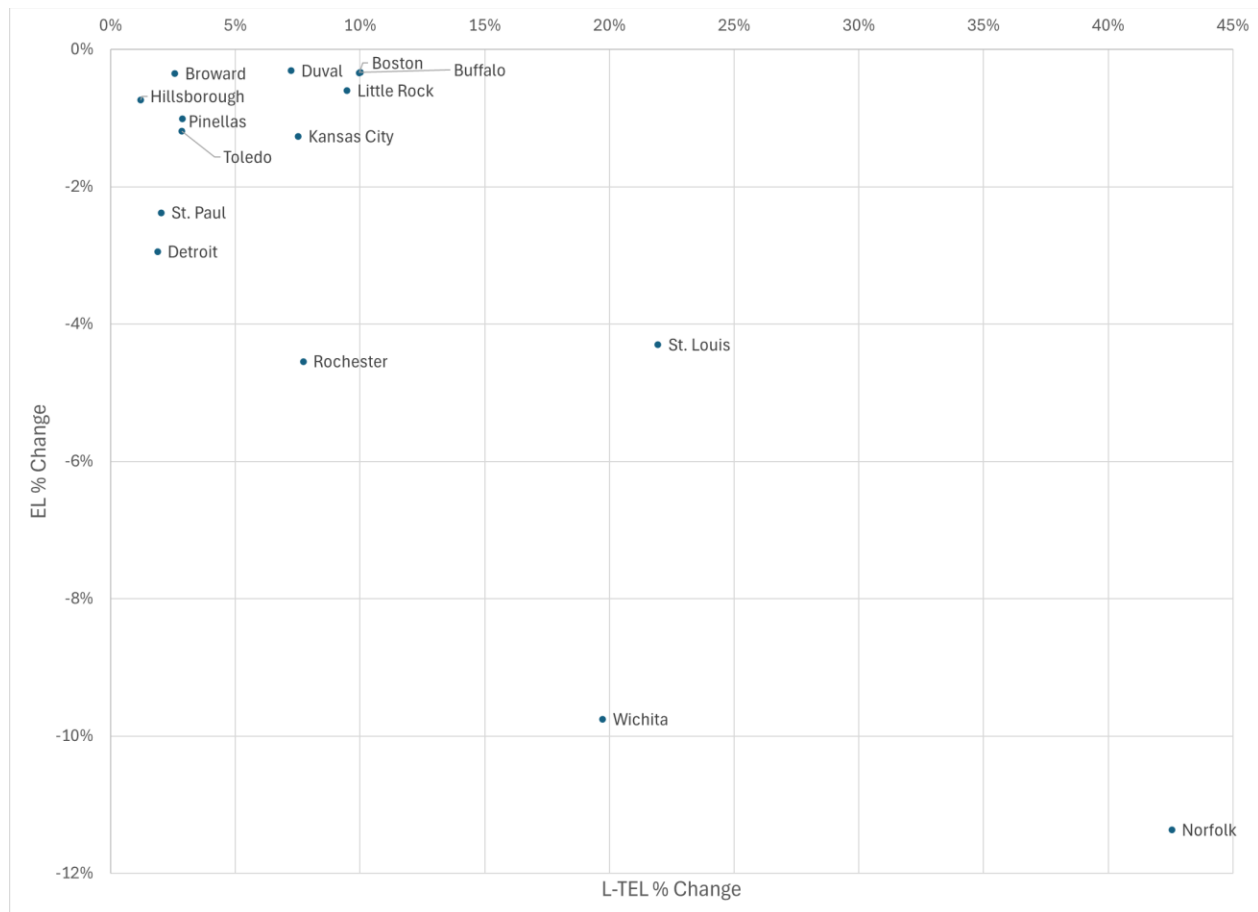


Figure 8. L-TELS vs. ELs: L-TEL % Change INCREASE and EL % Change DECREASE from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22 (Quadrant IV)



L-TEL Percentage Change Decrease (Quadrants II and III)

Table 12 lists the 19 districts that experienced a decrease in L-TELS from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22. In roughly half of these districts, the total EL enrollment increased, suggesting that the EL program growth is attributed to newer ELs rather than ELs remaining in the program for prolonged periods. Figures 9 and 10 display scatterplots for districts with increased total EL enrollment and those with decreased total EL enrollment, respectively.

**Table 12. Districts with L-TEL % Change Decrease by % Change of ELs from
SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22**

Sorted Alphabetically

L-TEL % Change Decrease – 19 Districts	
EL % Change Increase – 10 Districts (Figure 9)	EL % Change Decrease – 9 Districts (Figure 10)
Austin	Atlanta
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Columbus
Chicago	Denver
Des Moines	Guilford County
District of Columbia	Jackson
Metropolitan Nashville	Minneapolis
Miami-Dade County	Orange County
Omaha	Providence
Shelby County	Richmond
Winston-Salem	

Figure 9. L-TELS vs. ELs: L-TEL % Change DECREASE and EL % Change INCREASE from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22 (Quadrant II)

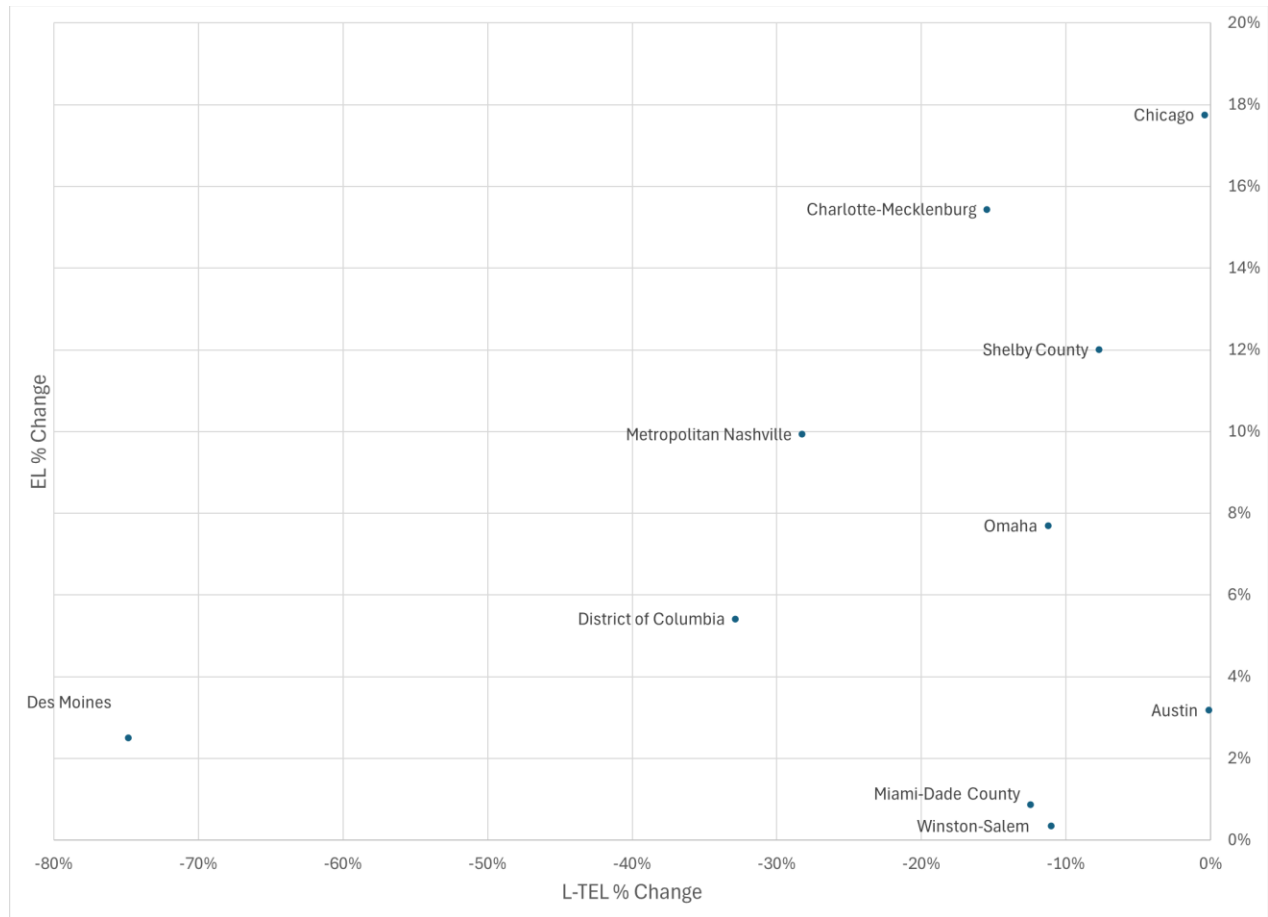
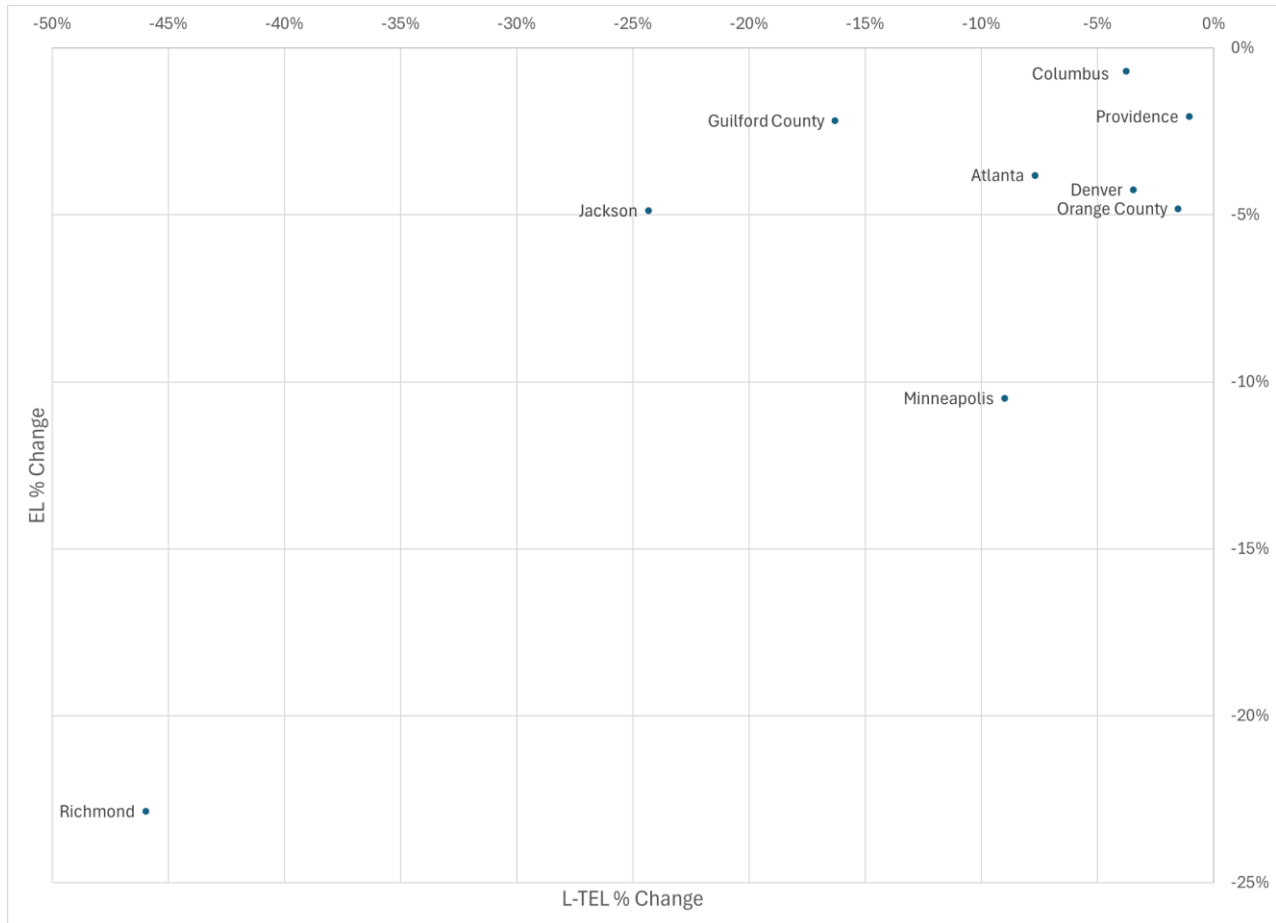


Figure 10. L-TELS vs. ELs: L-TEL % Change DECREASE and EL % Change DECREASE from SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22 (Quadrant III)



ELs Requiring Special Education Services

The Council's Academic KPI database tracks ELs identified as requiring special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This section covers their enrollment in schools and disproportionality ratios for Council-member districts.

Number of ELs Identified as Requiring Special Education Services from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N=37 Districts)

Table 13 shows the number of ELs and non-ELs enrolled in special education programs relative to total enrollment from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. To maintain comparability of data over the years, only districts that reported the requested special education enrollment data for all years, only districts that reported the requested special education enrollment data for all years were included in this analysis. Ultimately, 37 districts are represented in the aggregated figures.

Table 13. EL and Non-EL Participation in Special Education, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 37 Districts)				
	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	Change from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23
Total Student Enrollment	4,359,045	4,307,442	4,271,667	-87,378
Non-ELs	3,605,876	3,546,736	3,483,014	-122,862
ELs	753,169	760,706	788,653	35,484
Total in Special Education	617,859	654,564	673,272	55,413
Non-ELs in Special Education	501,260	535,373	553,217	51,957
ELs in Special Education	116,599	119,191	120,055	3,456

Using the figures in Table 13, Figure 11 shows the percentage of ELs within the total student enrollment, the percentage of non-ELs in special education within the total non-EL enrollment, and the percentage of ELs in special education within the total EL enrollment for SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. The data show an increase for non-ELs in special education that surpassed the percentage of ELs which has begun to slightly decrease. In the 2019 Council EL report, data showed that in SY 2015-16, ELs and non-ELs had roughly a 2 percent gap between them with ELs at 15.2 percent and non-ELs at 12.9 percent. More recently, the special education rate for ELs increased slightly to 15.5 percent before returning to 15.2 percent while the rate for non-ELs increased to 15.9 percent, contributing to a 0.7 percent gap between the two.

Figure 11. Percentage of ELs and Non-ELs in Special Education, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 37)

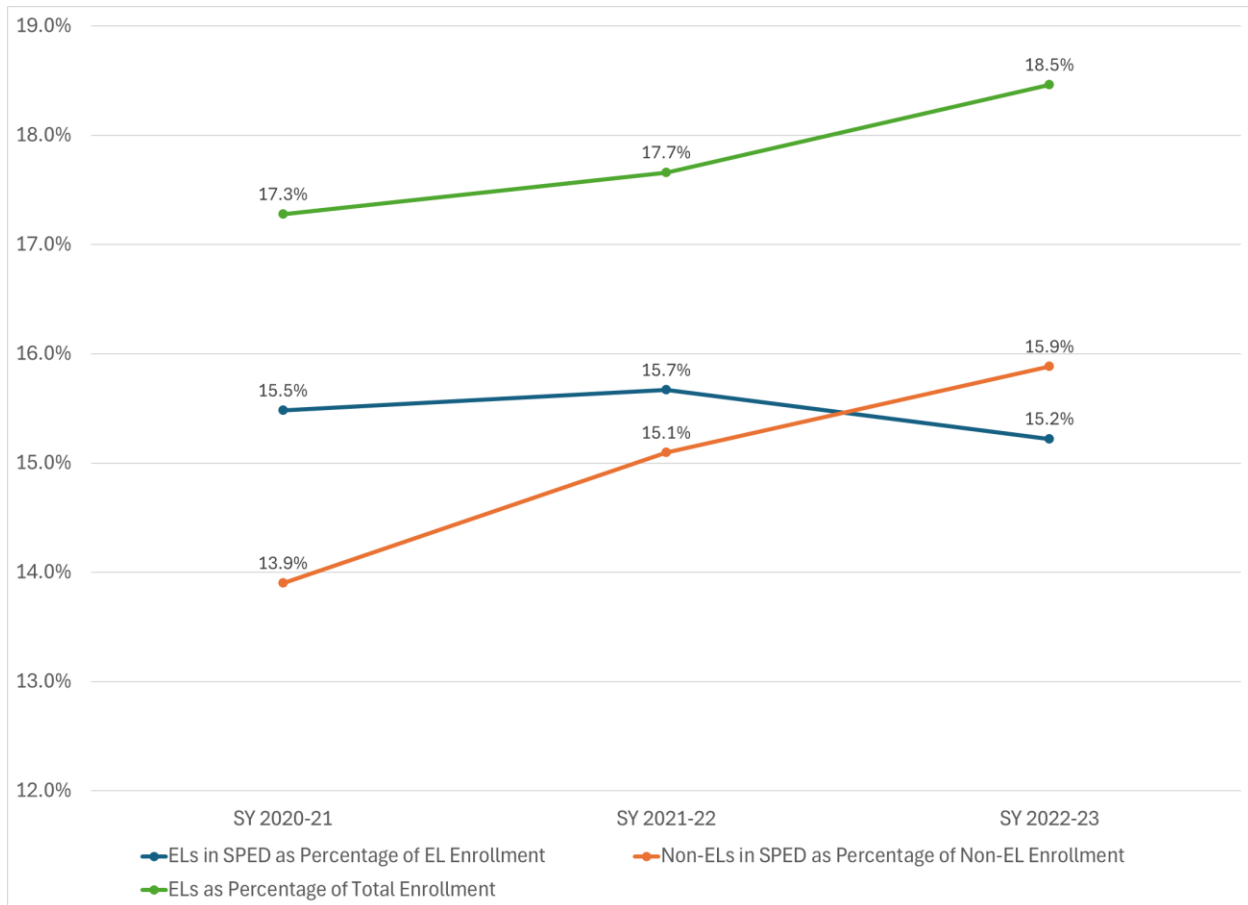


Figure 12 illustrates the comparison of 48 districts on the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in special education during SY 2022-23. Data are sorted by percentage of ELs in special education.

Figure 12. Percentage of ELs and Non-ELs in Special Education, SY 2022-23 (N = 48)
Sorted by EL SPED Percentage

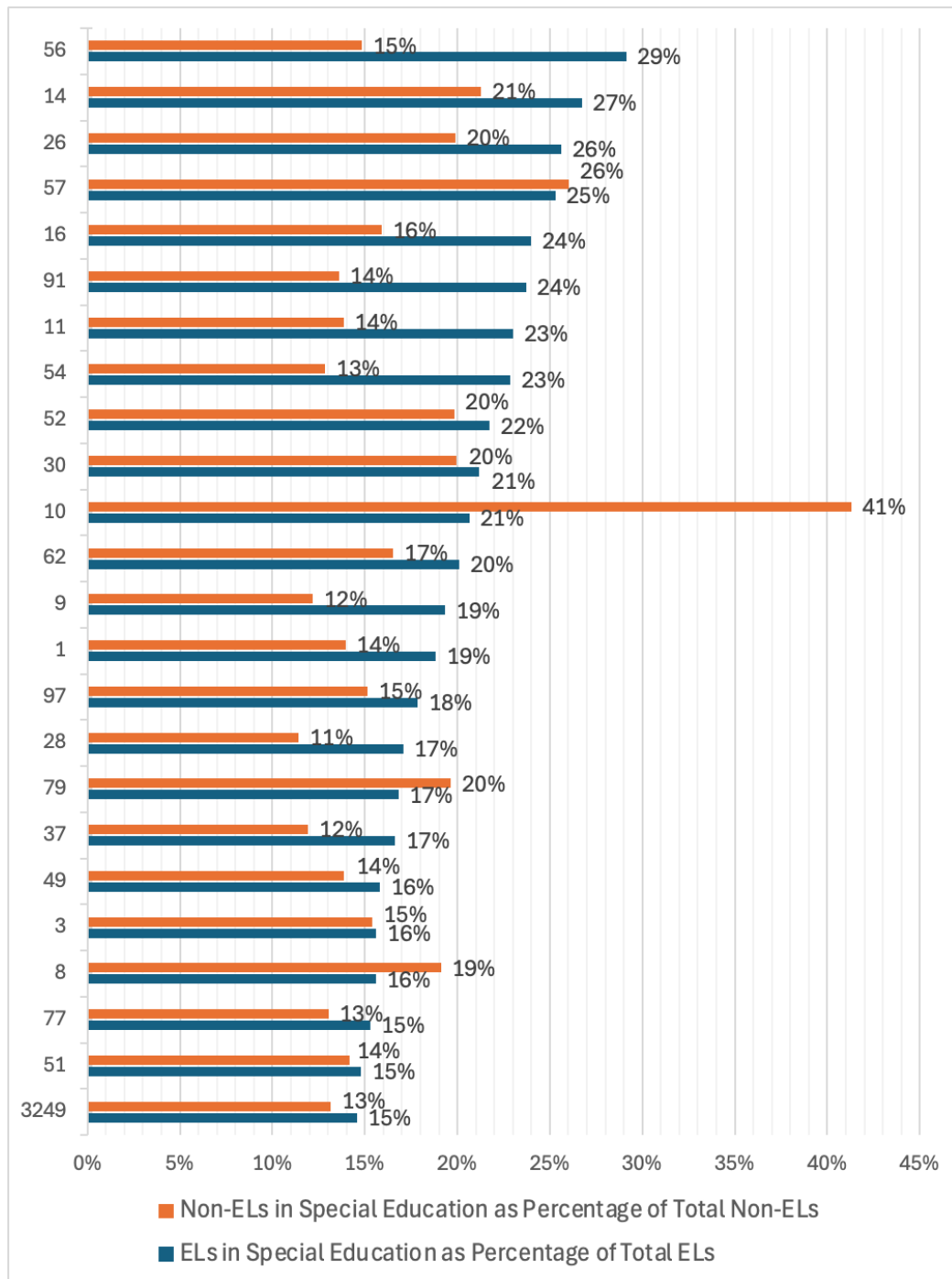
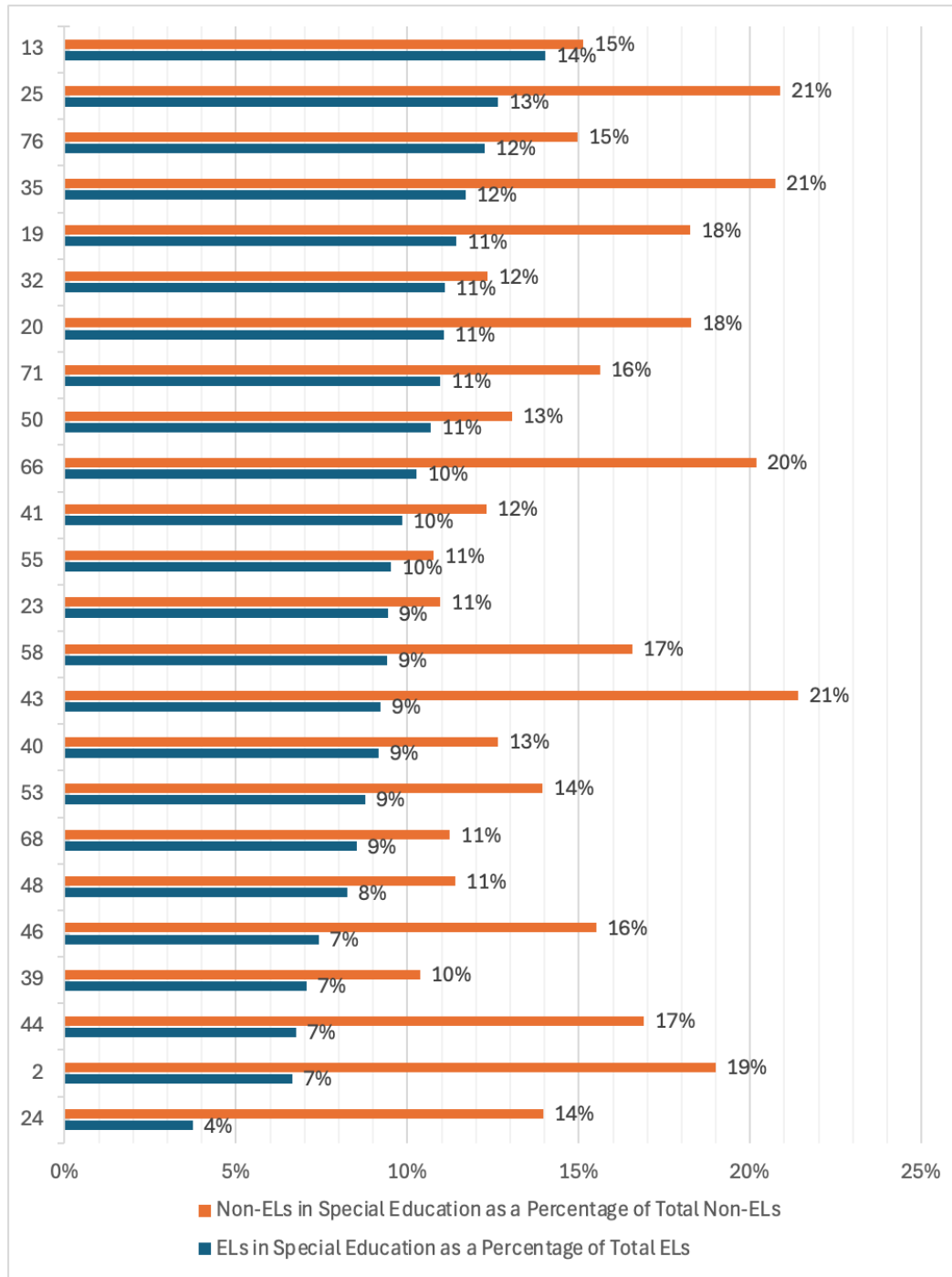


Figure 12. Percentage of ELs and Non-ELs in Special Education, SY 2022-23 (N = 48), continued
 Sorted by EL SPED Percentage



Special Education Disproportionality Ratios for SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N=58 Districts)

The Council used district-reported data to assess whether ELs were disproportionately represented in special education services across member districts. The disproportionality ratio compares the likelihood of ELs being classified with a disability to that of non-ELs. Over the period since the 2019 report, the distribution of districts with disproportionality ratios indicating either over- or under-identification of ELs as having disabilities changed as follows:—

This comparison is quantified as a disproportionality ratio represented by the following formula:

$$\text{Risk Ratio} = \frac{(ELs \text{ in SPED}) / (Total \text{ ELs})}{(Non - ELs \text{ in SPED}) / (Total \text{ Non} - ELs)}$$

A disproportionality ratio of less than one suggests that there is a reduced likelihood that ELLs are identified as requiring special education services and a ratio greater than one indicates a higher likelihood. Generally, a disproportionality ratio of 2 or more or of 0.5 or less suggests an area of concern. In the former case, it would suggest that ELLs are twice as likely to be identified as students requiring special education services, and in the latter case, ELLs would be half as likely to be identified compared to non-ELL students.

- ***More districts with disproportionality ratios suggesting under-identification of ELs.*** In SY 2015-16, 8.6 percent of reporting districts (5 of 58) had disproportionality ratios at or below 0.5, whereas in SY 2022-23, 12 percent of reporting districts (7 out of 58) had similar disproportionality ratios.
- ***Fewer districts approaching a one-to-one proportionality.*** In SY 2015-16 34.5 percent of reporting districts (20 out of 58) had disproportionality ratios between 0.9 and 1.2, whereas in SY 2022-23, 25.8% of reporting districts (15 out of 58) had disproportionality ratios within this range.
- ***Fewer districts with disproportionality ratios suggesting over-identification of ELs.*** In SY 2015-16, 19 percent of reporting districts (11 of 58) had disproportionality ratios above 1.5, but this decreased to 10 percent (6 out of 58) in SY 2022-23.

Table 14 shows the special education EL disproportionality ratios for three consecutive years for each of the 58 reporting districts using KPI codes and ranked from highest to lowest risk ratio in SY 2022-23.

Table 14. Special Education Risk Ratio for ELs from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 <i>Sorted by SY 2022-23 Risk Ratio</i>								
District	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23		District	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
56	2.24	2.07	1.96		41	0.75	0.78	0.80
54	2.09	1.88	1.78		68	0.81	0.77	0.76

Table 14. Special Education Risk Ratio for ELs from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23*Sorted by SY 2022-23 Risk Ratio*

District	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23		District	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
91	1.84	1.86	1.74		40	0.90	0.77	0.72
11	1.53	1.95	1.66		48	0.86	0.82	0.72
9	1.73	1.66	1.59		71	-	1.01	0.70
16	1.65	1.62	1.51		39	0.71	0.72	0.68
28	1.35	1.45	1.49		19	0.33	-	0.63
37	1.36	1.30	1.39		53	0.83	0.71	0.63
1	1.34	1.47	1.35		20	-	0.66	0.61
26	1.21	1.19	1.29		25	0.58	-	0.61
14	1.59	1.41	1.26		58	0.68	0.65	0.57
62	-	-	1.21		35	0.67	0.58	0.56
97	1.25	1.27	1.18		66	-	0.51	0.51
77	1.27	1.14	1.17		10	0.76	0.69	0.50
49	0.01	-	1.14		46	0.43	0.42	0.48
3249	1.15	1.11	1.11		43	-	0.50	0.43
52	1.21	1.18	1.10		44	0.52	0.47	0.40
30	1.08	1.12	1.06		2	0.35	0.32	0.35
51	1.06	1.06	1.04		24	-	0.33	0.27
3	-	1.00	1.01		12	1.10	1.31	-
57	0.91	1.01	0.97		29	37.30	-	-
13	0.67	1.04	0.93		67	1.83	-	-
32	1.17	1.02	0.90		15	0.53	0.58	-
55	1.32	-	0.89		34	0.67	-	-
23	1.11	0.96	0.86		93	-	0.72	-
79	1.19	0.91	0.86		18	0.80	0.89	-
50	0.73	0.79	0.82		47	1.00	0.87	-
8	0.93	0.92	0.82		60	1.01	1.01	-
76	0.86	-	0.82		63	0.65	-	-

*(-)Denotes insufficient data for calculation.**Source: Calculated from district-reported data.*

English Language Proficiency

The Council aimed to paint a picture of EL performance in its member districts by examining measurements from a variety of sources, including scores from English language proficiency assessments, performance levels from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and academic KPI data. As explained in the following sections, these measures only provide a rough sketch of EL achievement in Council-member districts. Their meaning is derived from an understanding of local contexts, and the analyses presented in this section are meant to be a starting point for benchmarking and further inquiry.

While all school districts are required to assess the English language proficiency (ELP) levels of students identified as ELs, no single assessment instrument exists to do so. States have the discretion to determine the English language proficiency standards and the corresponding assessments to measure English proficiency as part of their state accountability under federal law.²² In some states, the state education agency identifies a single English proficiency assessment instrument while in others, an approved list of assessments is identified from which local school districts can select. For the KPI data collection, member districts were asked to use the data from their respective state proficiency assessments to report on the distribution of ELs along various measures of English proficiency over three years—SY 2020-21, SY 2021-22, and SY 2022-23.

The different assessments and the differing proficiency scales, ranging from two to six levels, across the member districts complicated the analysis of ELP trends in the aggregate. Reporting three years of data posed additional challenges—

- Some states adopted new assessments over the years.
- The reclassification criteria to designate ELs as English-proficient, and thus, exit the EL reporting group differs by state, resulting in notable variation in the percentage of ELs at the highest levels of proficiency.

Given these constraints, the following graphs present data for SY 2022-23, showing the percentage distribution of English proficiency levels by grade band. Districts are grouped based on the number of reported proficiency levels, recognizing that proficiency levels may not be directly comparable across different assessment instruments. Seven districts reported using a three-level scale, ten used a four-level scale, two used a five-level scale, and thirty-one used a six-level scale.

The reporting of district-specific profiles of English proficiency allows member districts to benchmark against similar urban districts and provides a more nuanced look at the heterogeneity of ELs in any given district. For each grade band, we produced a graph to represent the snapshot data of English proficiency levels of ELs in SY 2022-23. In other words, each distribution of a particular

²² Each State plan shall demonstrate that local educational agencies in the State will provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency of all English learners in the schools served by the State educational agency. Sec.1111 (b)(2)(G) of ESEA as amended by ESSA.

grade band is not longitudinally linked to others; they represent different students altogether. Rather than district names, we used KPI codes assigned by the Council.

Districts with Three Levels of English Language Proficiency in SY 2022-23 (N=7 Districts)

Figures 13 to 15 display English language proficiency data for ELs in Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 enrolled in each of the three districts that reported three ELP levels.

Figure 13. Percentage of ELs in Grades K-5 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23

Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

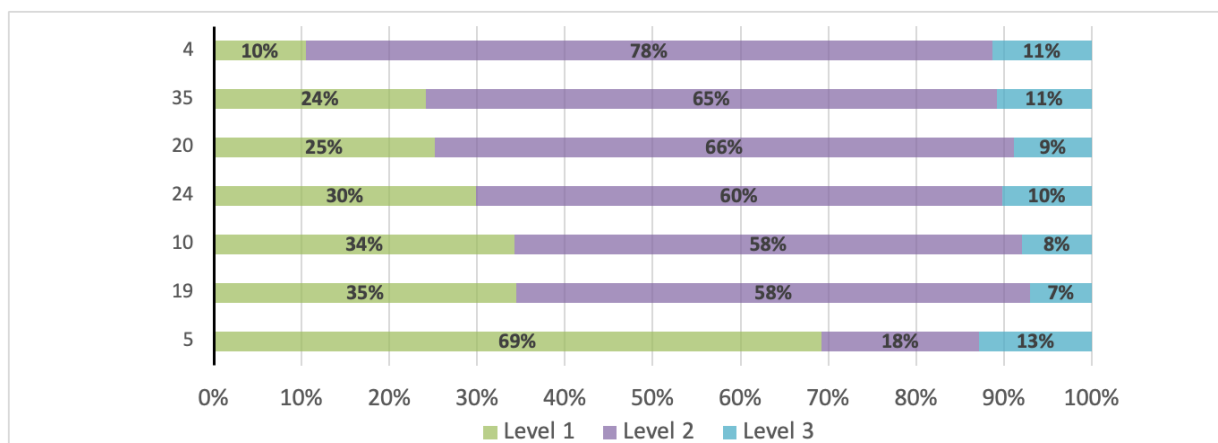


Figure 14. Percentage of ELs in Grades 6-8 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23

Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

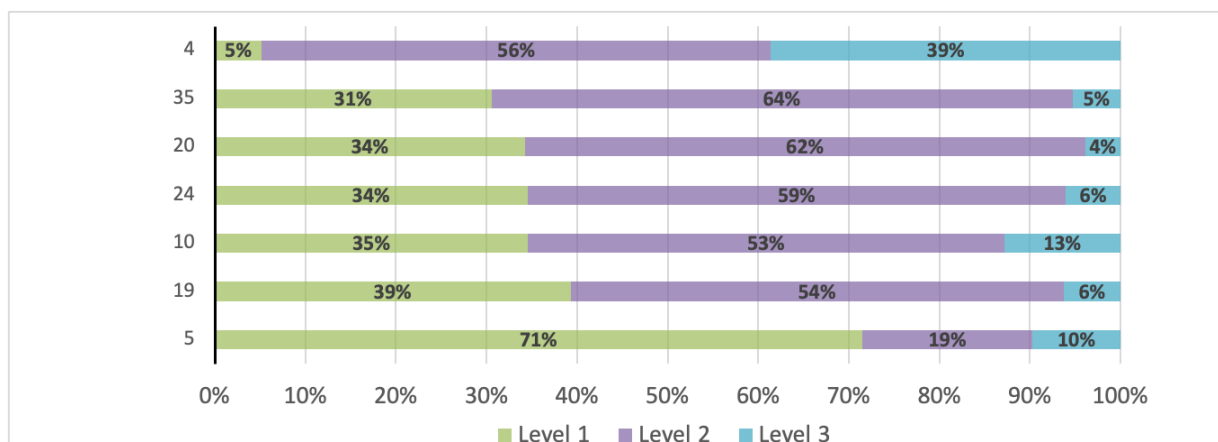
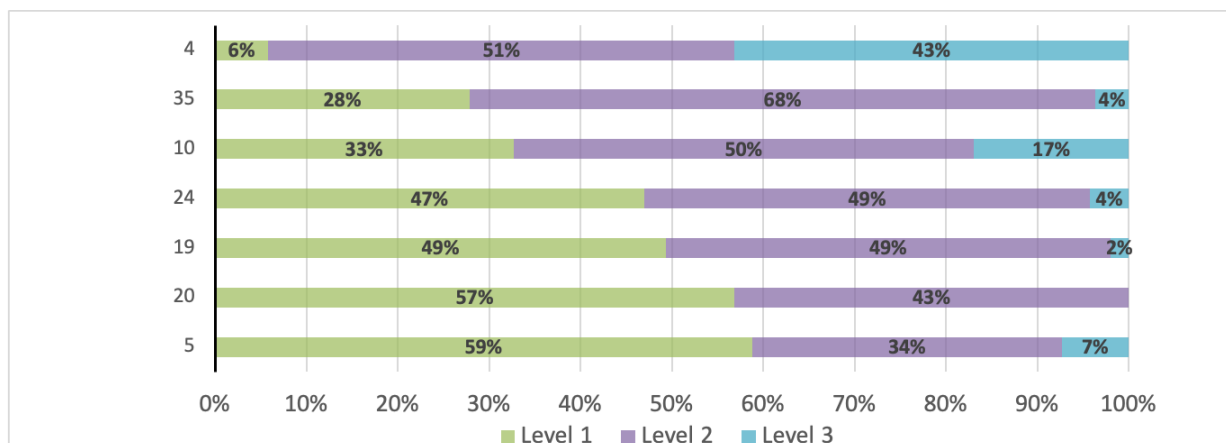


Figure 15. Percentage of ELs in Grades 9-12 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1



Districts with Four Levels of English Language Proficiency in SY 2022-23 (N=10 Districts)

Figures 16 to 18 display English language proficiency data for ELs in Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 enrolled in each of the ten districts that reported four ELP levels.

Figure 16. Percentage of ELs in Grades K-5 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

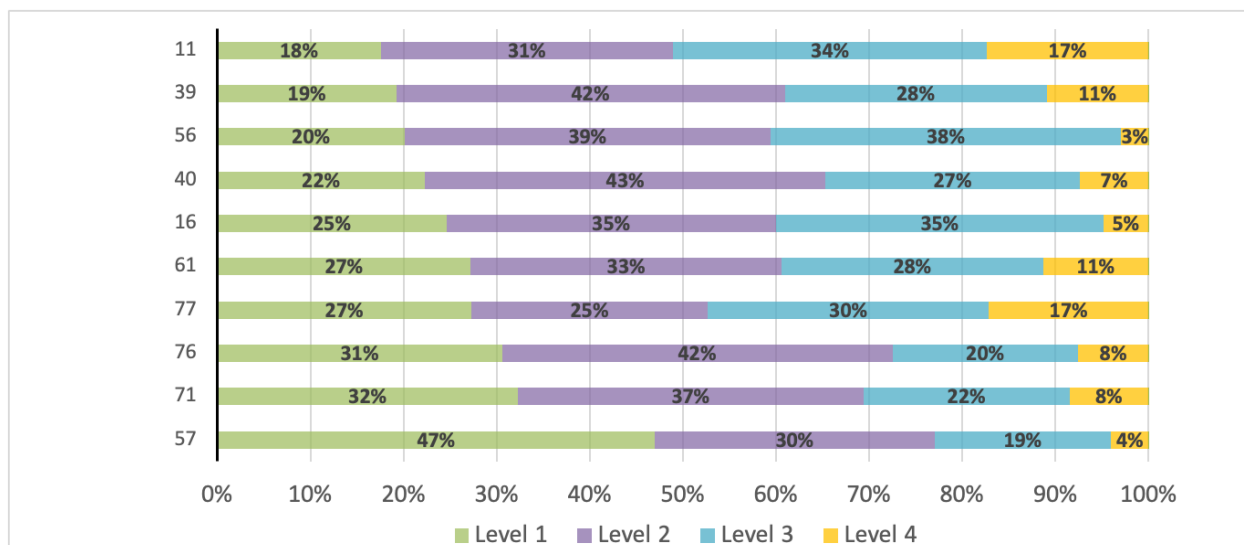


Figure 17. Percentage of ELs in Grades 6-8 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

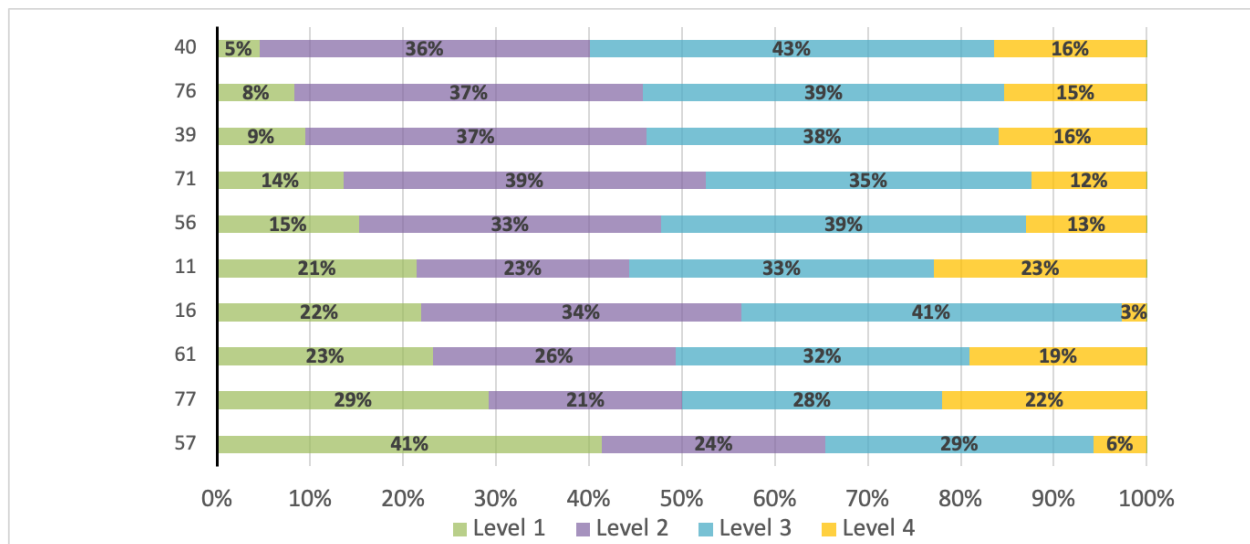
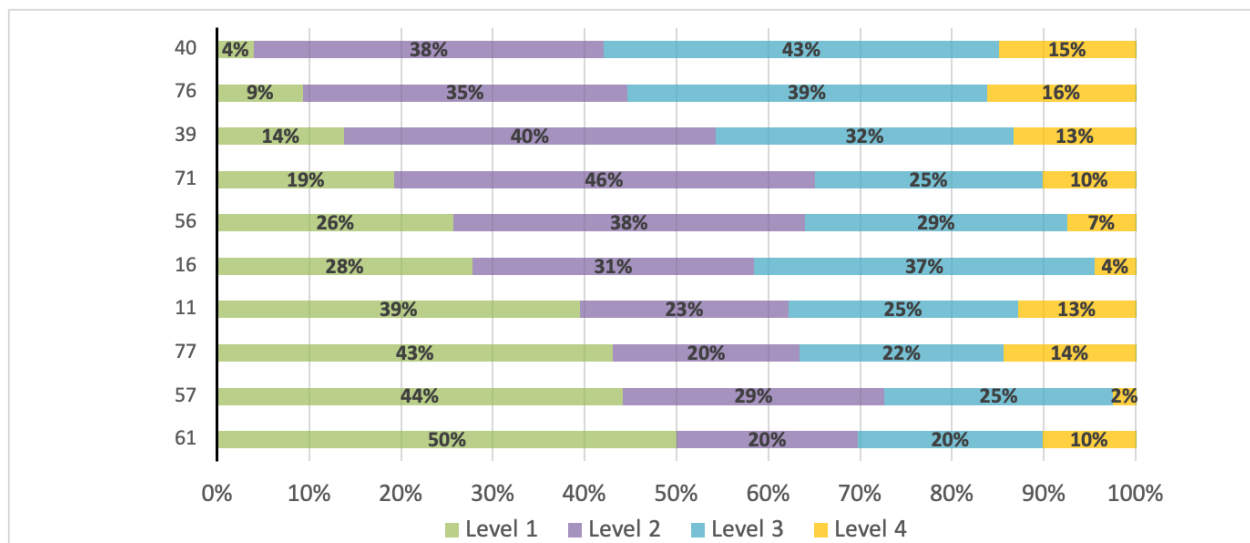


Figure 18. Percentage of ELs in Grades 9-12 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1



Districts with Five Levels of English Language Proficiency in SY 2022-23 (N=2 Districts)

Figures 19 to 21 display English language proficiency data for ELs in Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 enrolled in each of the two districts that reported five ELP levels.

Figure 19. Percentage of ELs in Grades K-5 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

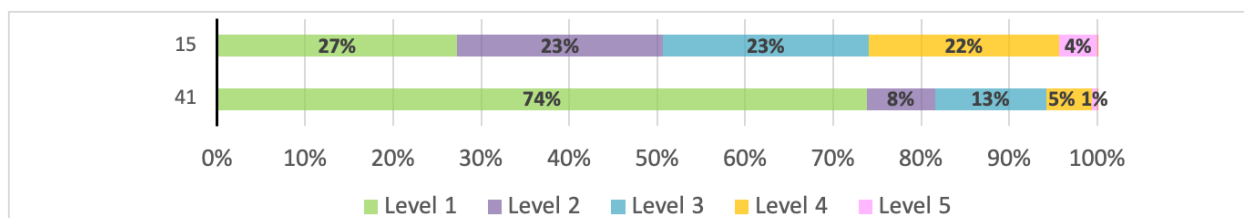


Figure 20. Percentage of ELs in Grades 6-8 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

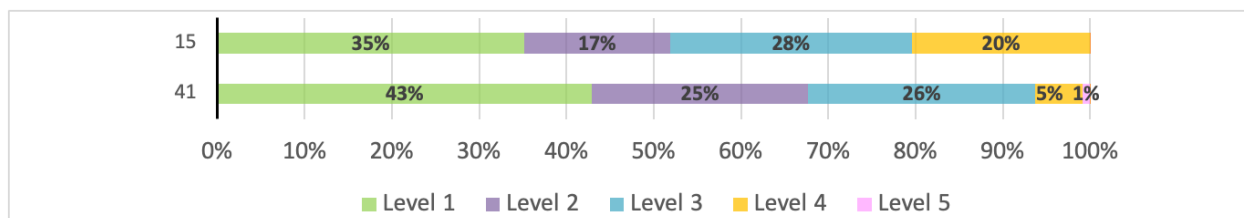
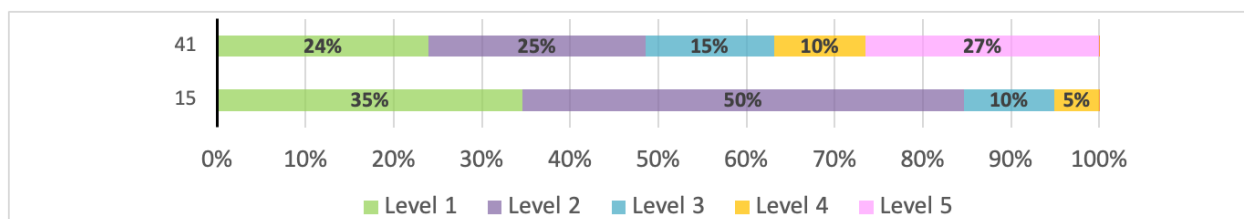


Figure 21. Percentage of ELs in Grades 9-12 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1



Districts with Six Levels of English Language Proficiency in SY 2022-23 (N=31 Districts)

Figures 22 to 24 display English language proficiency data for ELs in Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 enrolled in each of the thirty-one districts that reported six ELP levels.

Figure 22. Percentage of ELs in Grades K-5 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

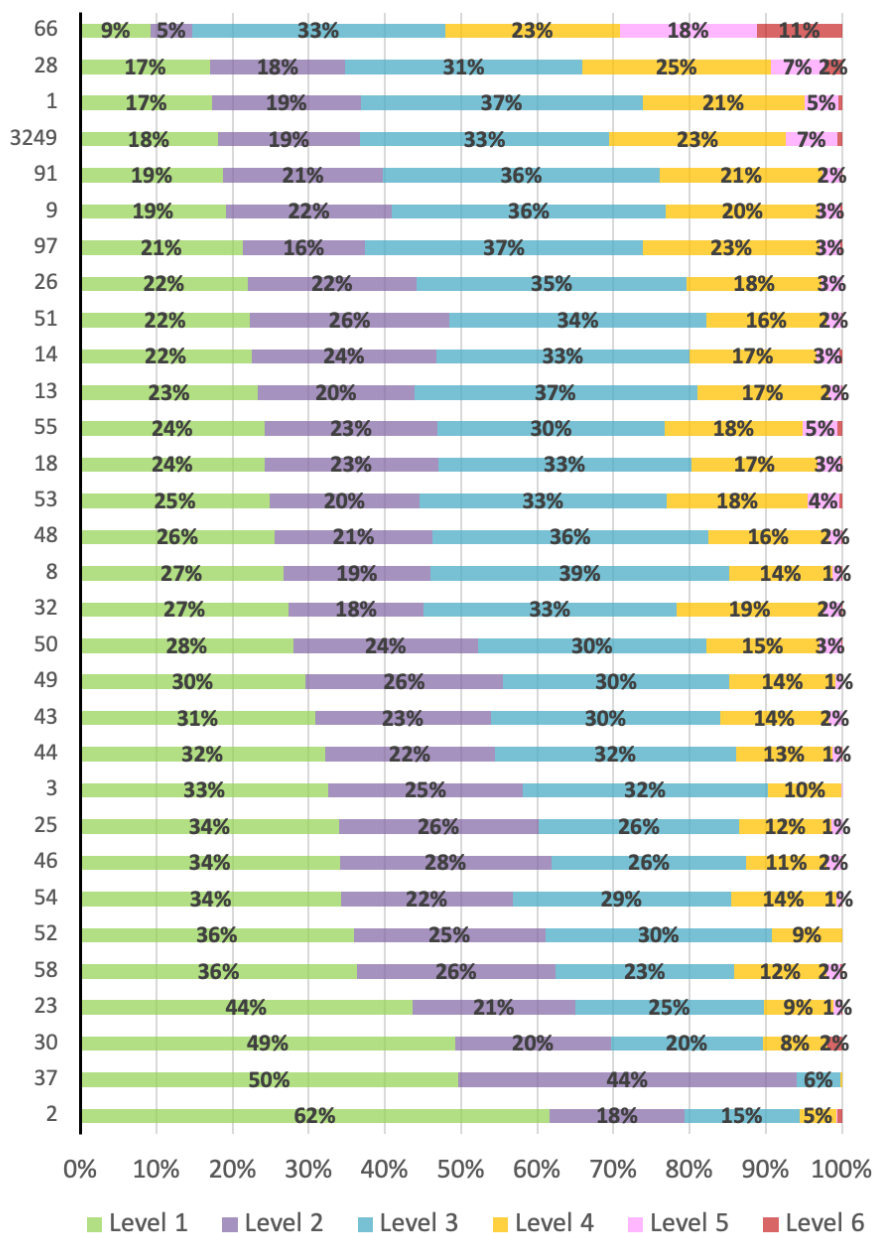


Figure 23. Percentage of ELs in Grades 6-8 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1

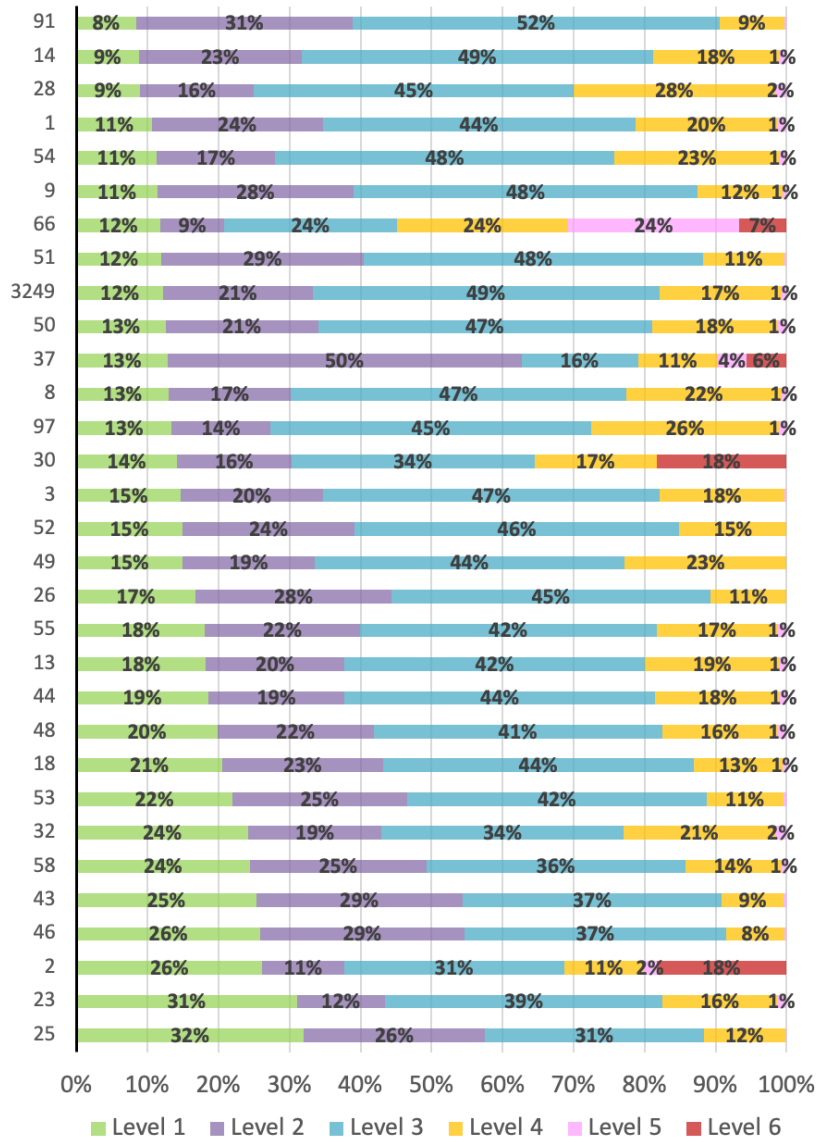
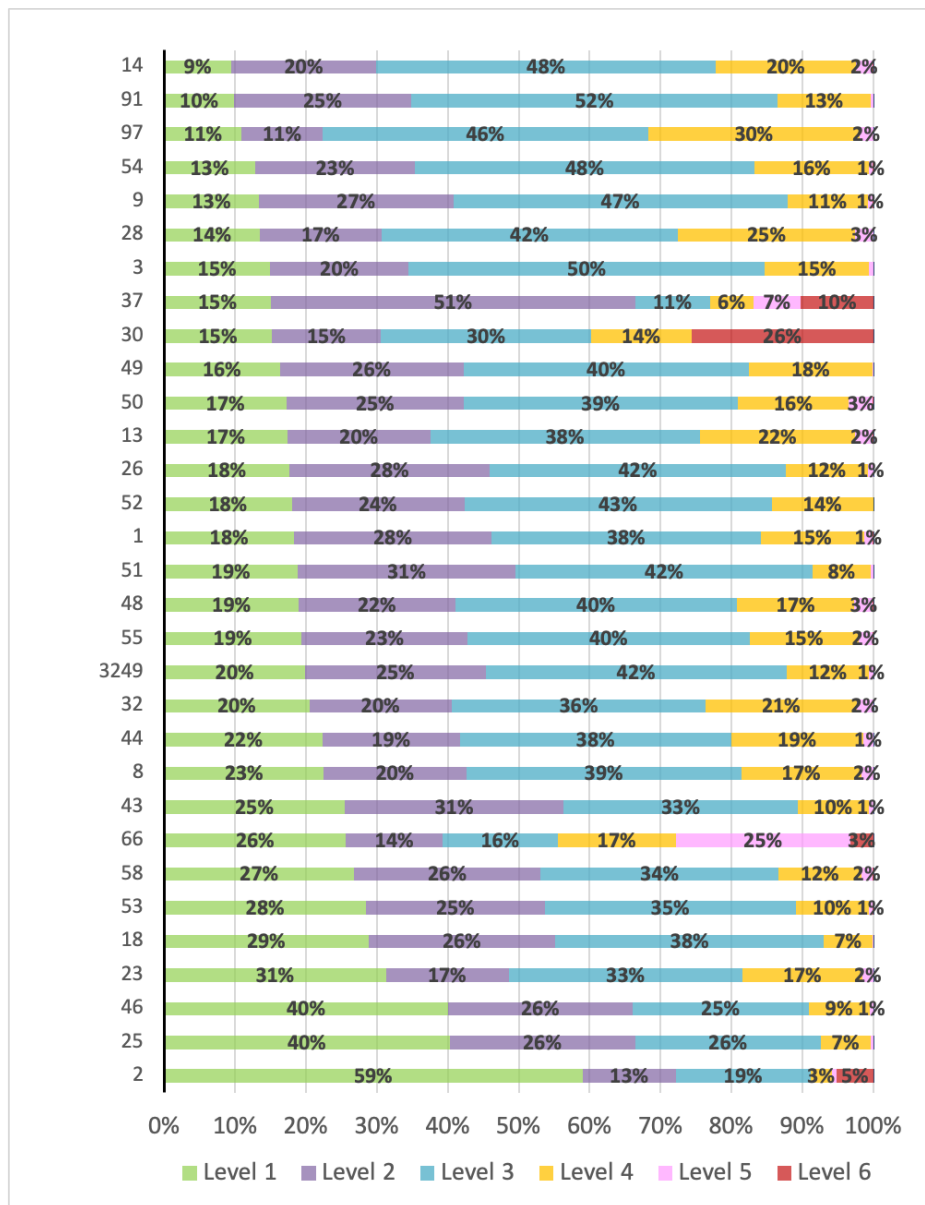


Figure 24. Percentage of ELs in Grades 9-12 Scoring in Each Proficiency Level in SY 2022-23
Ranked by Percentage in Level 1



Proficiency in Reading and Mathematics on NAEP

As noted in the Council’s report *Student Testing in America’s Great City Schools: An Inventory and Preliminary Analysis* (2015), there is an array of state content assessments that are typically administered in Grade 3 through Grade 8 and one in high school pursuant to ESSA, the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Understanding that this array of assessments across states precludes us from making any direct comparisons of annual academic achievement for ELs in member districts.

An analysis of the academic performance of ELs in Council-member districts can only be approximated by using data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), since it is the only assessment that captures achievement across states on a common measure. The NAEP is administered to a representative sample of students throughout the nation to measure performance in reading and mathematics. The results allow comparisons of state, nation (NP), and large-city samples (LC). The LC sample closely approximates Council trends since Council-member districts constitute more than 70 percent of the LC sample.

For this report, we use LC sample data as a proxy for the achievement levels and trends of ELs in Council-member districts. The report does not use Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) results, as the 27 member districts that participated in the 2017 TUDA represent no more than 38 percent of the Council membership. Similar to the 2019 Council EL report, we analyzed reading and mathematics achievement data by EL status (ELs, former ELs, and non-ELs), as well as disaggregated achievement data by free- and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligibility status. NAEP results are reported along three achievement levels—basic, proficient, and advanced. The data displayed in the report present the percentage of students performing at or above the proficient level (i.e., proficient or advanced).

In addition to descriptive analyses of the NAEP trends, the Council conducted statistical significance tests to identify variations between years and groups that were not attributable to chance.²³ Statistical significance²⁴ was specifically examined for—

²³ Because of sample size variations from year to year among various groups, statistical significance may not be straightforward to deduce from graphs. In larger samples, small variations may be detected as statistically significant, whereas greater variation is necessary in smaller samples. Thus, visual differences between years and samples on the presented charts cannot be assumed to be statistically significant solely by inspection. For an in-depth explanation, see <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/guides/statsig.aspx>.

²⁴ Due to the rounding of figures, reported difference values for pairwise statistical significance tests may differ by no more than one or two percentage points from values reported on NAEP’s Data Explorer at <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/xplore/NDE>.

- 1) the percentage point achievement difference between 2005 and 2022, the bookend years for the 2019 EL report and this report;
- 2) year-to-year changes in achievement from 2005 to 2022;
- 3) the difference in achievement for ELs, former ELs, and non-ELs when FRPL-eligibility is considered; and
- 4) the difference in achievement between former ELs and non-ELs when FRPL-eligibility is considered.

English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools (2019) documented NAEP performance from 2005 to 2017. The current report covers two additional NAEP testing cycles—2019 and 2022, providing data covering a 17-year or nine-cycle period. The achievement trend over the nine cycles of NAEP testing does not tell a linear story, as there are visible peaks and valleys across the years and for various student groups. Our analysis examined changes from 2005 to 2022, as well as between each of the years to provide a more nuanced understanding of achievement in mathematics and reading for various groups. While some differences in the graphs appear significant to the eye, we conducted statistical significance tests to signal which of these changes were indeed significant. These more nuanced performance trends are provided following the discussion of general trends revealed by the analysis.

General Observations about Achievement Trends between 2005 and 2022

READING

For Grade 4 Reading in the nine testing years examined, the performance of ELs was similar regardless of whether students were FRPL-eligible.

- In four out of the nine testing years, ELs showed statistically significant differences in scores between students based on FRPL eligibility.
- For former ELs, differences between FRPL-eligible and FRPL-ineligible students were statistically significant in three out of nine years.

For Grade 8 Reading, there were fewer instances in which the performance difference between FRPL-eligible ELs and FRPL-ineligible ELs was statistically significant. Former ELs showed a similar number (four out of nine) of statistically significant performances as in Grade 4 Reading.

- None of the EL scores over the nine test years showed statistically significant differences between students who were FRPL-eligible and those not eligible.
- For former ELs, in four of the nine years, statistically significant differences were noted between FRPL-eligible and ineligible former ELs.

Table 15. Statistically Significant Differences in Performance in Reading by FRPL Status from 2005-2022										
Grade and Subgroup		%-Point Difference between FRPL-Eligible and FRPL-Ineligible								
		2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
Grade 4	EL	-6%	-6%*	-6%	-5%	-13%*	-7%	-3%	-7%*	-9%*
	Former EL	-22%	-29%	-10%	-23%*	-34%*	-15%*	-25%	-25%	-13%
	Non-EL	-25%*	-29%*	-28%*	-31%*	-35%*	-33%*	-29%*	-30%*	-31%*
Grade 8	EL	-6%	-3%	-4%	-2%	-2%	-4%	-2%	-2%	-6%
	Former EL	-19%*	-5%	-9%	-13%	-20%*	-18%*	-10%	-11%	-25%*
	Non-EL	-21%*	-21%*	-23%*	-23%*	-28%*	-25%*	-24%*	-26%*	-23%*

MATHEMATICS

For Grade 4 Mathematics in the nine testing years examined, there was a preponderance of statistically significant score differences between students who were FRPL-eligible and those who were not—

- For ELs, in all but one year, the differences between FRPL-eligible and FRPL-ineligible students were statistically significant.
- For former ELs, differences between FRPL-eligible and FRPL-ineligible students were statistically significant in six out of nine years.

For Grade 8 Mathematics during the same period, in only one year was the performance difference statistically significant between FRPL eligibility groups of ELs—

- Only in 2005 was there a statistically significant difference between the performance of FRPL-eligible and FRPL-ineligible ELs.
- For former ELs, in six out of nine years, the difference was statistically significant.

Table 16. Statistically Significant Differences in Performance in Mathematics by FRPL Status from 2005-2022										
Grade and Subgroup		%-Point Difference between FRPL-Eligible and FRPL-Ineligible								
		2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
Grade 4	EL	-12%*	-10%*	-10%*	-11%*	-15%*	-20%*	-1%	-16%*	-12%*
	Former EL	-20%	-32%	-25%*	-16%*	-32%*	-22%*	-9%	-25%*	-28%*
	Non-EL	-32%*	-31%*	-32%*	-31%*	-37%*	-36%*	-32%*	-34%*	-35%*
Grade 8	EL	-5%*	-6%	-9%	-7%	-2%	-3%	-1%	-9%	-8%
	Former EL	-9%	-10%	-9%	-10%*	-19%*	-17%*	-13%*	-18%*	-24%*
	Non-EL	-24%*	-23%*	-25%*	-27%*	-28%*	-30%*	-28%*	-29%*	-24%*

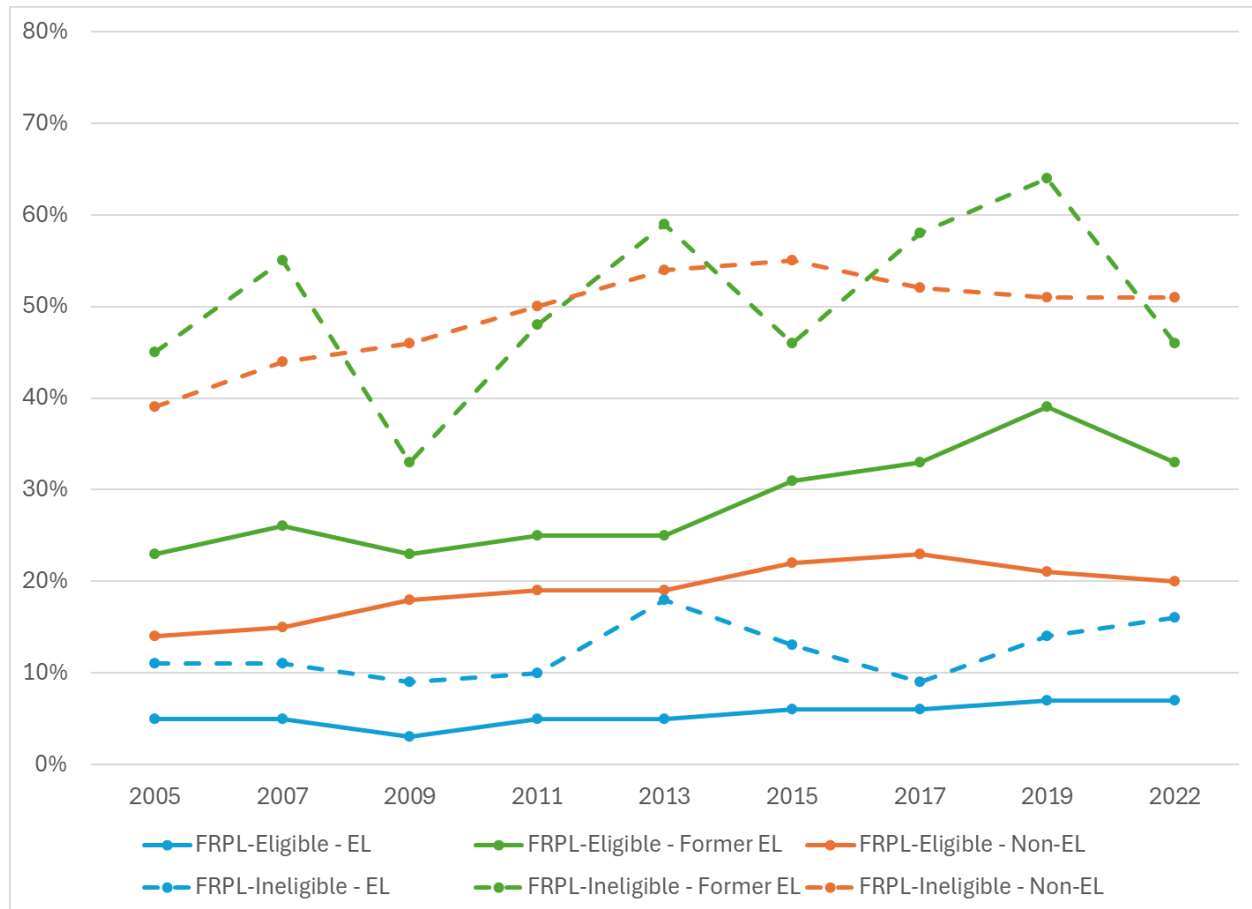
Content NAEP Results by Grade

In this section, we show and discuss the results by grade level and content area for the nine NAEP administrations between 2005 and 2022. The graphs show trend lines for the various student groups, disaggregated by EL status and FRPL eligibility. The graphs show variability in the intervening years between 2015 and 2022, with most of this variance being the result of random chance (i.e., not statistically significant). Our analysis, therefore, is limited to comparing the NAEP results between two years—2005 and 2022 for the LC sample and highlighting only a few of the interim years in which there were statistically significant and large achievement differences. Our discussion mainly focuses on general achievement trends.

Grade 4 NAEP Reading from 2005 to 2022

- **ELs.** The percentage of ELs scoring at or above proficient remained relatively stable, with only minor fluctuations across the years. Among FRPL-eligible ELs, the percentage increased from 5 percent in 2005 to 7 percent in both 2019 and 2022, showing slow growth. For FRPL-ineligible EL students, there was a larger fluctuation, with scores starting at 11 percent in 2005, peaking at 18 percent in 2013, and then dropping to 9 percent in 2017, before recovering to 16 percent in 2022. However, these changes were not statistically significant.
- **Former ELs.** Former ELs consistently scored higher than ELs. Among FRPL-eligible former EL students, performance increased from 23 percent in 2005 to 33 percent in 2019, but then decreased to 33 percent in 2022, reflecting some fluctuation. In the FRPL-ineligible group, performance was much higher overall. Former EL students began at 45 percent in 2005 and peaked at 64 percent in 2019, before dropping back to 46 percent in 2022. These fluctuations were not statistically significant, but the gap between FRPL-eligible and FRPL-ineligible former EL students remained notable.

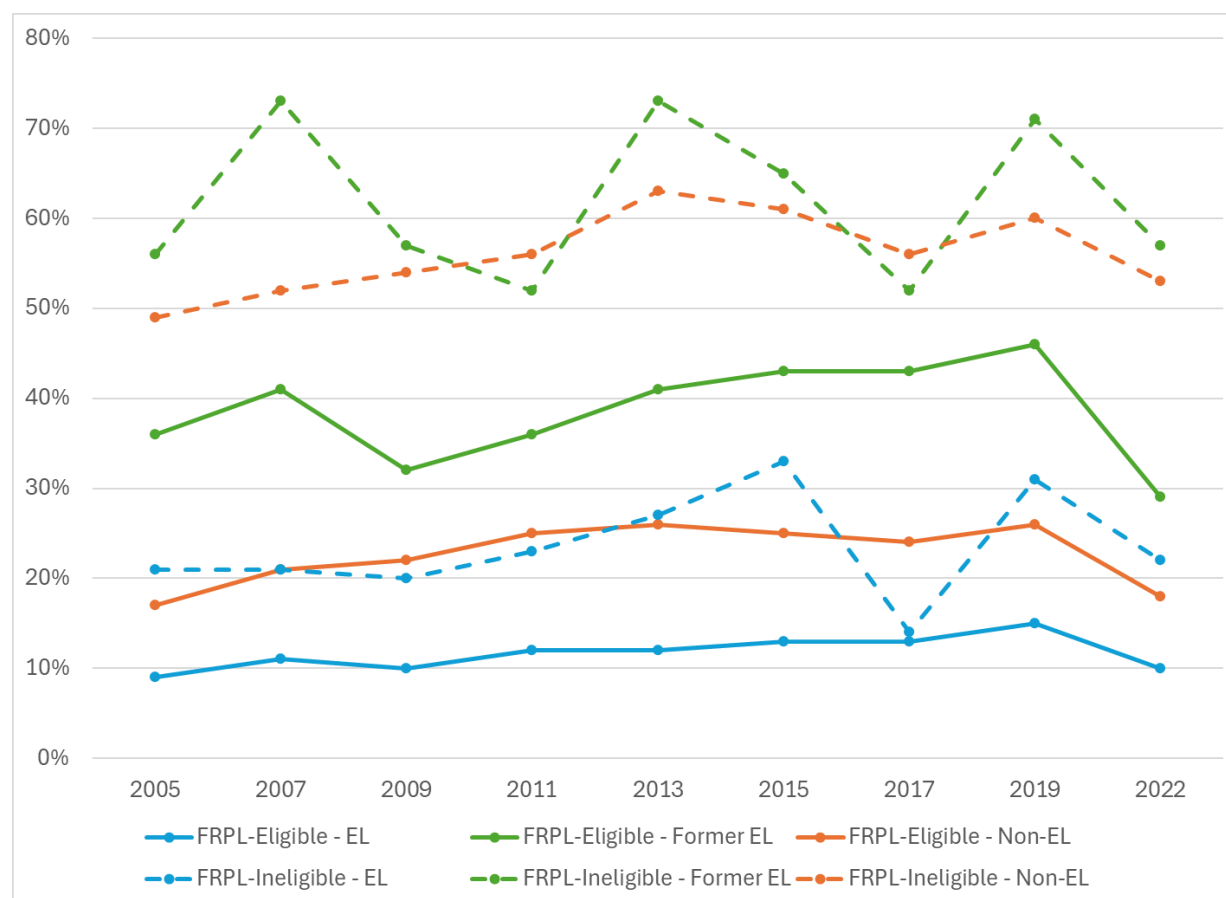
Figure 25. Percentage of Large City Grade 4 ELs, Non-ELs, and Former ELs Performing At or Above Proficient in NAEP Reading by FRPL-Eligibility



Grade and Subgroup		2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
FRPL-Eligible	EL	5%	5%	3%	5%*	5%	6%	6%	7%	7%
	Former EL	23%	26%	23%	25%	25%	31%	33%	39%	33%
	Non-EL	14%	15%	18%*	19%	19%	22%*	23%	21%*	20%
FRPL-Ineligible	EL	11%	11%	9%	10%	18%	13%	9%	14%	16%
	Former EL	45%	55%	33%	48%	59%	46%	58%	64%	46%
	Non-EL	39%	44%*	46%	50%	54%*	55%	52%	51%	51%

Grade 4 NAEP Mathematics from 2005 to 2022

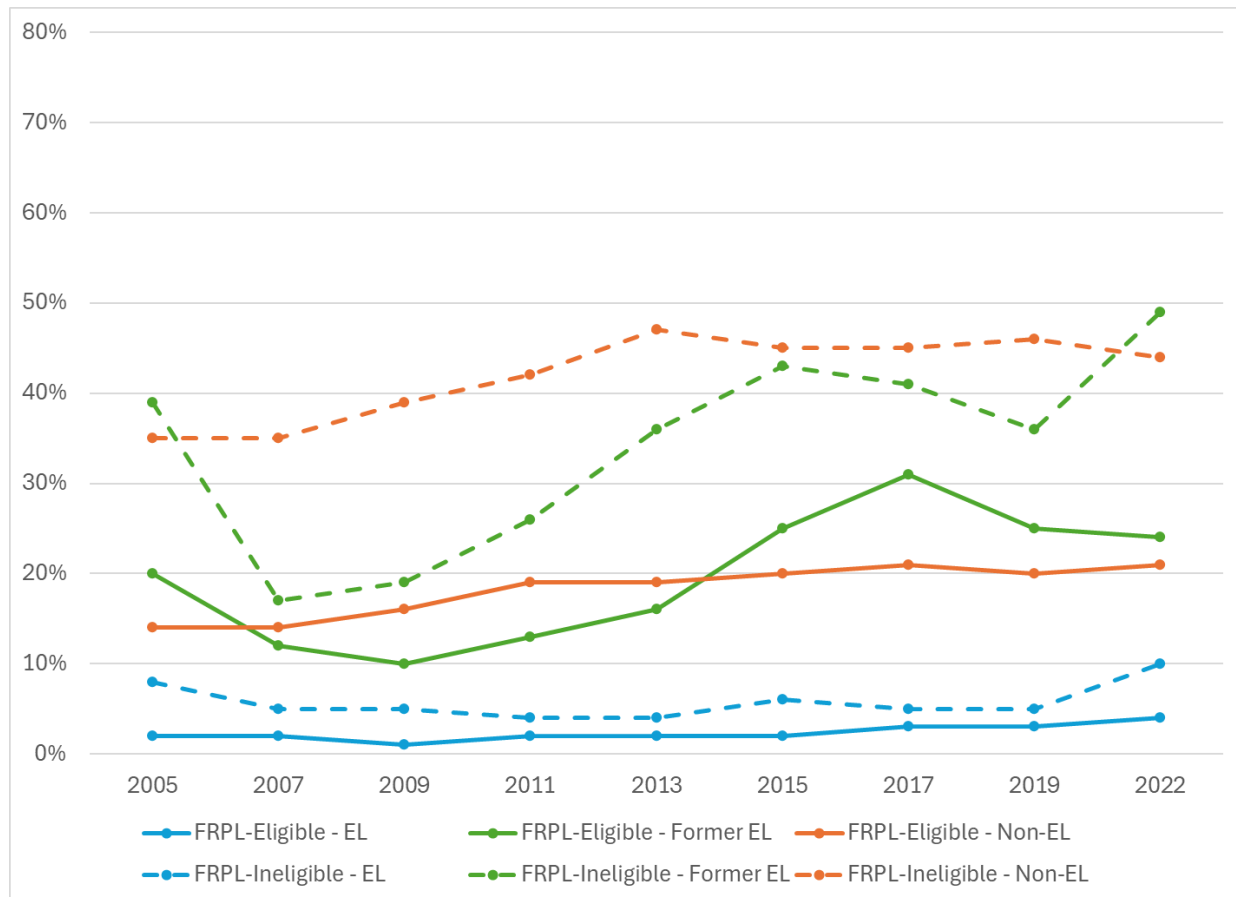
Figure 26. Percentage of Large City Grade 4 ELs, Non-ELs, and Former ELs Performing At or Above Proficient in NAEP Mathematics by FRPL-Eligibility



Grade and Subgroup		2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
FRPL-Eligible	EL	9%	11%	10%	12%	12%	13%	13%	15%	10%*
	Former EL	36%	41%	32%	36%	41%	43%	43%	46%	29%*
	Non-EL	17%	21%*	22%	25%*	26%	25%	24%	26%	18%*
FRPL-Ineligible	EL	21%	21%	20%	23%	27%	33%	14%*	31%*	22%
	Former EL	56%	73%	57%	52%	73%*	65%	52%	71%	57%
	Non-EL	49%	52%	54%	56%	63%*	61%	56%	60%	53%*

Grade 8 NAEP Reading from 2005 to 2022

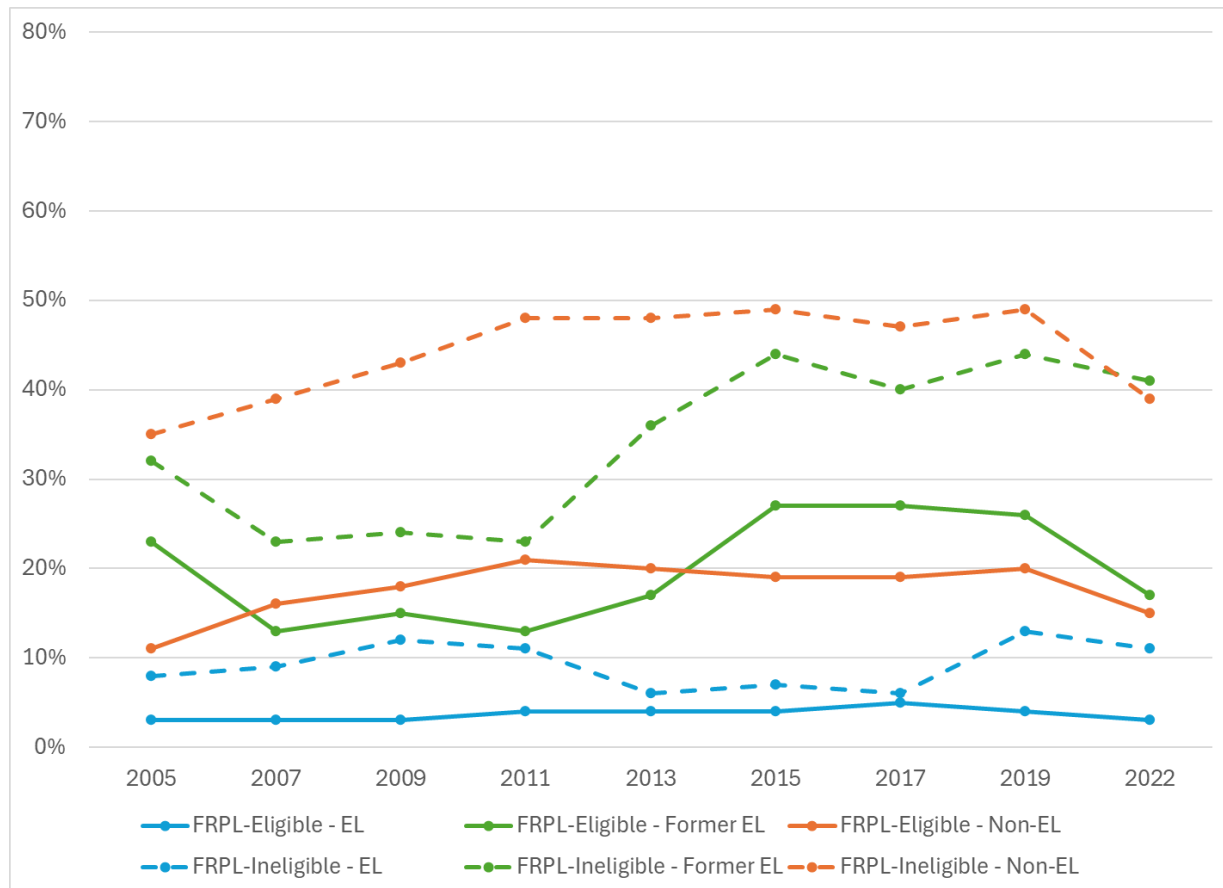
Figure 27. Percentage of Large City Grade 8 ELs, Non-ELs, and Former ELs Performing At or Above Proficient in NAEP Reading by FRPL-Eligibility



Grade and Subgroup		2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
FRPL-Eligible	EL	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%
	Former EL	20%	12%*	10%	13%	16%	25%*	31%	25%	24%
	Non-EL	14%	14%	16%*	19%*	19%	20%	21%	20%	21%
FRPL-Ineligible	EL	8%	5%	5%	4%	4%	6%	5%	5%	10%
	Former EL	39%	17%	19%	26%	36%	43%	41%	36%	49%
	Non-EL	35%	35%	39%	42%	47%*	45%	45%	46%	44%

Grade 8 NAEP Mathematics from 2005 to 2022

Figure 28. Percentage of Large City Grade 8 ELs, Non-ELs, and Former ELs Performing At or Above Proficient in NAEP Mathematics by FRPL-Eligibility



Grade and Subgroup		2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
FRPL-Eligible	EL	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
	Former EL	23%	13%*	15%	13%	17%	27%*	27%	26%	17%*
	Non-EL	11%	16%*	18%*	21%*	20%	19%	19%	20%	15%*
FRPL-Ineligible	EL	8%	9%	12%	11%	6%	7%	6%	13%	11%
	Former EL	32%	23%*	24%	23%	36%	44%	40%	44%	41%
	Non-EL	35%	39%*	43%*	48%*	48%	49%	47%	49%	39%*

Analysis of Selected CGCS Academic Key Performance Indicators

We selected a few of the Academic Key Performance Indicators to provide contextual information in examining the EL-related indicators collected through the Council’s EL survey and the federal data sources. As with the Academic KPI reports, however, the purpose of reporting on the selected indicators is to encourage districts to ask questions and consider ways to analyze their data by showing trends, further disaggregating results, and combining variables—not assessing causality.

The indicators reported in this section follow the KPI reporting conventions in which n-sizes less than 20 are not reported, except for Algebra I completion by Grade 7 or 8, for which small cohorts are common. Consistent with the data quality protocol of the Academic KPIs, districts were removed from the data set when data were missing or could not be confirmed. We examined the following Academic KPIs—

- ***Absentee rates by selected grade levels.*** From the attendance measures collected through the Academic KPIs, we analyzed absentee rates for ELs in Grades 3, 6, and 9 who were absent between 10 and 20 or more days. The KPI survey reported cumulative absences across the following ranges: 5 to 9 days, 10 to 19 days, and 20 or more days.
- ***Failure of one or more courses in Grade 9.*** Among the secondary achievement indicators collected through the Academic KPIs, we examined the percentage of ELs who failed one or more core courses in Grade 9.
- ***Algebra 1 or equivalent course completion by Grade 9.*** We also reviewed the percentage of first-time ninth-grade ELs who successfully completed Algebra I, Integrated Math, or an equivalent course by the end of seventh, eighth, or ninth grade.
- ***AP course participation in Grades 9 through 12.*** Another secondary achievement indicator we examined was the ratio of AP exams taken per EL enrolled in AP. Additionally, we examined the percentage of ELs scoring three or higher on AP exams.
- ***High school 4-year and 5-year graduation rates.*** Finally, we reviewed both the 4-year and 5-year graduation rates for ELs.

For each of the Academic KPIs, we display the district-specific data for SY 2022-23. For a smaller number of districts that provided complete data for three consecutive years, we calculated trends in the aggregate from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 on each of the selected indicators.

Absences

Figure 29 shows how 52 districts compare on their rates for grade 3 ELs and non-ELs chronically absent between 10 and 19 or 20+ days. The bars to the left of 0 percent on the x-axis represent the absence rates for non-ELs and the bars to the right of the 0 percent represent the absence rates for ELs. Districts are ranked by the percentage of ELs absent between 10 to 19 days.

Figure 29. Grade 3 Chronic Absences by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 52)
 Sorted by Percentage of ELs Absent 10-19 Days

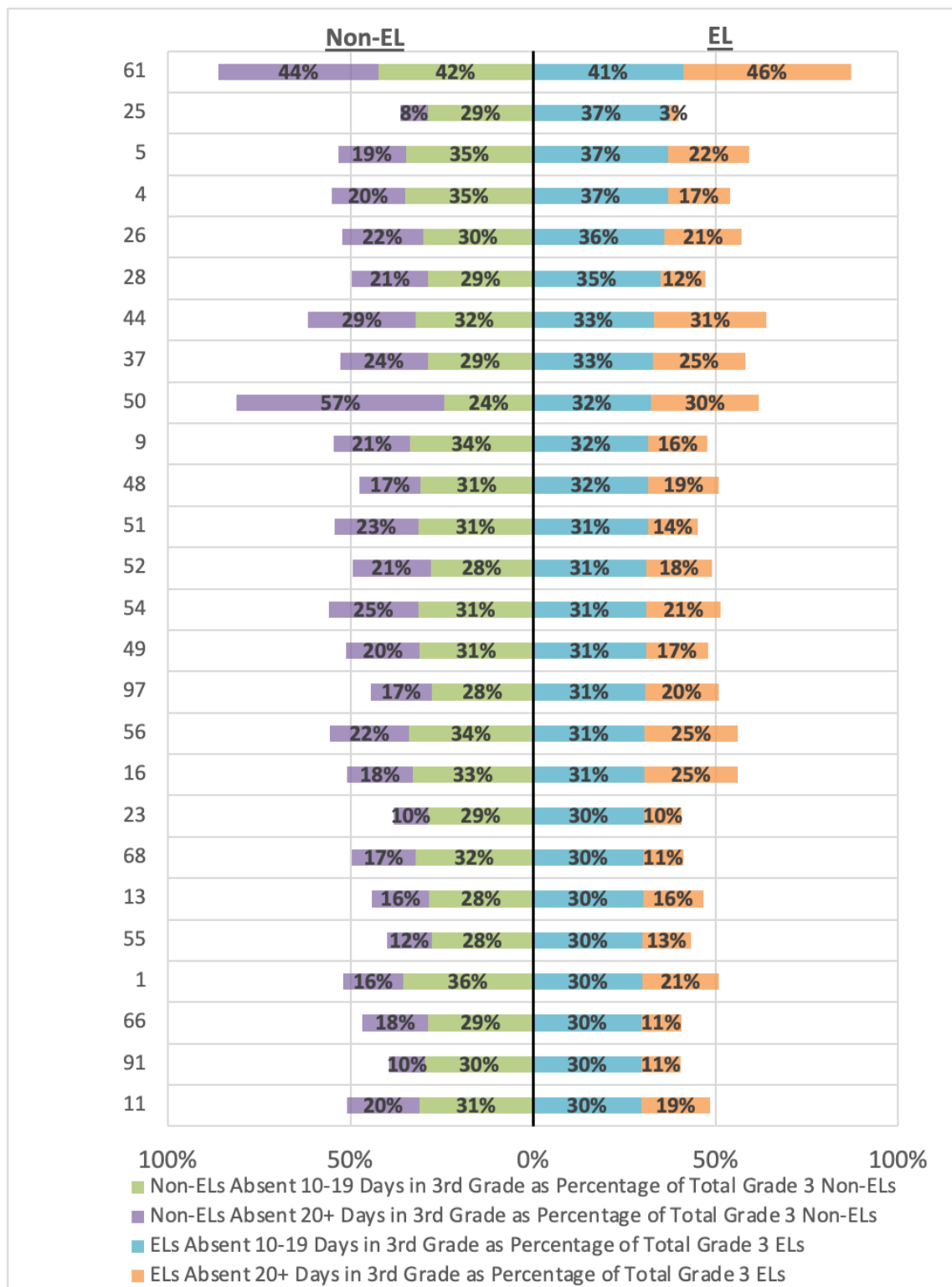


Figure 29. Grade 3 Chronic Absences by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 52), continued
 Sorted by Percentage of ELs Absent 10-19 Days

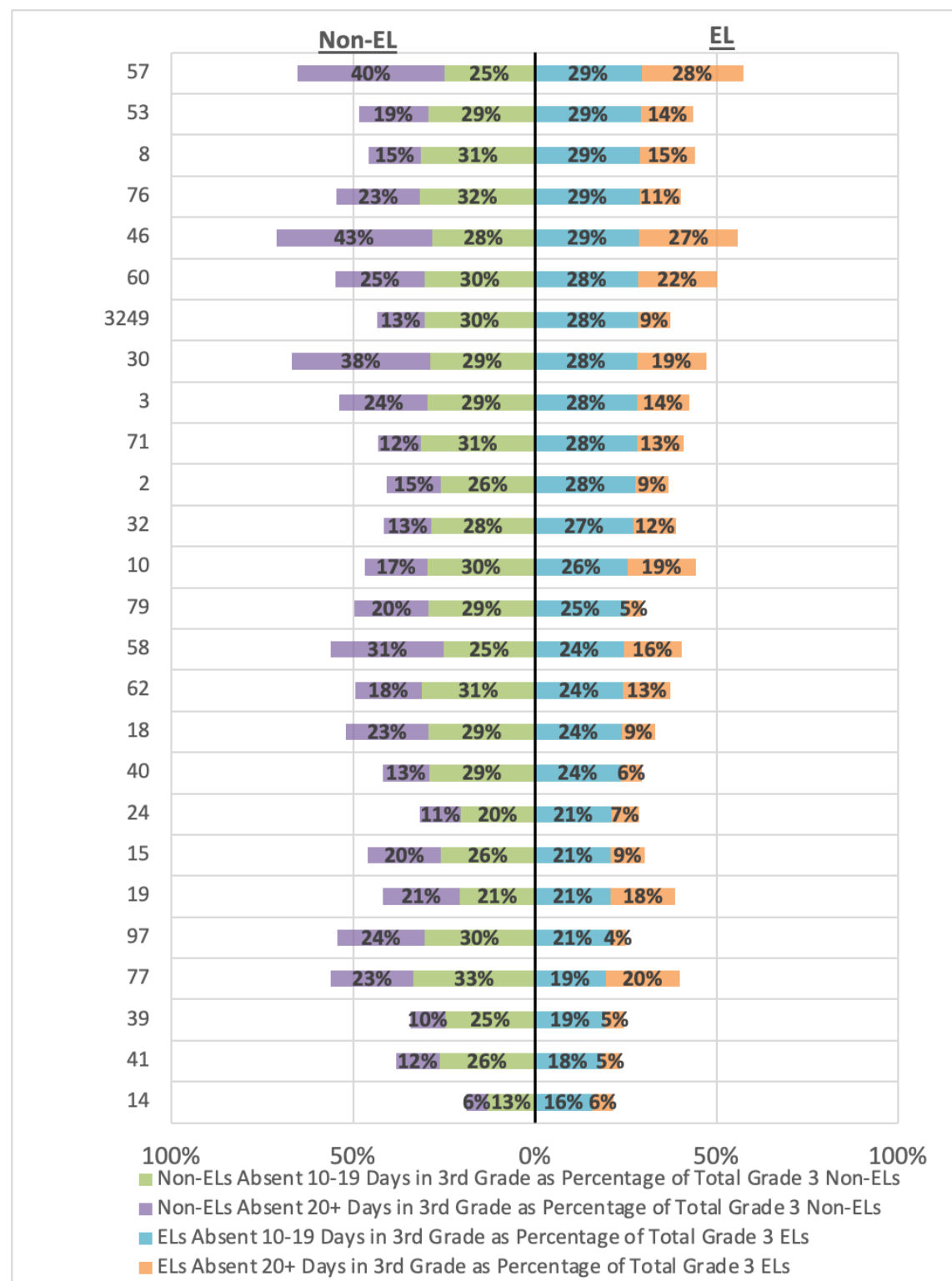


Figure 30 shows a comparison of three-year rates of absence for ELs and non-ELs for a total of 42 districts that had complete data for all three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23.

Figure 30. Percentage of Grade 3 Students Chronically Absent by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 42)

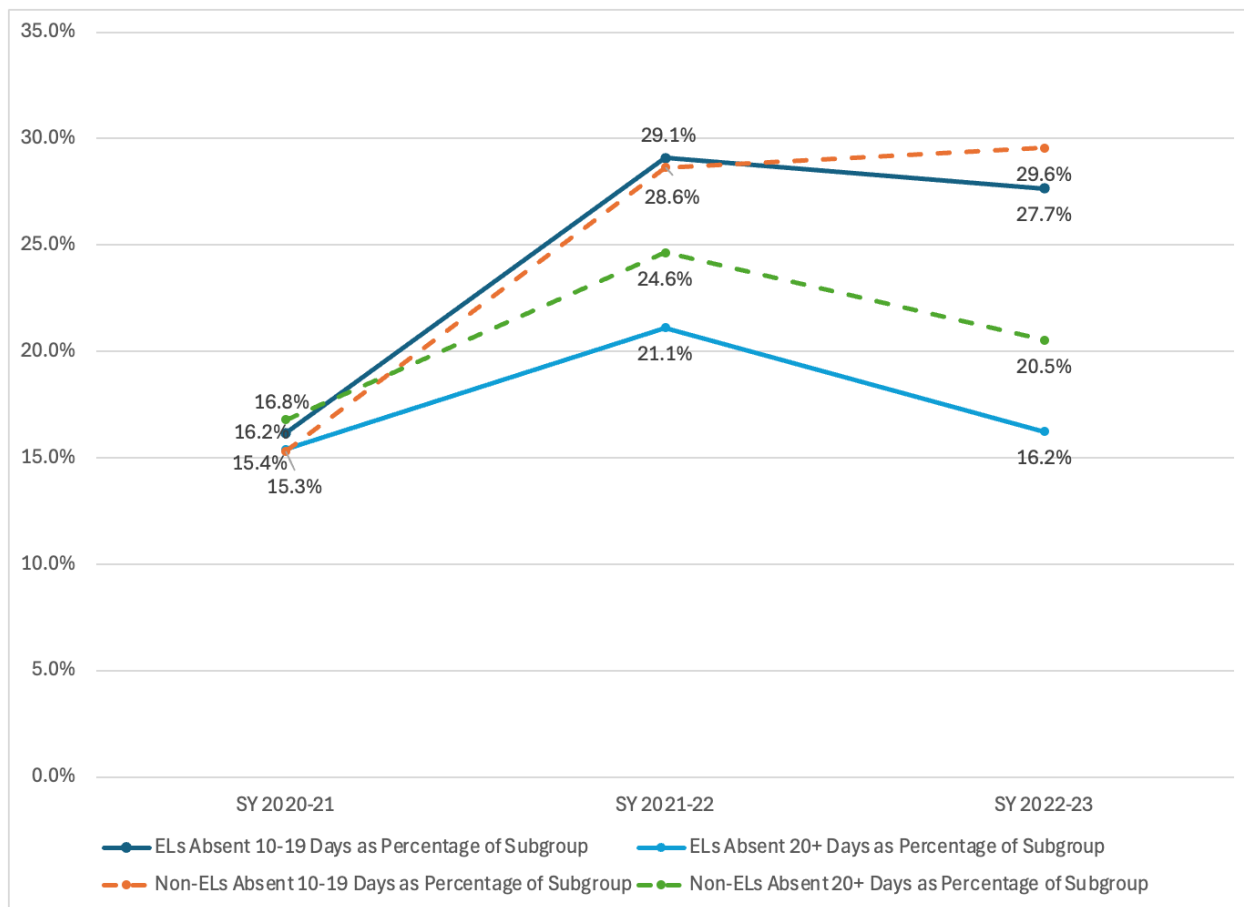


Figure 31 shows how 52 districts compare on rates for ELs and non-ELs in grade 6 who were chronically absent between 10 and 19 or 20+ days. The bars to the left of 0 percent on the x-axis represent the absence rates for non-ELs and the bars to the right of 0 percent represent the absent rates for ELs. Districts are ranked by the percentage of ELs absent between 10 to 19 days.

Figure 31. Grade 6 Chronic Absences by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N =52)

Sorted by Percentage of ELs Absent 10-19 Days

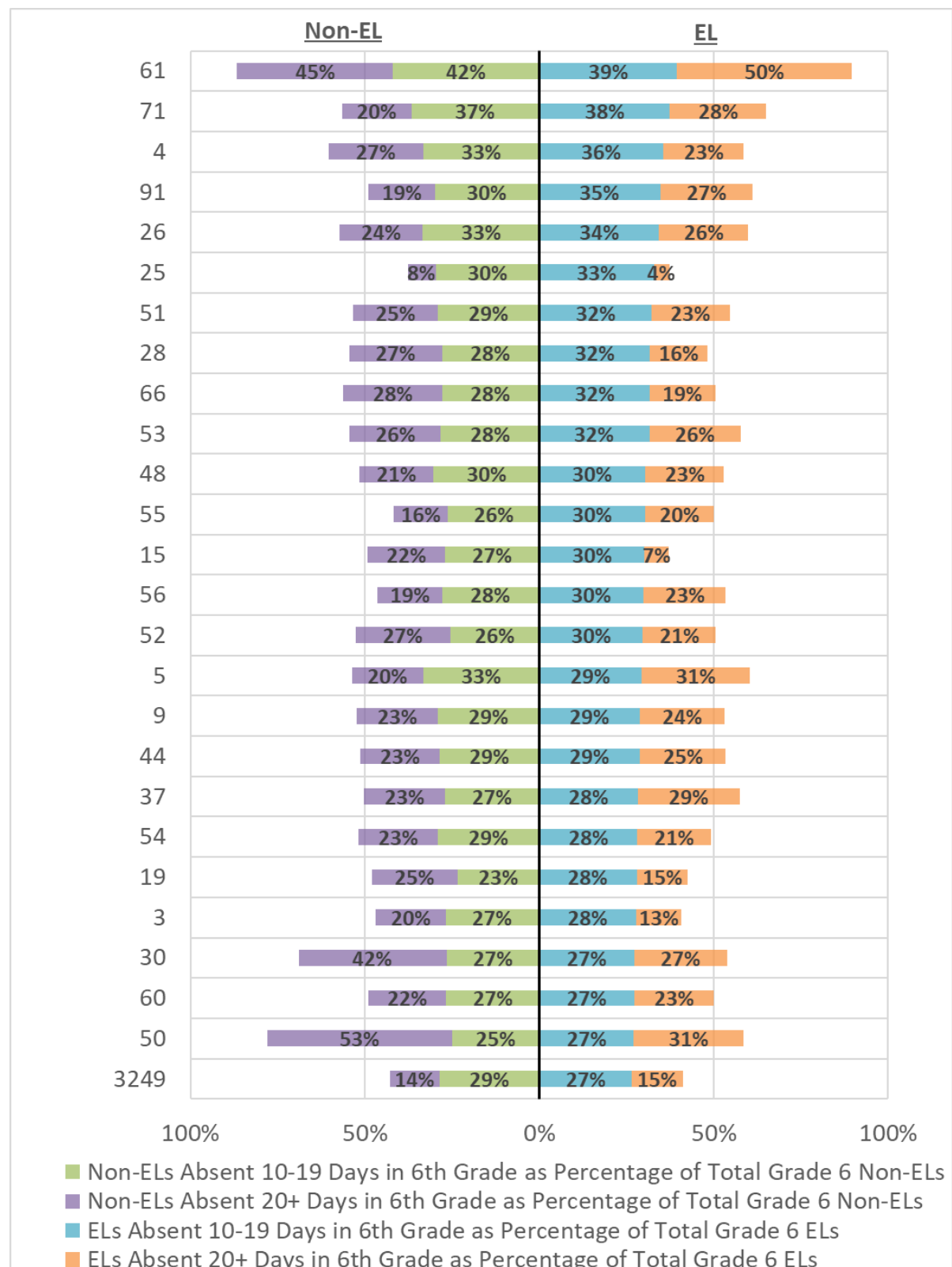


Figure 31. Grade 6 Chronic Absences by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N =52), continued
 Sorted by Percentage of ELs Absent 10-19 Days

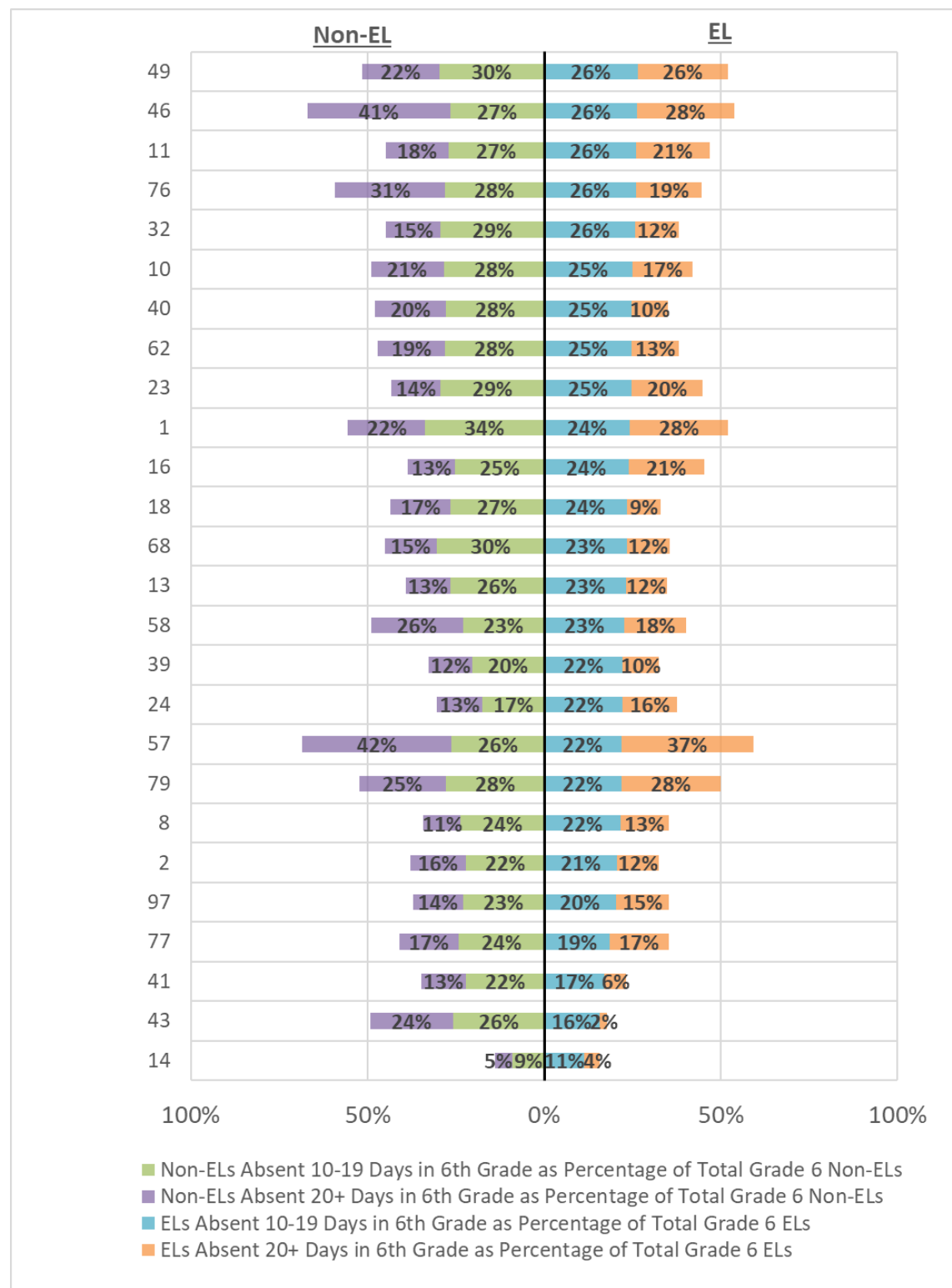


Figure 32 compares three-year rates of absence for ELs and non-ELs for 42 districts that reported data for all three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23.

Figure 32. Percentage of Grade 6 Students Chronically Absent by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 42)

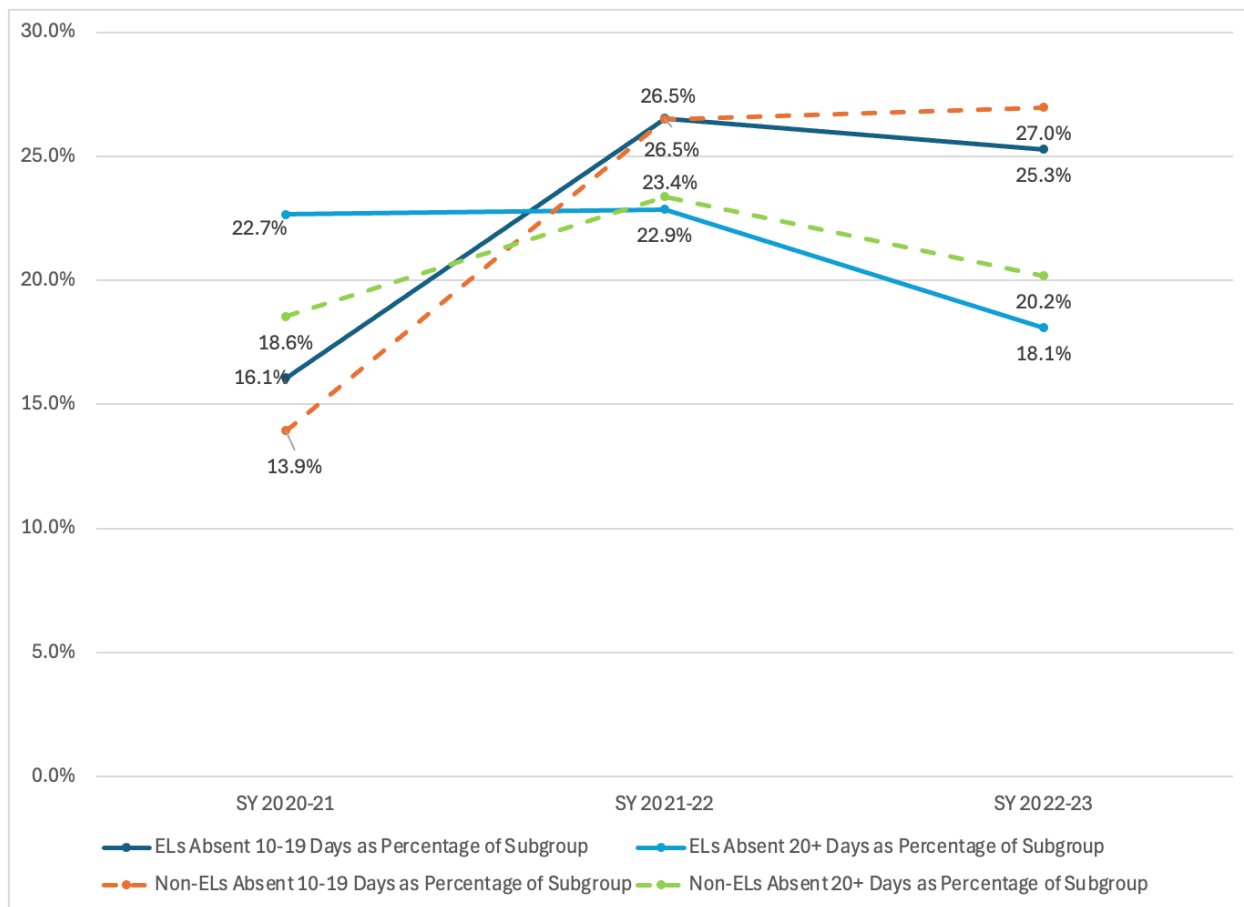


Figure 33 compares 52 districts on rates for ELs and non-ELs in Grade 9 who were chronically absent between 10 and 19 or 20+ days in SY 2022-23. The bars to the left of 0 percent on the x-axis represent the absence rates for non-ELs and the bars to the right of 0 percent represent the absence rates for ELs. Districts are ranked by the percentage of ELs absent between 10 to 19 days.

Figure 33. Grade 9 Chronic Absences by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 52)

Sorted by Percentage of ELs Absent 10-19 Days

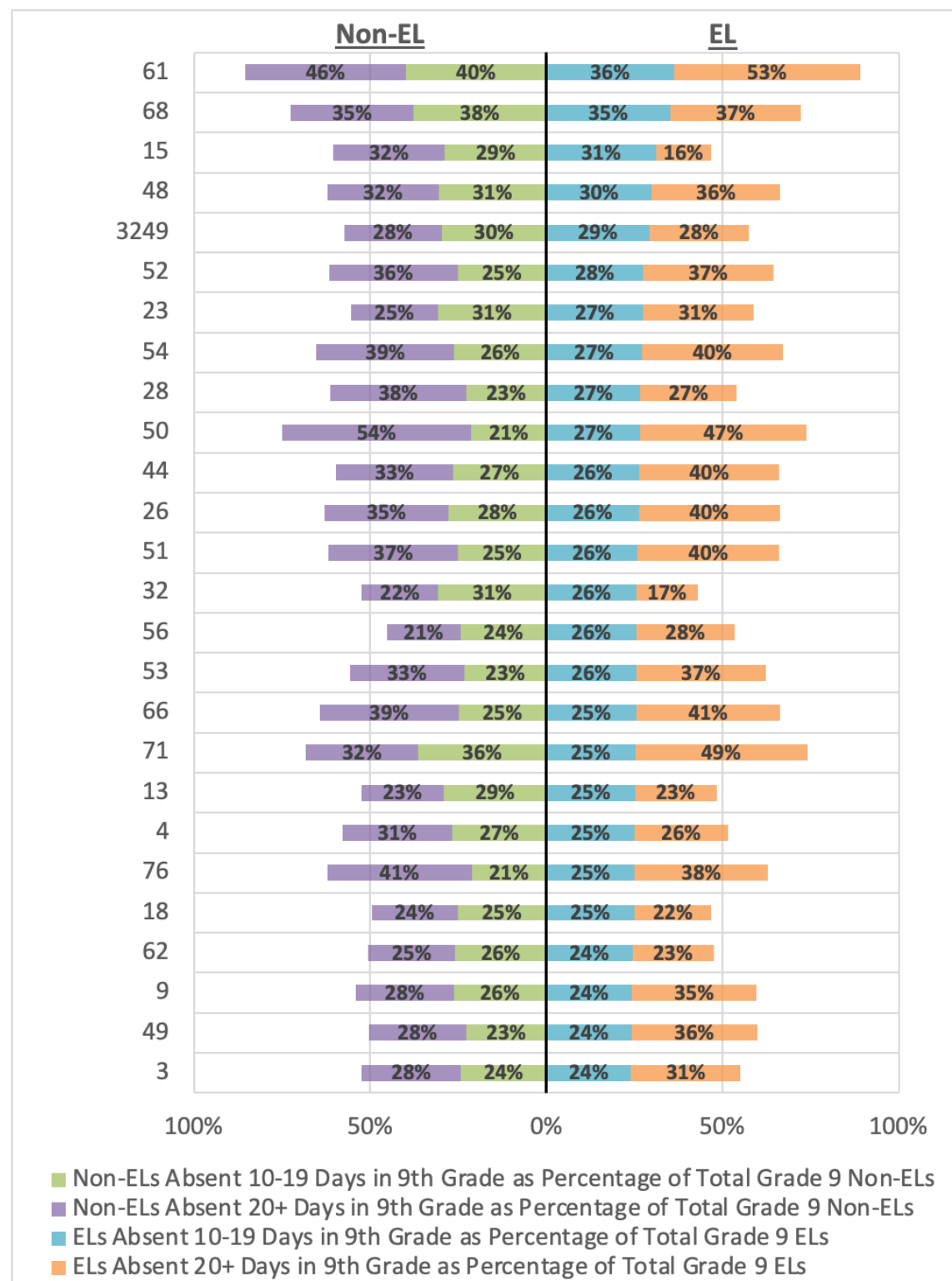


Figure 33. Grade 9 Chronic Absences by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 52), continued
 Sorted by Percentage of ELs Absent 10-19 Days

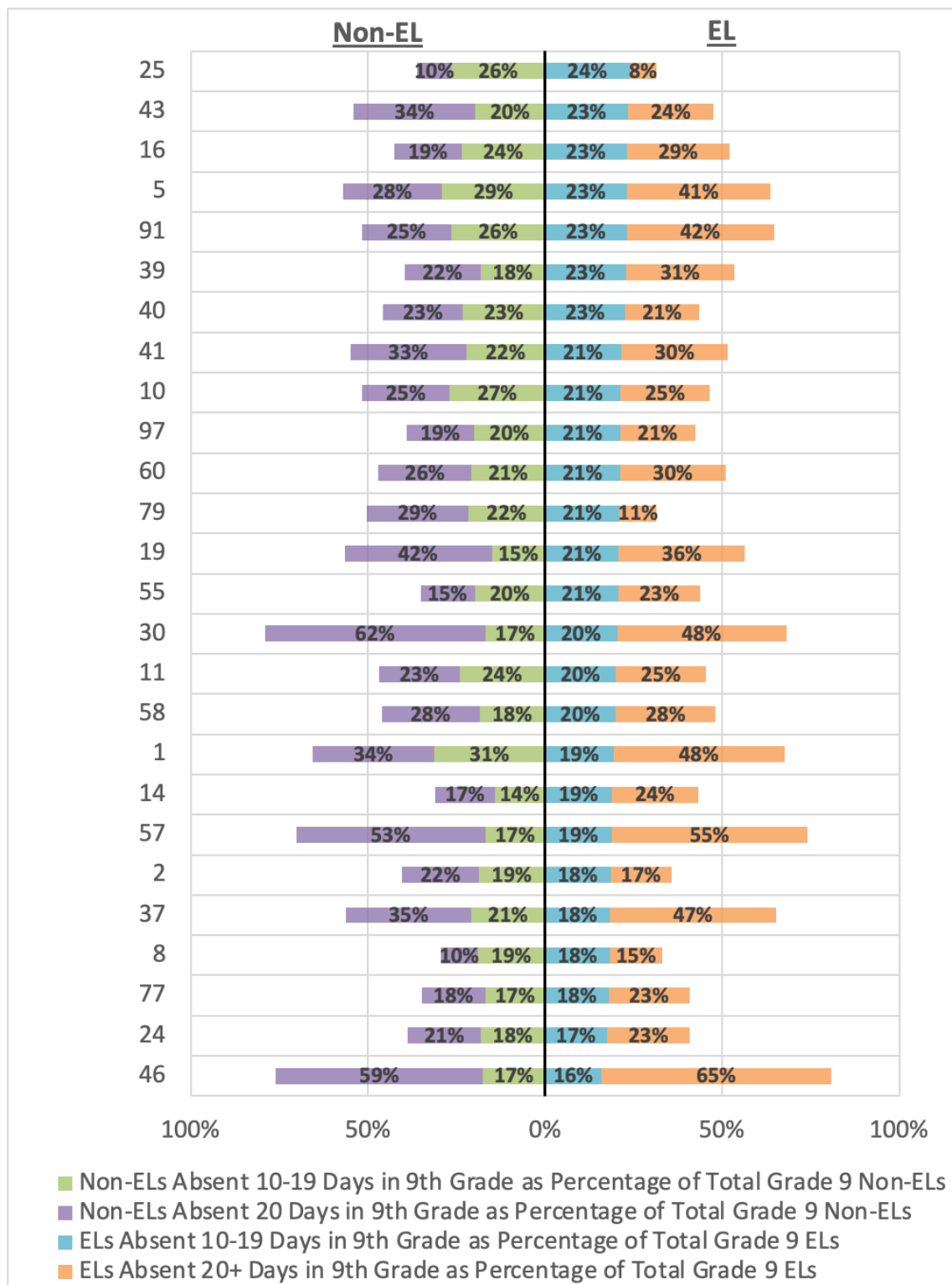
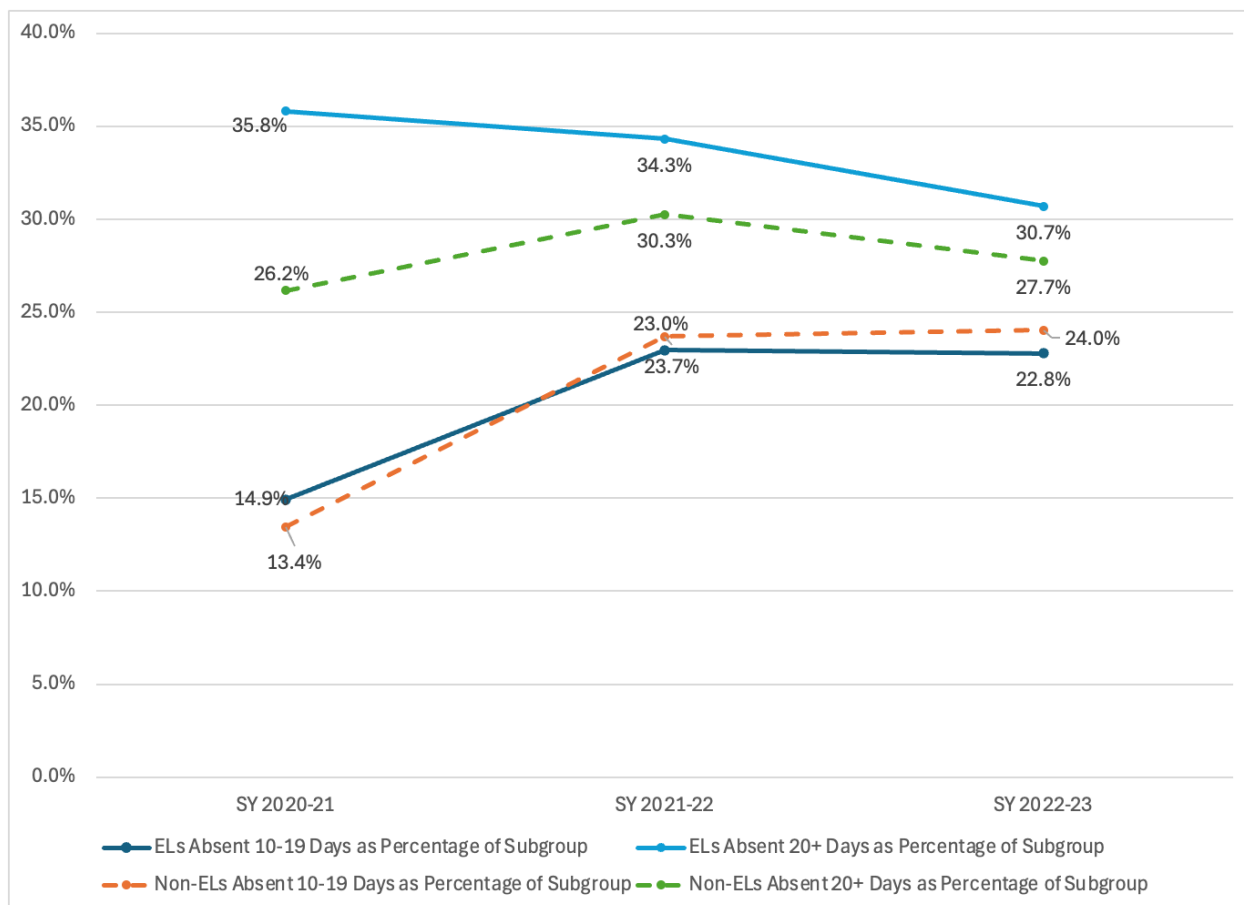


Figure 34 compares rates of absence for ELs and non-ELs for 41 districts that reported data for all three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23.

Figure 34. Percentage of Grade 9 Students Chronically Absent by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 41)



Failure of One or More Courses in Grade 9

Figure 35 compares 52 districts on the percentage of ELs and non-ELs who have failed one or more core courses in grade 9 during SY 2022-23. Data are sorted by the percentage of ELs in grade 9 with one or more course failures. Due to the variability in how districts report course failure data, these charts should be interpreted with caution. The data and charts are intended to prompt further inquiry by districts as they examine their data more closely.

**Figure 35. Failure of One or More Core Courses by Grade 9 ELs and Non-ELs, SY 2022-23
(N = 52)**

Sorted by Percentage of ELs Failing Grade 9 Course

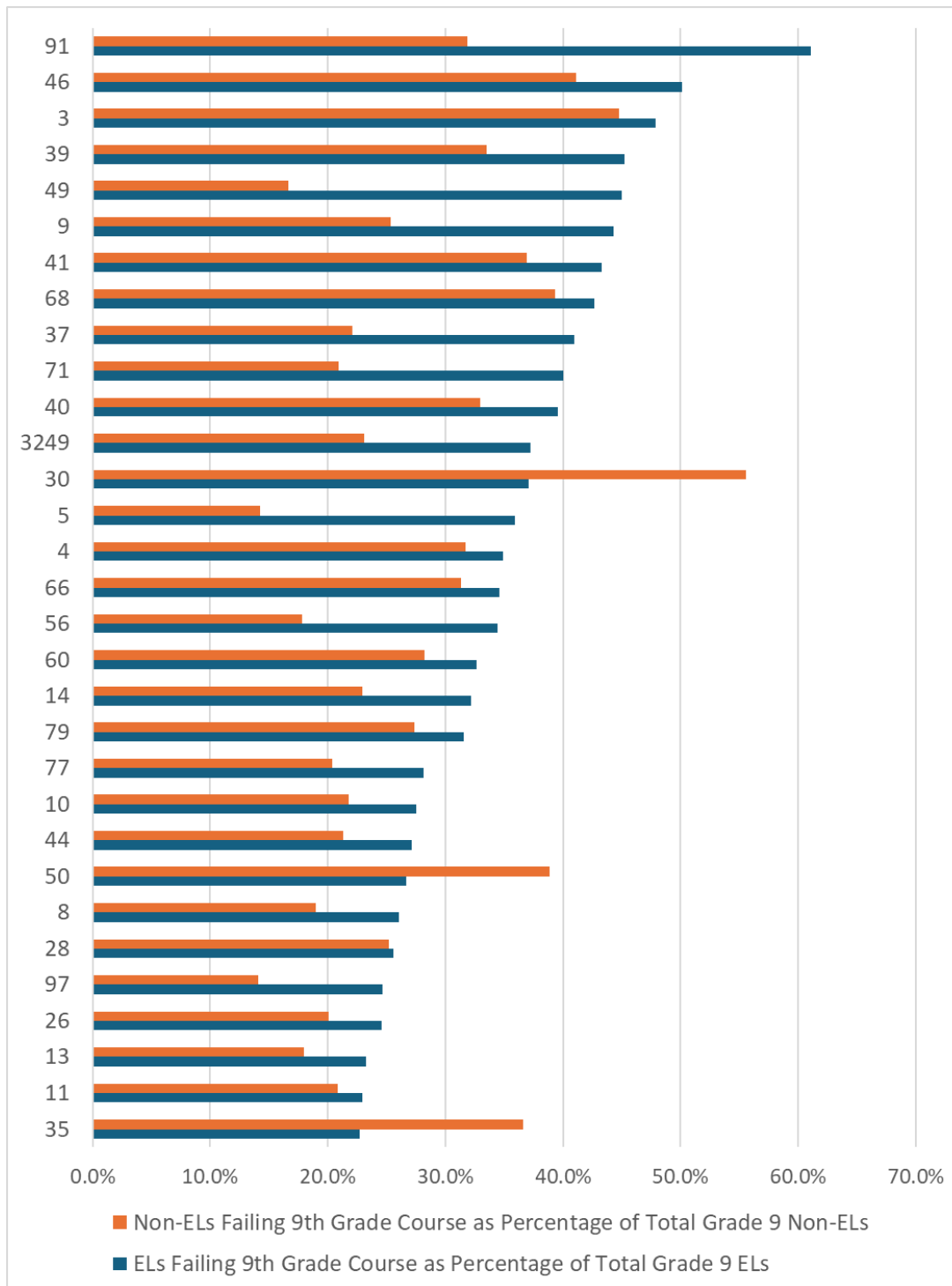


Figure 35. Failure of One or More Core Courses by Grade 9 ELs and Non-ELs, SY 2022-23 (N = 52), continued

Sorted by Percentage of ELs Failing Grade 9 Course

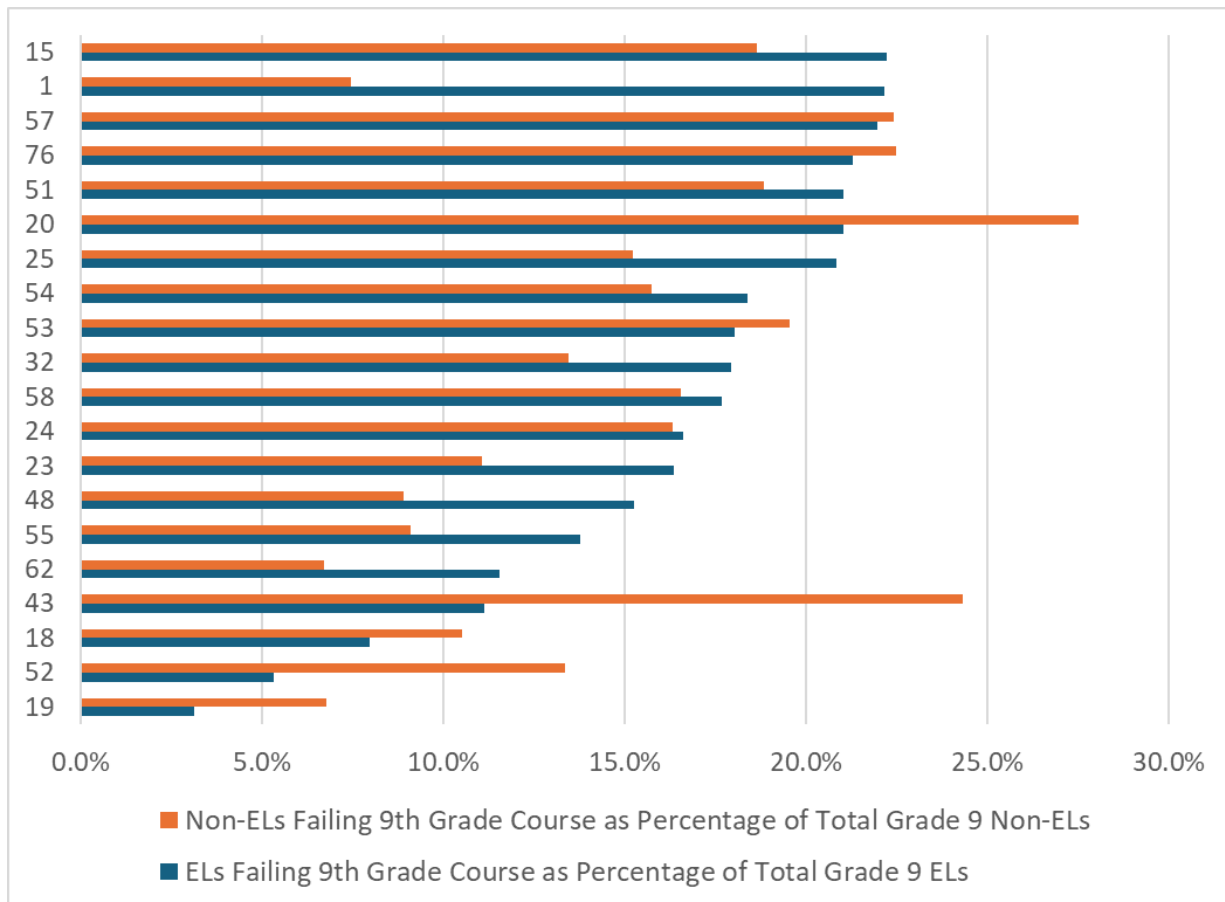
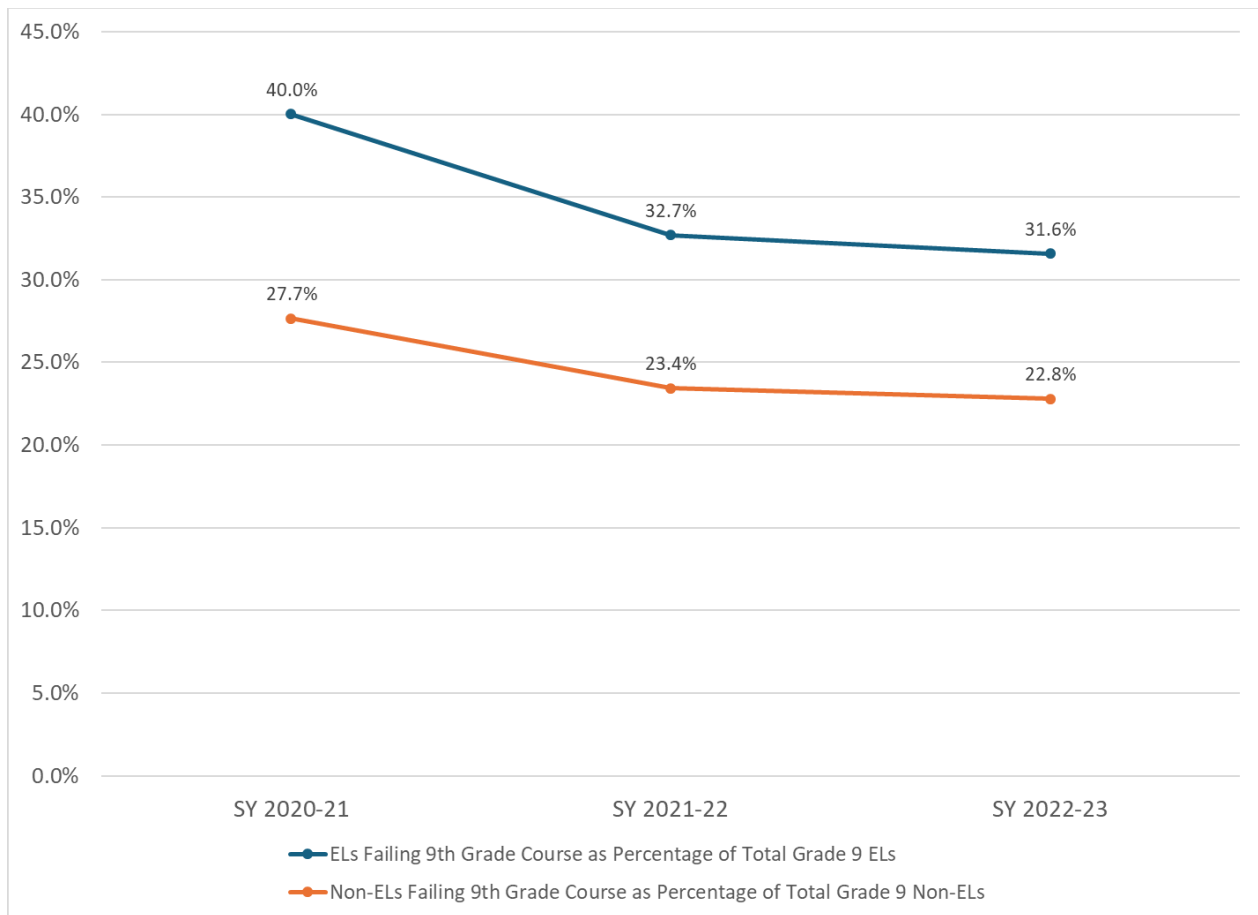


Figure 36 compares the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in grade 9 who failed one or more core courses over the three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 for the 43 districts that reported data for all three years.

Figure 36. Percentage of Grade 9 Students Failing One or More Core Courses by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 43)



Algebra I or Equivalent Course Completion by First-Time Grade 9 Students

Figure 37 illustrates how 46 districts compare on the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in SY 2022-23 who successfully completed Algebra I or an equivalent course by the end of grades 7, 8, or 9. Data are sorted by the percentage of ELs completing Algebra I. Data show that the vast majority of ELs who successfully completed Algebra I did so by the end of grade 9.

Figure 37. Algebra I or Equivalent Course Completion by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 46)
 Sorted by Percentage of ELs who Completed Algebra I

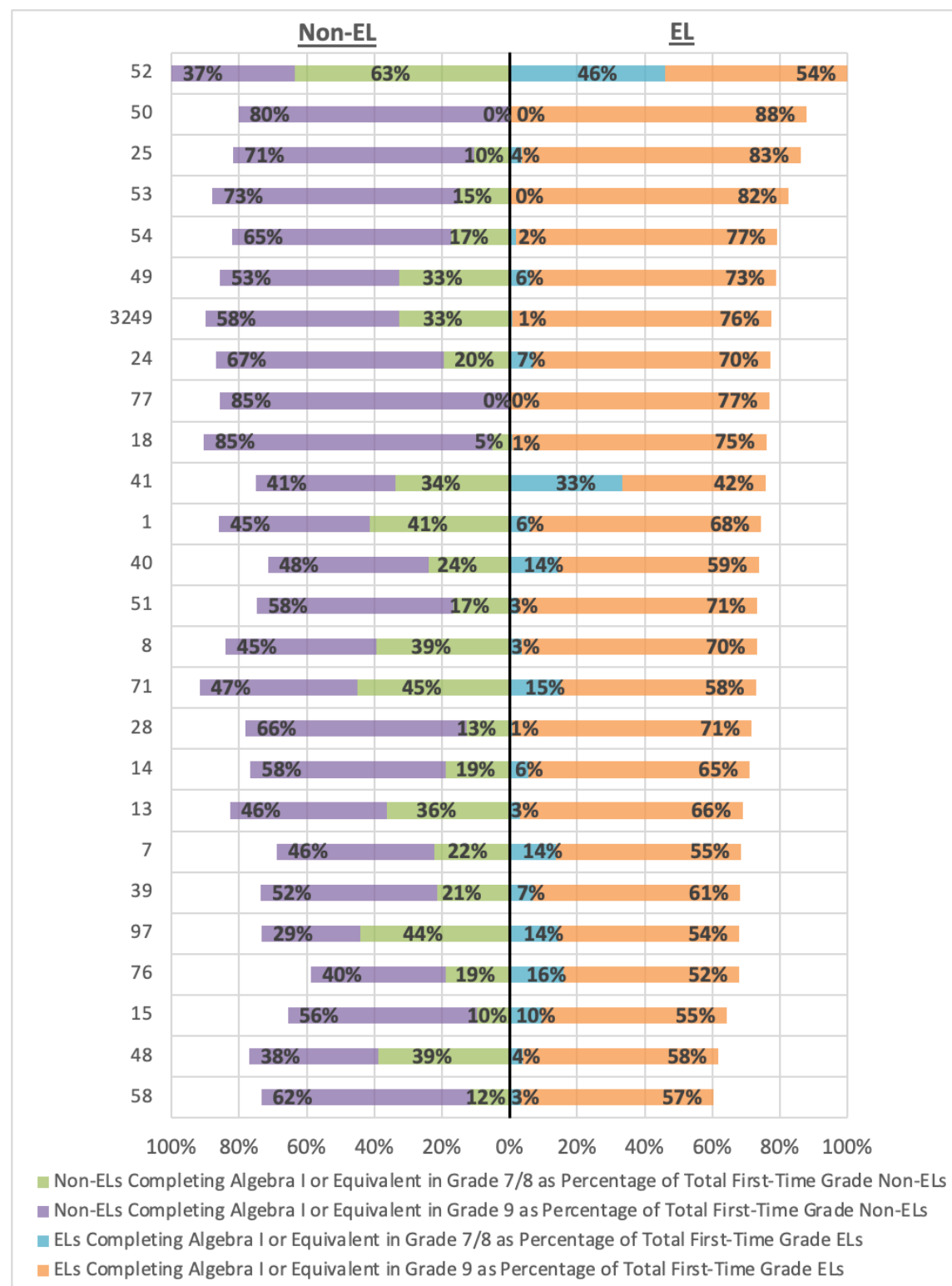


Figure 37. Algebra I or Equivalent Course Completion by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 46), continued

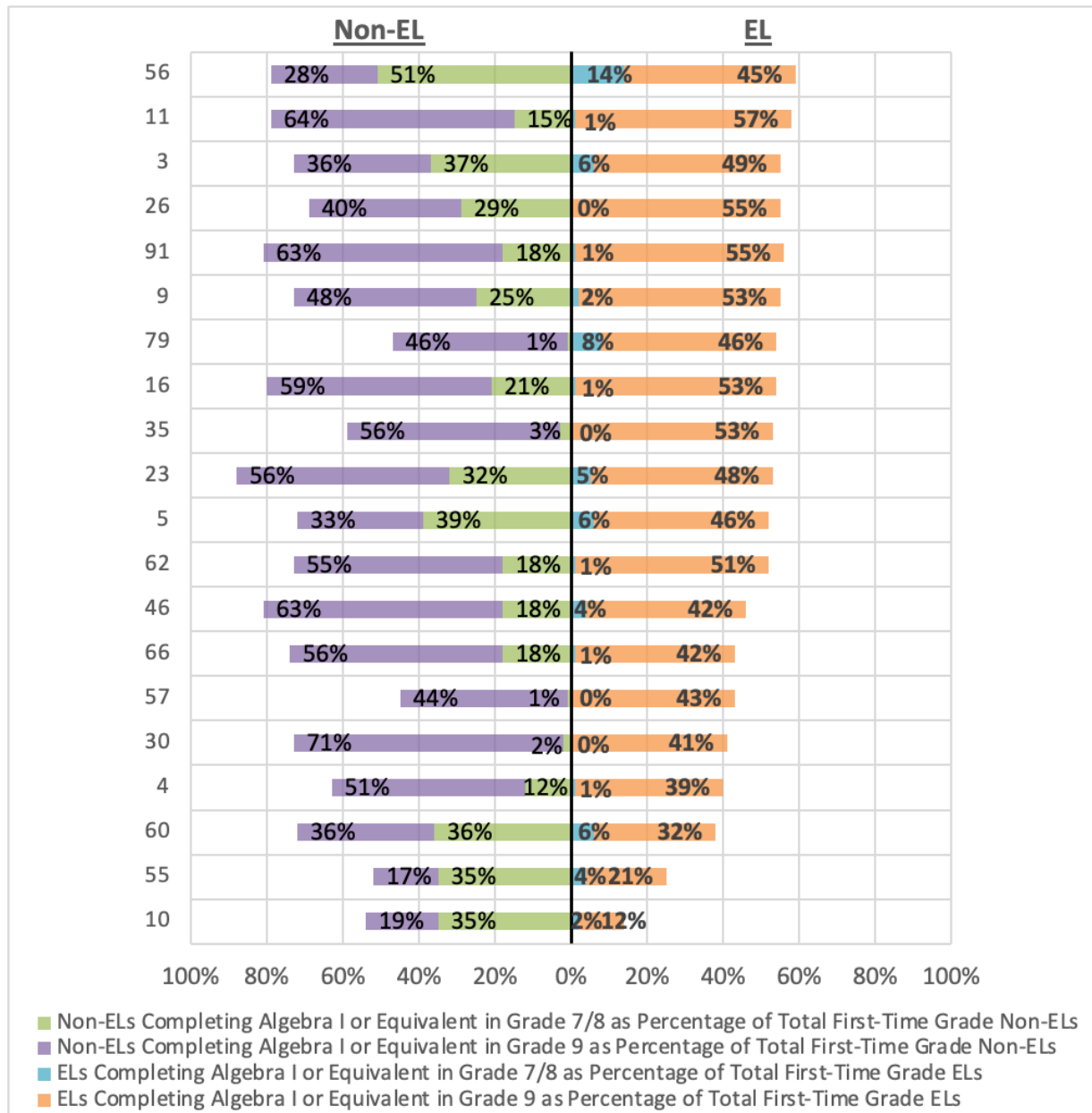
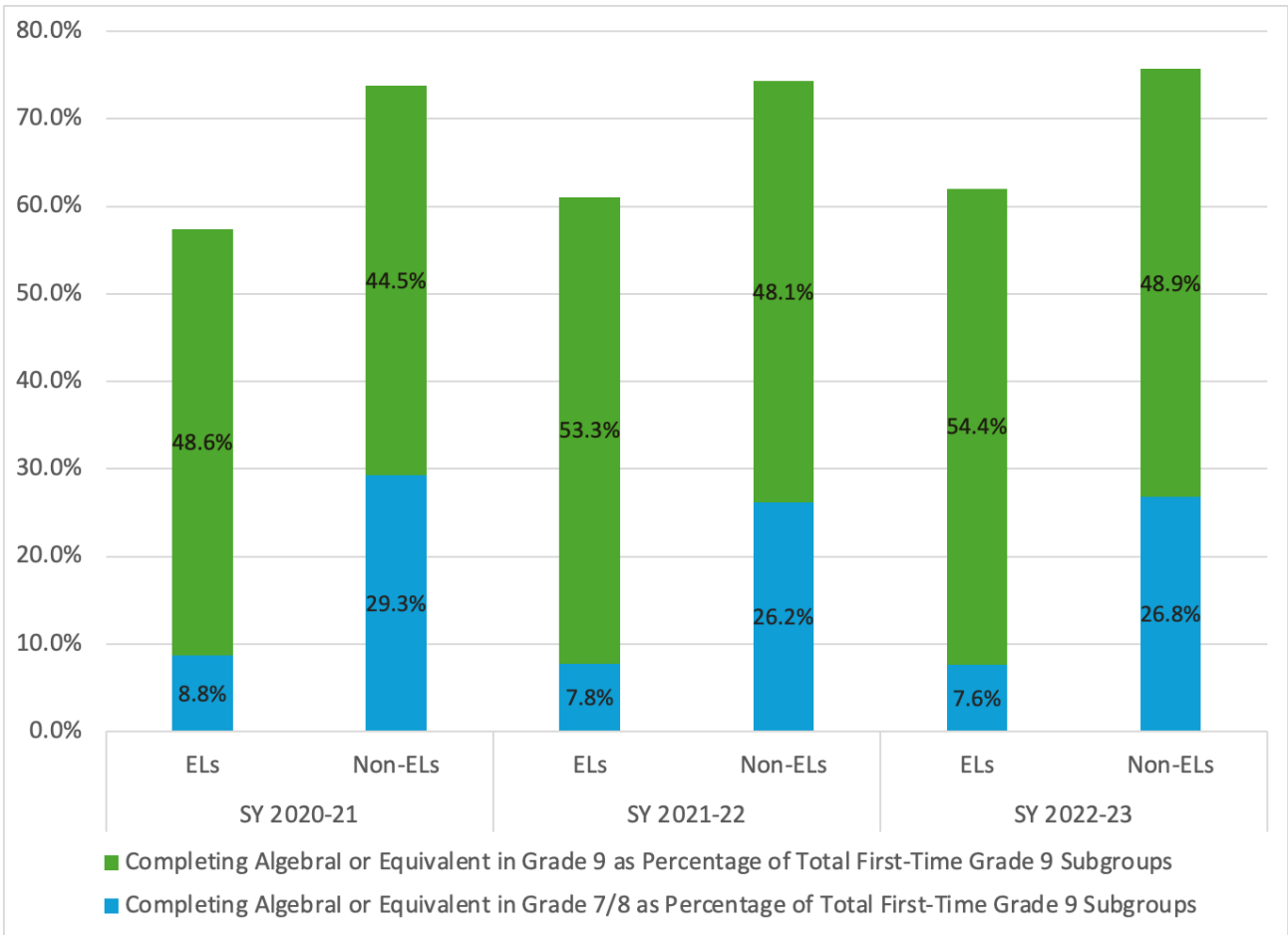


Figure 38 compares the percentage of ELs and non-ELs who completed Algebra I or an equivalent course by grade 9 over three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23. The aggregate figures include data from 38 member districts that provided complete data for all three years.

Figure 38. Percentage of First-Time Grade 9 Students Completing Algebra I or Equivalent by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 38)



AP Participation by Students in Grades 9 through 12

Figure 39 compares 47 districts on the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in grades 9 through 12 who have taken one or more AP courses during SY 2022-23. Data are sorted by the AP percentage of ELs.

Figure 39. Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 47)
Sorted by ELs Taking AP Percentage

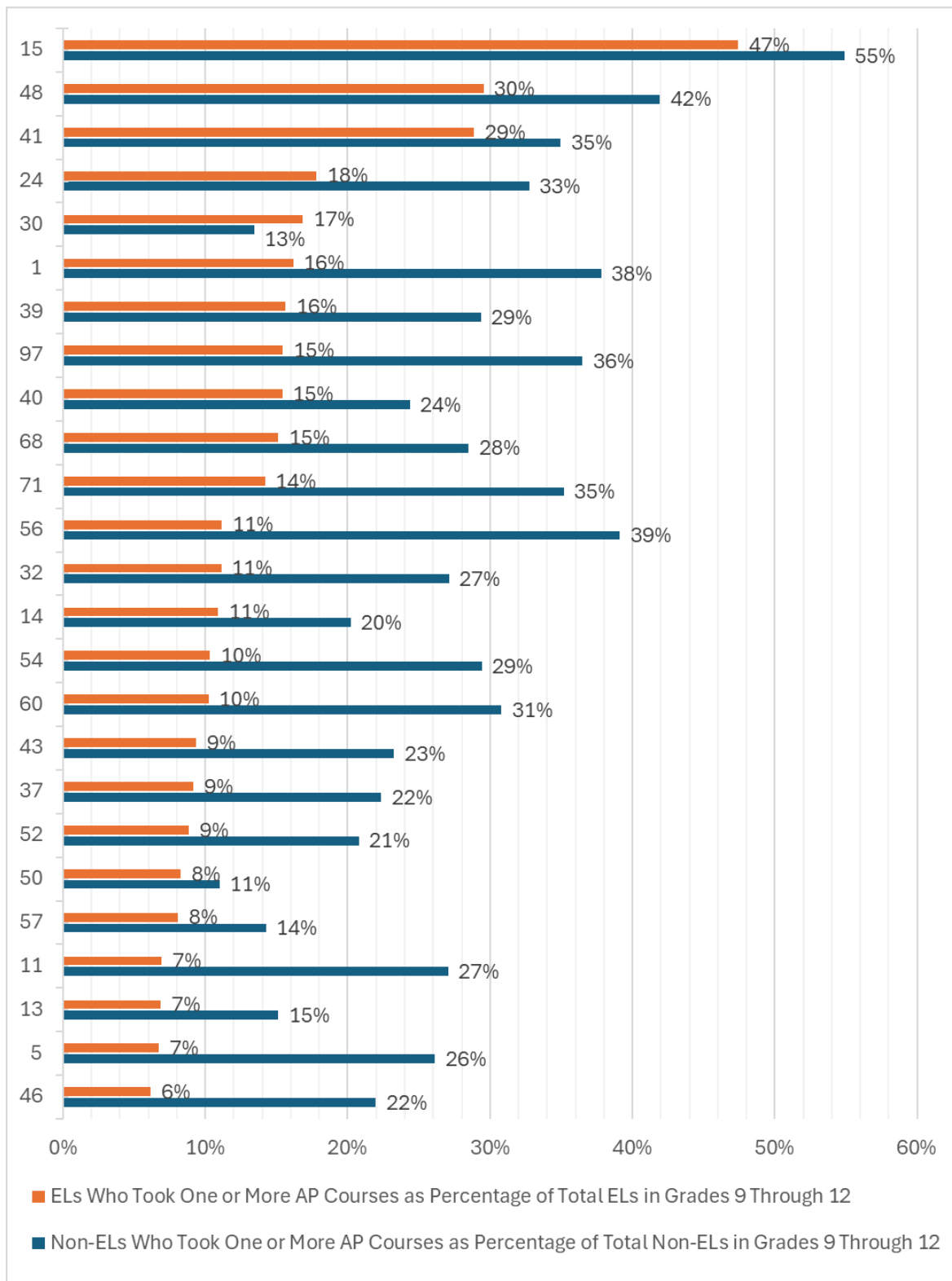


Figure 39. Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 47), continued

Sorted by ELs Taking AP Percentage

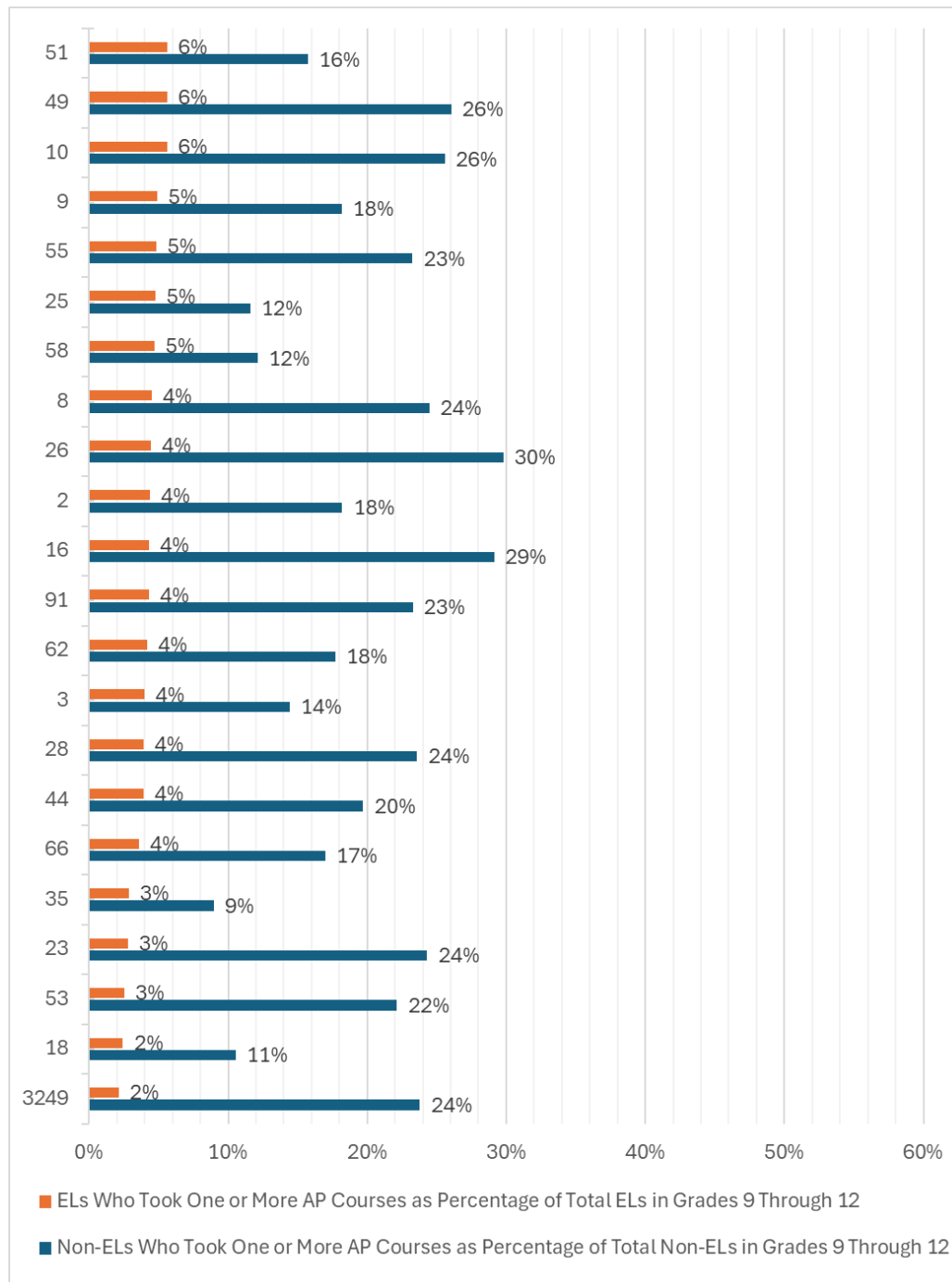


Figure 40 compares the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in grades 9 through 12 who took one or more AP core courses over the three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 for the 44 districts that reported for all three years.

Figure 40. Percentage of Grade 9-12 Students Taking One or More AP Courses by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 44)

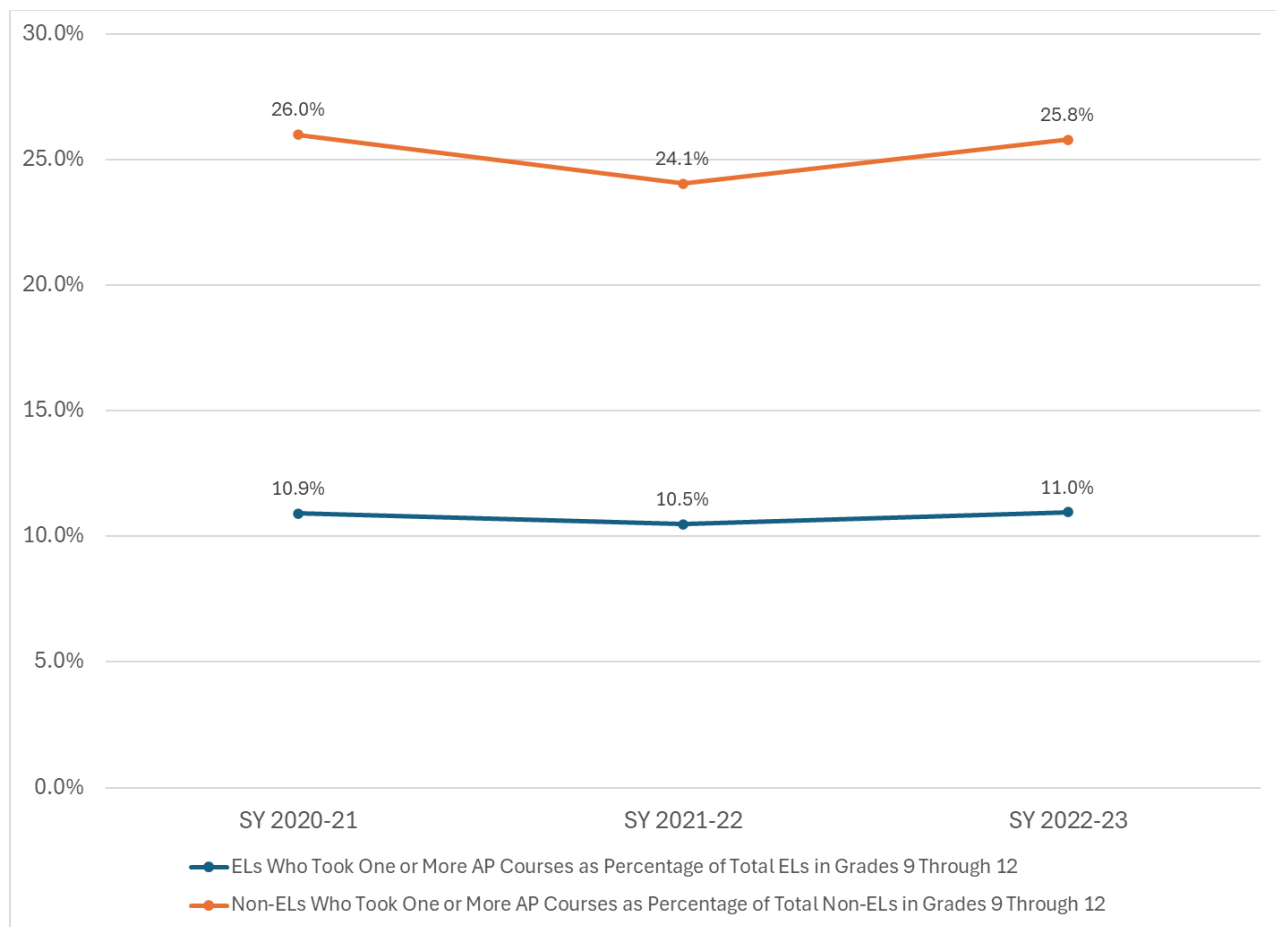


Table 17 compares the total number of AP exams taken, the number of students enrolled in one or more AP courses, and the ratio of AP exams taken per student taking one or more AP courses for ELs and non-ELs in grades 9 through 12 during SY 2022-23, for 58 districts. The exams taken per student ratio helps assess the extent to which students who enroll in AP courses follow through with taking AP exams, which can indicate differences in academic readiness, support, or confidence between ELs and non-ELs.

Table 17. Number of AP Exams per Grade 9-12 EL and Non-EL Student in One or More AP Courses, SY 2022-23 (N=58)

Sorted by EL Number of AP Exams Taken per Student

District	Number of AP Exams		Number of Students in AP Courses		AP Exams Taken per Student Ratio	
	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL
58	677	10,860	349	4,525	1.9	2.4
23	57	5,939	32	3,230	1.8	1.8
62	140	5,491	105	1,973	1.3	2.8
39	3,292	20,436	2,480	12,450	1.3	1.6
68	924	6,407	718	4,077	1.3	1.6
55	424	18,897	332	10,387	1.3	1.8
26	230	6,147	185	3,527	1.2	1.7
44	110	14,528	89	7,097	1.2	2.0
50	212	1,521	174	1,465	1.2	1.0
54	2,201	41,380	1,874	25,911	1.2	1.6
20	28	3,205	24	1,568	1.2	2.0
49	101	10,593	93	5,791	1.1	1.8
77	286	8,680	268	4,666	1.1	1.9
35	74	891	70	811	1.1	1.1
25	103	1,452	98	1,001	1.1	1.5
32	1,627	47,344	1,574	26,559	1.0	1.8
13	368	24,338	368	12,590	1.0	1.9
40	1,290	5,942	1,300	4,013	1.0	1.5
41	5,529	13,486	5,841	8,460	0.9	1.6
28	17	4,712	18	3,331	0.9	1.4
2	50	1,692	53	902	0.9	1.9
51	178	1,296	190	1,044	0.9	1.2
10	167	28,807	183	17,586	0.9	1.6
56	244	14,450	272	7,680	0.9	1.9
9	653	23,950	734	17,085	0.9	1.4
18	53	4,193	60	3,159	0.9	1.3
461	680	10,715	809	6,051	0.8	1.8
3249	25	4,691	30	2,981	0.8	1.6
60	3,533	109,800	4,291	77,822	0.8	1.4
97	237	16,998	289	11,551	0.8	1.5
91	89	6,018	111	4,269	0.8	1.4
15	49	2,905	65	3,457	0.8	0.8
5	59	4,396	79	3,713	0.7	1.2
46	105	4,513	148	4,590	0.7	1.0
37	505	8,755	745	6,042	0.7	1.4

Table 17. Number of AP Exams per Grade 9-12 EL and Non-EL Student in One or More AP Courses, SY 2022-23 (N=58), continued

District	Number of AP Exams		Number of Students in AP Courses		AP Exams Taken per Student Ratio	
	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL	EL	Non-EL
48	1,205	35,490	1,807	27,660	0.7	1.3
30	340	1,506	516	2,436	0.7	0.6
53	70	7,833	107	6,225	0.7	1.3
14	332	4,319	517	4,352	0.6	1.0
8	180	23,469	293	12,615	0.6	1.9
43	27	1,522	44	1,591	0.6	1.0
52	101	1,557	167	1,812	0.6	0.9
16	87	9,399	144	7,620	0.6	1.2
11	646	33,980	1,104	31,974	0.6	1.1
3	66	1,637	120	1,196	0.6	1.4
66	49	3,135	90	2,395	0.5	1.3
24	111	4,326	221	4,432	0.5	1.0
57	48	1,236	119	1,703	0.4	0.7
1	63	6,058	298	5,637	0.2	1.1
4	2	518	50	1,254	0.0	0.4

Figure 41 shows the *AP Exams Taken per Student* ratio from Table 17.

Figure 41. AP Exams Taken per Student Enrolled in AP Courses by EL Status, SY 2022-23
(N = 50)

Sorted by Number of AP Exams Taken per EL

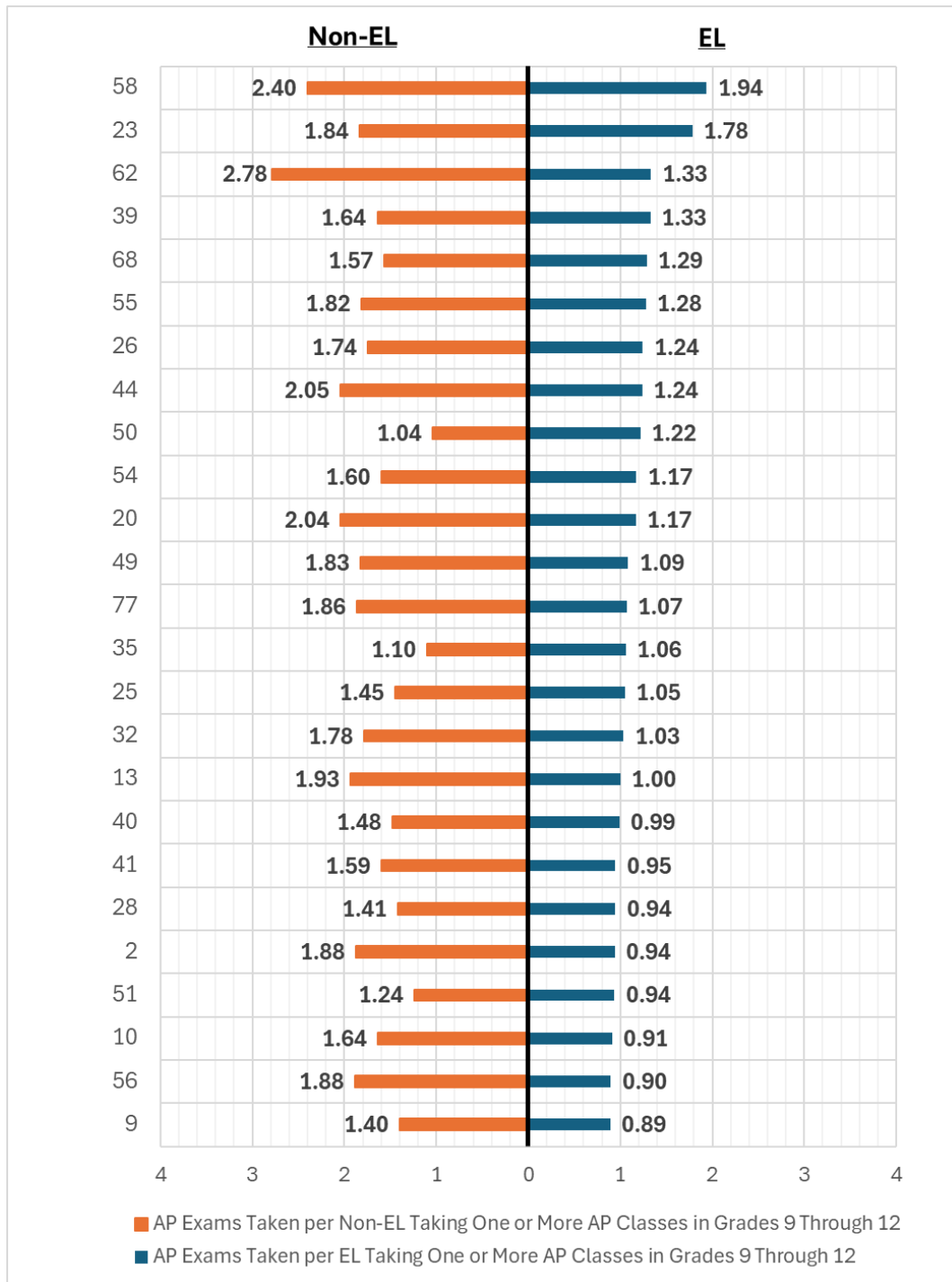


Figure 41. AP Exams Taken per Student Enrolled in AP Courses by EL Status, SY 2022-23
(N = 50), continued

Sorted by Number of AP Exams Taken per EL

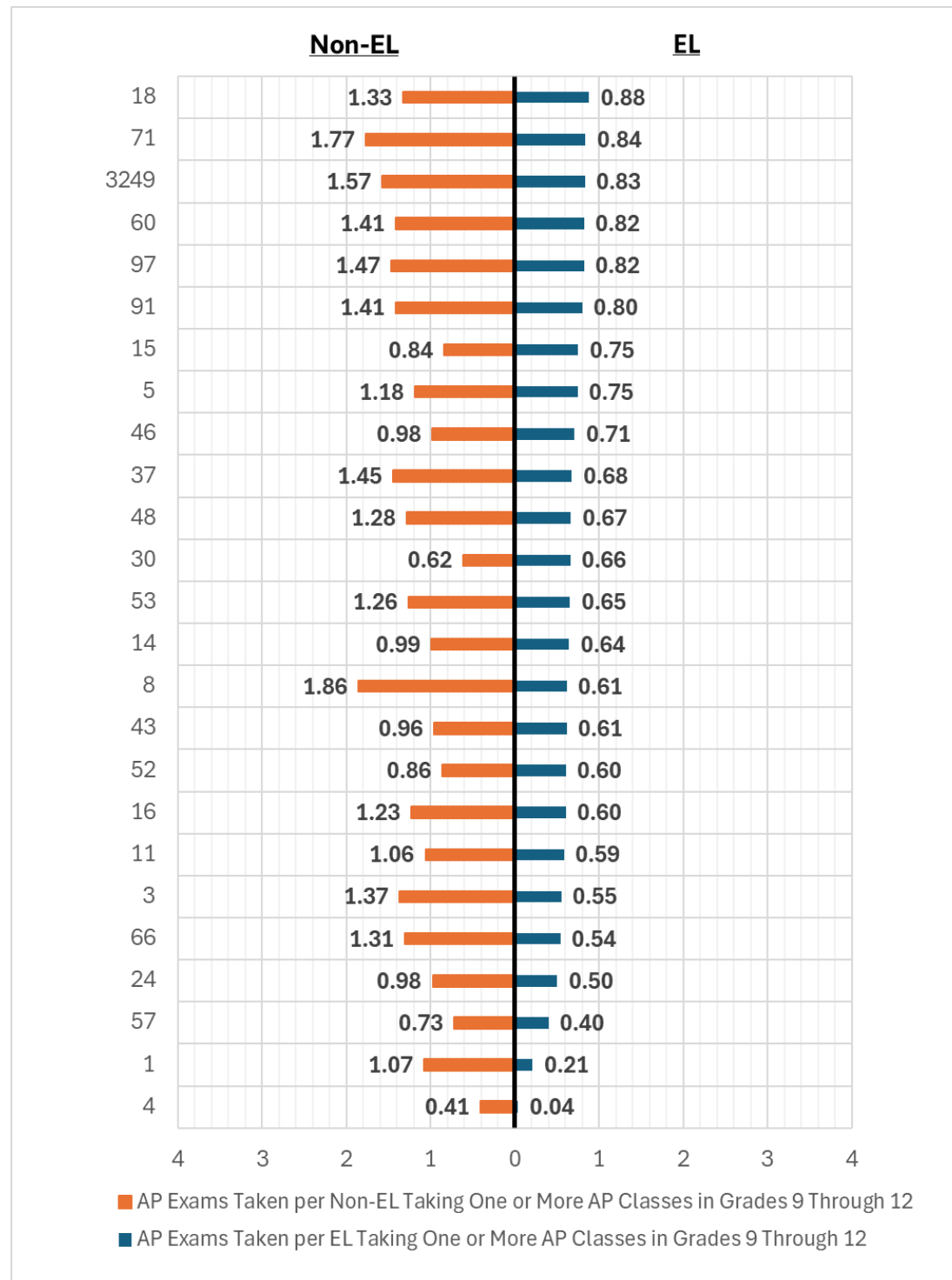


Figure 42 compares 48 districts on the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in grades 9 through 12 who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam during SY 2022-23. Data are sorted by the EL AP score percentage.

Figure 42. Percentage of Students Scoring Three or Higher on AP Exams by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 48)

Sorted by EL AP Scores Three or Higher Percentage

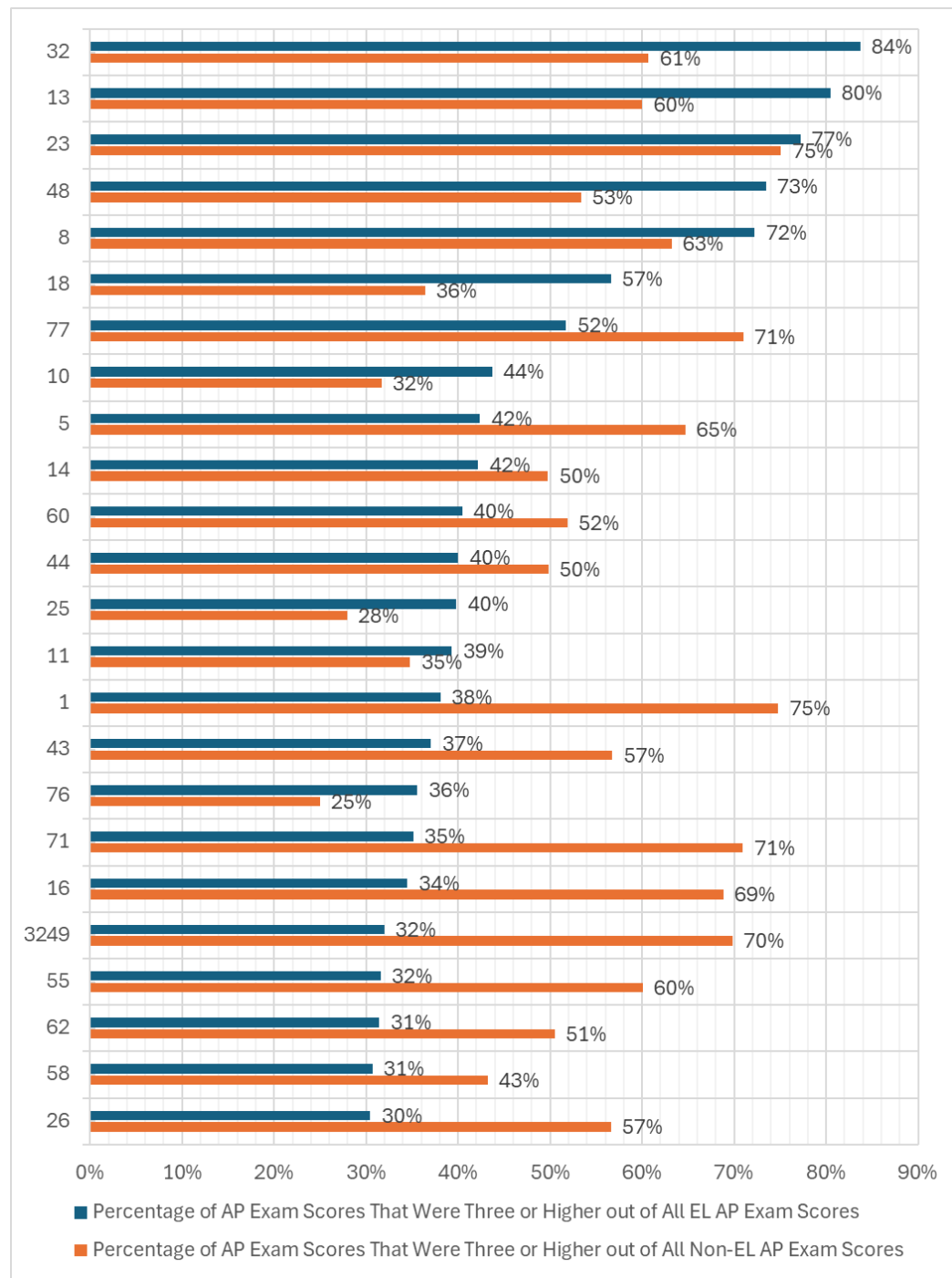


Figure 42. Percentage of Students Scoring Three or Higher on AP Exams by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 48), continued

Sorted by EL AP Scores Three or Higher Percentage

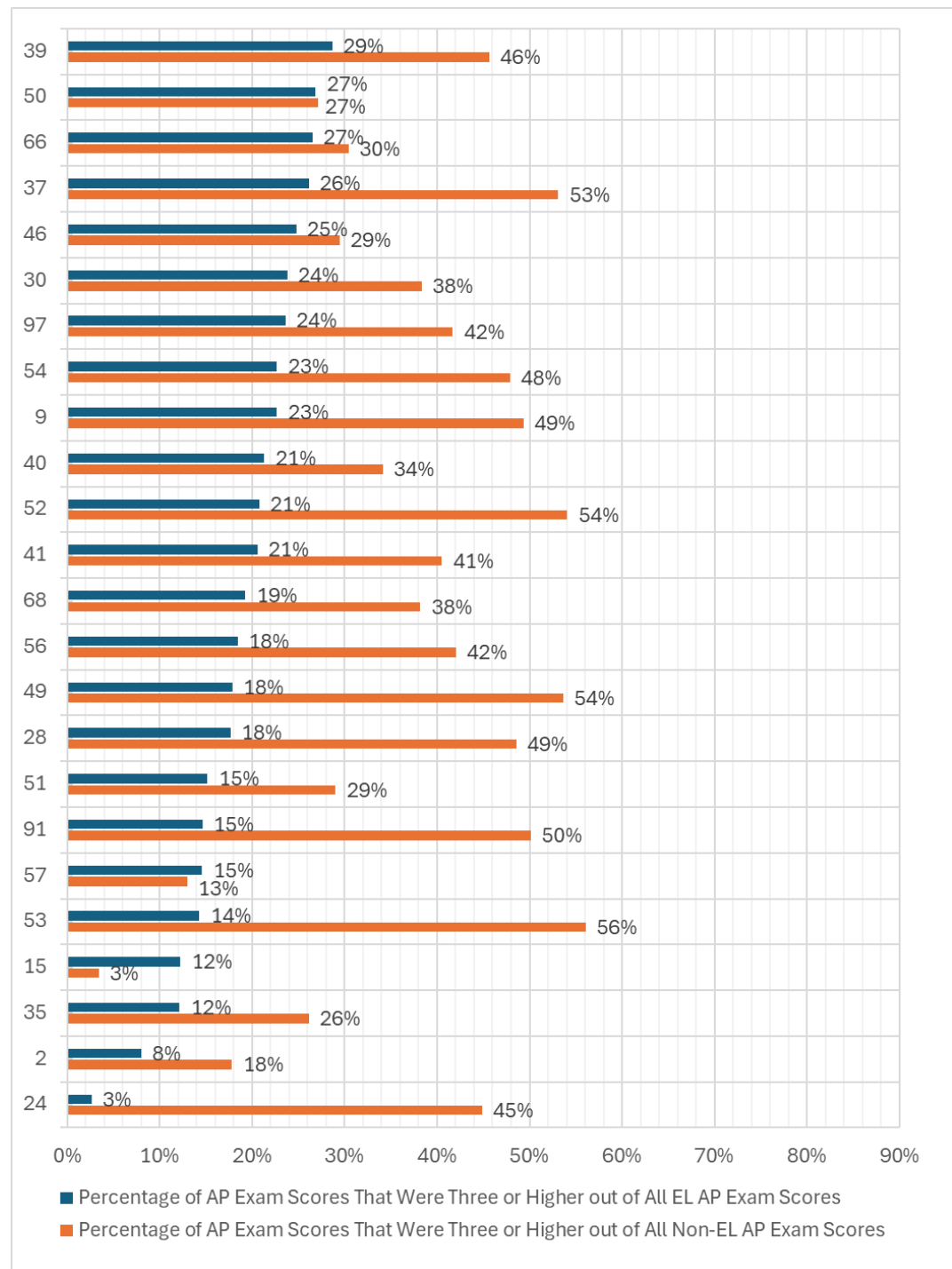
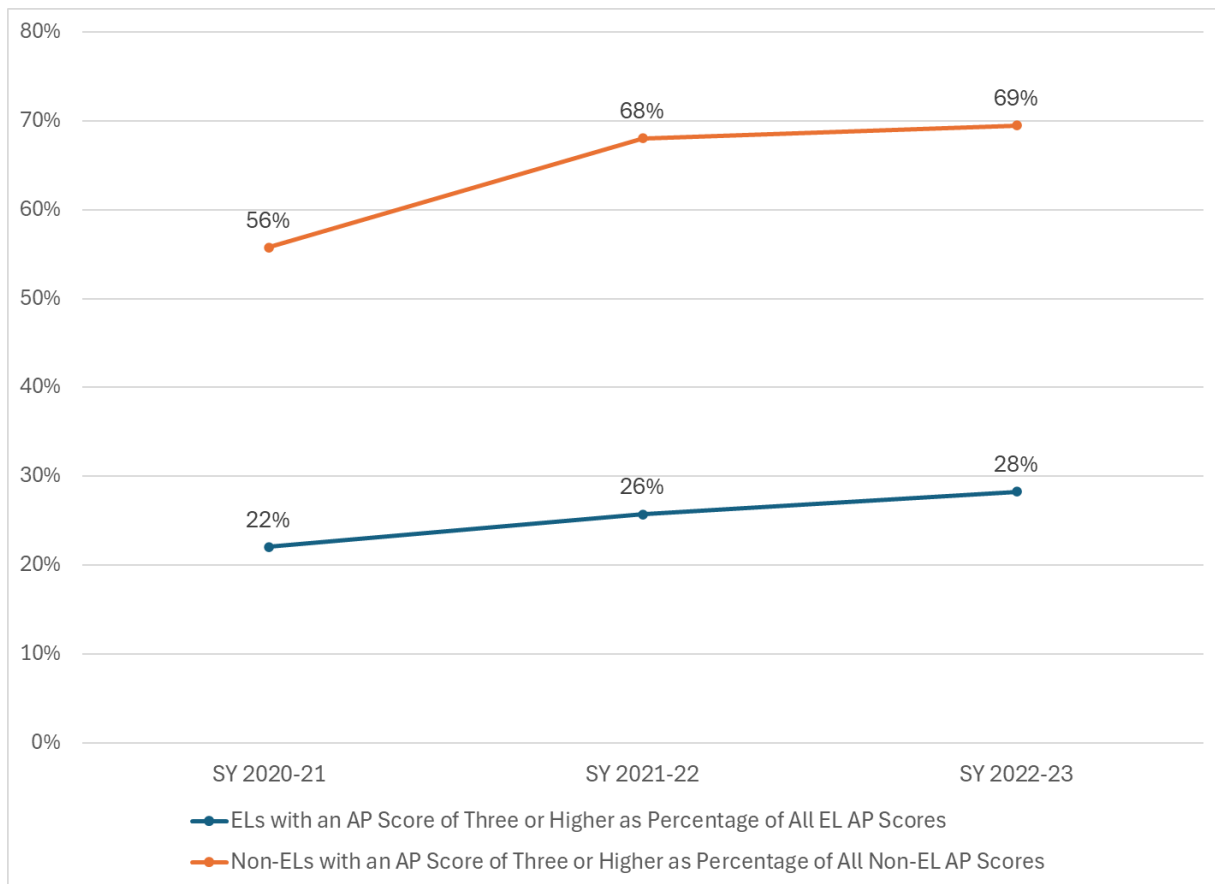


Figure 43 compares the percentage of ELs and non-ELs in grades 9 through 12 who scored a three or higher over the three years from SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 for the 40 districts that reported data for all three years.

Figure 43. Percentage of Students Scoring Three or Higher on AP Exams by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23 (N = 40)



High School Graduation Rate

Figure 44 compares 47 districts on the rate of ELs and non-ELs who graduated in SY 2022-23 after being enrolled in grades 9 through 12 for four years. Data are sorted by the EL graduation rate.

Figure 44. Four-Year Graduation Rate by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 47)

Sorted by EL Graduation Rate

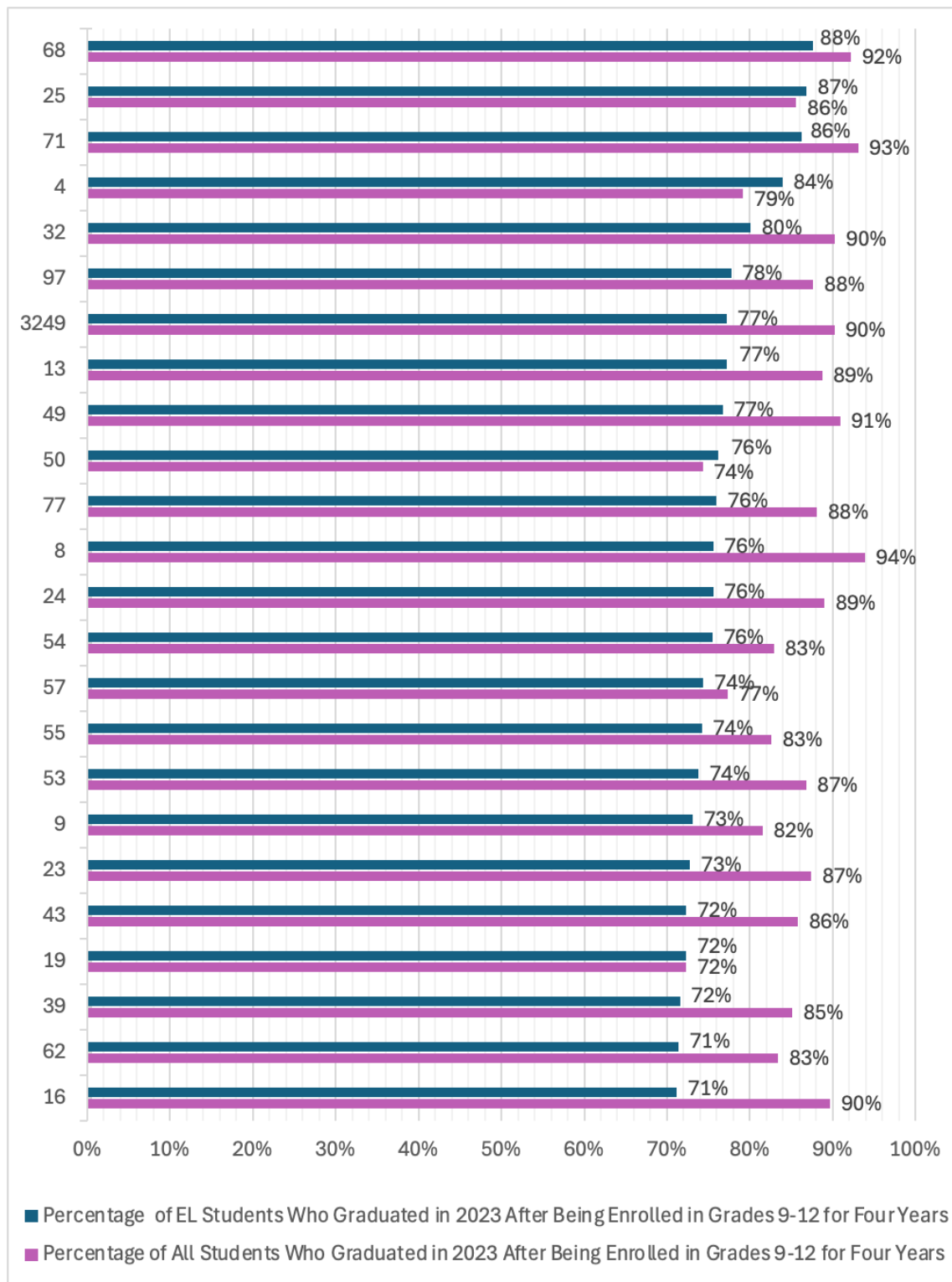


Figure 44. Four-Year Graduation Rate by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 47), continued
Sorted by EL Graduation Rate

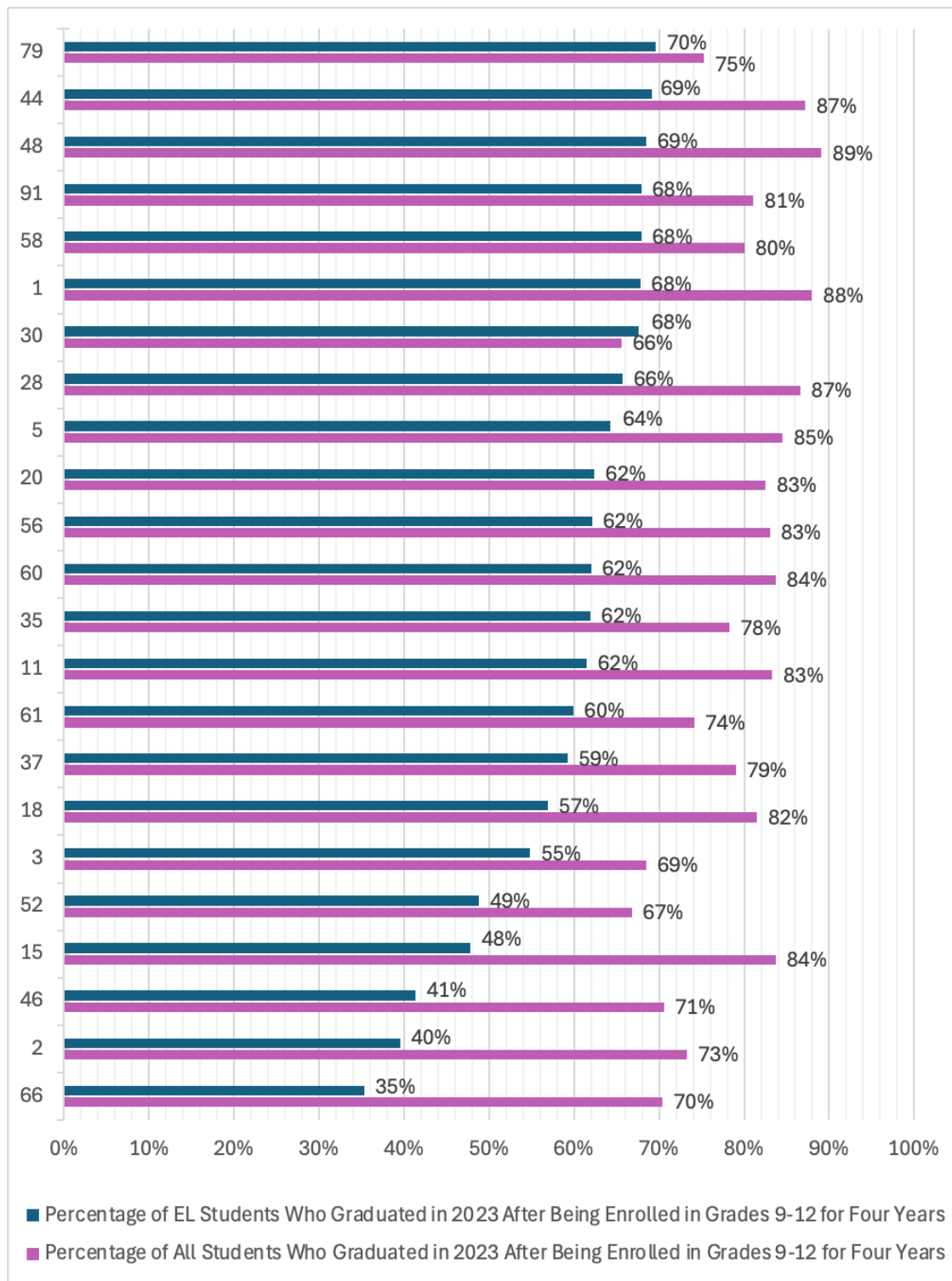


Figure 45 compares 31 districts on the rate of ELs and non-ELs who graduated in SY 2022-23 after being enrolled in grades 9 through 12 for five years. Data are sorted by the EL graduation rate.

Figure 45. Five-Year Graduation Rate by EL Status, SY 2022-23 (N = 31), continued
Sorted by EL Graduation Rate

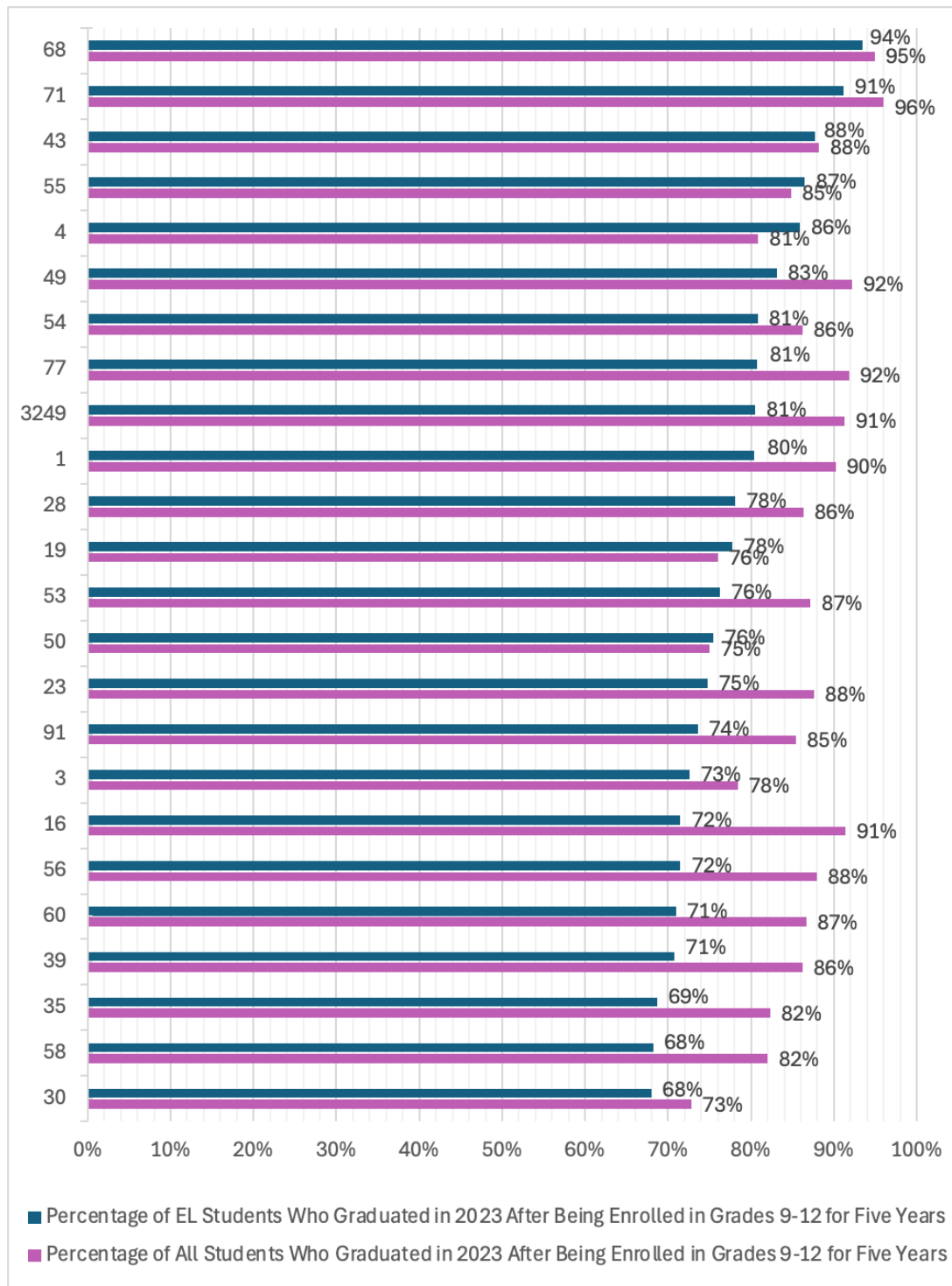


Figure 45. Five-Year Graduation Rate by EL Status, SY 2022-23, continued
Sorted by EL Graduation Rate

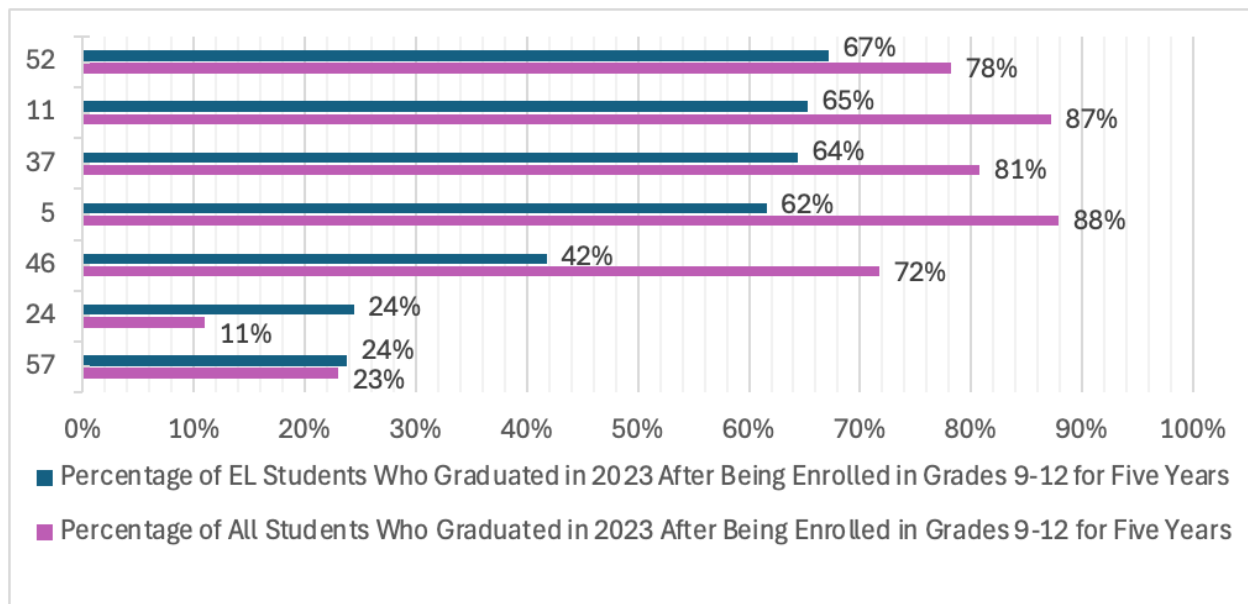


Table 18 shows a comparison between the percentage of all students, ELs, and former ELs who graduated high school in four years over three years, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23.

Status	Year	Number of Districts	Lowest District 4-Year Graduation Rate (%)	Median District 4-Year Graduation Rate (%)	Highest District 4-Year Graduation Rate (%)
All Students	SY 2020-21	50	63.8	81.25	96.1
	SY 2021-22	48	65.4	83.75	96.3
	SY 2022-23	47	65.6	83.4	93.9
ELs	SY 2020-21	48	45.3	69.1	94.5
	SY 2021-22	47	37.9	71	92.1
	SY 2022-23	48	35.3	71.3	87.6
Former ELs	SY 2020-21	28	64.1	88.85	98.1
	SY 2021-22	27	57.9	91.1	100
	SY 2022-23	29	67.9	91.5	96.9

Table 19 shows a comparison between the percentage of all students, ELs, and former ELs who graduated high school in five years over a three-year period, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23.

Table 19. Five-Year Graduation Rate by EL Status, SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23					
Status	Year	Number of Districts	Lowest District 5-Year Graduation Rate (%)	Median District 5-Year Graduation Rate (%)	Highest District 5-Year Graduation Rate (%)
All Students	SY 2020-21	37	72.4	83.41	96.1
	SY 2021-22	32	46	84.7	96.7
	SY 2022-23	32	11	86.2	96
ELs	SY 2020-21	37	45.9	74	94.6
	SY 2021-22	31	14.1	73.6	92.5
	SY 2022-23	31	23.8	73.6	93.5
Former ELs	SY 2020-21	21	36.36	90	100
	SY 2021-22	20	0	90.85	95.98
	SY 2022-23	19	30.4	92.1	99.1

Forthcoming Topics

1. Comparison of EL Performance
2. Comparison of Large City (LC) and National Public (NP) Performance
3. General Observations about Achievement Trends
4. Teacher Recruitment and Placement
 - a. Teacher Recruitment Efforts
 - b. Teachers of ELs in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools by Requirement Status and Type
 - c. Instructional Aids to Support ELs in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools by Setting and Purpose
5. Professional Development
 - a. EL-Related Professional Development Received by Staff Type and District
 - b. EL-Related Professional Development Content by Percentage of Districts Reporting Topic
 - c. Content of EL-related District Professional Development

Survey Completion Status

Sorted Alphabetically within Completion Status Group

Complete PD Surveys – 31 Districts		
Anchorage	Detroit	Omaha
Arlington (TX)	Duval	Orange County
Atlanta	Guilford	Philadelphia
Aurora	Indianapolis	Pinellas County
Baltimore	Jackson	Richmond
Birmingham	Jefferson County	San Francisco
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Metropolitan Nashville	St. Paul
Chicago	Miami-Dade County	Tulsa
Cincinnati	Milwaukee	Winston-Salem
Cleveland	Minneapolis	
Des Moines	Oklahoma City	

Incomplete PD Surveys – 46 Districts		
Partial Responses – 15 Districts		
Clark County	Little Rock	Pittsburgh
Dallas	New Orleans	Portland
Dayton	Oakland	Providence
Fayette County	Palm Beach County	St. Louis
Kansas City	Phoenix Union	Toledo
Missing Responses – 31 Districts		
Albuquerque	El Paso	Rochester
Austin	Fort Worth	Sacramento
Boston	Fresno Unified	San Antonio
Bridgeport	Hawaii	San Diego
Broward	Hillsborough	Santa Ana
Buffalo	Houston	Seattle
Charleston	Long Beach	Shelby County
Columbus	Los Angeles	Washoe
Denver	New York City	Wichita
District of Columbia	Newark	
East Baton Rouge	Norfolk	



Introduction and Purpose

In 2019, the Council of the Great City Schools published an update to [*English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools: Demographics, Achievement, and Staffing*](#)—a one-of-its-kind compilation of EL-related data from our nation's great cities—first published in 2013. The report was possible thanks to the data received from the Council's membership, and it has served us well to support our advocacy on behalf of English learners (ELs) in the Council membership as well as to provide technical assistance to member districts.

Data Update. Much has changed in our districts since 2019, and it is time to update our EL data to reflect the current realities. We have streamlined the survey to include only data elements we have not captured in other data collection activities (e.g., Academic Key Performance Indicators, etc.) or through publicly available sources.

Data Reporting. Your individual completed survey results will not be made public, and reports that the Council generates will use aggregated data. Indicators reported per district will use confidential Council-assigned numbers rather than district names.

The survey deadline is January 31, 2025. We realize you have busy schedules, so we are grateful for your time to complete the survey. Should you have any questions about the survey, please contact David Lai (dlai@cgcs.org) and De'Aysia Barner (dbarner@cgcs.org).

Survey Instructions

Survey Preview: The full survey is available for [download in PDF format](#). We recommend completing a printed version of the survey prior to inputting responses on SurveyMonkey. This will minimize the need to jump between questions and expedite completion.

Navigation: Use the arrow buttons near the bottom of each page to navigate between sections of the survey.

Saving and Exiting: Your progress on the survey will be saved for you to complete it in multiple sittings. To access your saved survey, use the link provided in the response request email from the Council. If additional staff will be assisting you to complete the survey, you can forward the emailed link to provide them access. The provided survey link uniquely identifies your district and should not be shared with individuals in other districts.

Submitting Completed Surveys: The survey is complete when you respond to the final question and receive a confirmation of completion. Changes to responses cannot be made after surveys are submitted.

Contact Information

School District

Contact Person for Survey Response

Name

Title

Department

Email Address

Phone Number

Requirements for Teaching ELs and Teacher Recruitment (SY 2022-23)

The following questions gather information about (1) the requirements for teachers to be authorized to instruct English learners and (2) how teachers for English learners are recruited.

Note that the definitions for "license," "certification," and "endorsement" vary between states. For this survey, please use the terms as follows:

- **License/Certification:** The primary credential required to teach in a specific subject or grade level.
- **Endorsement/Credential:** A supplementary qualification added to the primary license to indicate expertise in a specific area or additional teaching responsibility.

States may also vary in the types of teachers they credential to teach English learners. For this survey, the types of teachers are defined as follows:

- **ESL Teacher:** An educator who teaches English language development to ELs, typically in **pull-out** or **push-in** settings, focusing on language acquisition.
- **Bilingual Education Teacher:** A teacher who provides instruction in both a student's native language and English, typically in **transitional** or **maintenance bilingual programs**.
- **Dual Language Teacher:** An educator who teaches content in both English and another language (e.g., Spanish) in a **dual language immersion program** to promote biliteracy.
- **Content Area Teacher of ELs:** A teacher who delivers academic content (e.g., math, science) to ELs using **sheltered instruction** or similar strategies, typically in mainstream classrooms with language support.
- **General Education Teacher of ELs:** A teacher credentialed to work with ELs in a general education setting, integrating language support within the core curriculum.
- **Special Education Teacher of ELs:** A teacher credentialed to provide special education services to ELs with disabilities, working in **inclusive classrooms** or specialized settings.

By type of teacher, what credentials or EL-related training were required to instruct English learners in your district during SY 2022-23? (Check all that apply.)

	License/Certification Specific to Teaching ELs (ESL, Bilingual, Dual Language, etc.)	Endorsement/Credential Specific to Teaching ELs (ESL, Language, etc.)
ESL Teacher	✓	
Bilingual Education Teacher	✓	
Dual Language Teacher	✓	
Content Area Teacher of ELs	✓	
General Education Teacher of ELs	✓	
Special Education Teacher of ELs	✓	

Other Teachers – Please specify any other types of teachers (not mentioned in the previous question) who are required to complete EL-related training. For each type, describe:

1. the specific training or certification required (e.g., License or Certification as their primary teaching license, Endorsement or Credential as a supplemental qualification, EL-related Professional Development, EL-related Coursework, etc.); and
2. the source of the requirement (e.g., State Requirement, District Requirement (Supplemental to State Requirement), etc.).

What recruitment efforts did your district use to hire EL teachers during SY 2022-23? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Partnerships with local universities and colleges of education
- ☐ Grow your own strategies
- ☐ Alternative certification programs
- ☐ Travel team attending college job fairs
- ☐ Recruitment efforts at bilingual education conferences
- ☐ International recruitment
- ☐ Other (please specify)

What approaches were used to respond to EL teacher shortages or recruitment difficulties in SY 2022-23? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Collaborated with traditional teacher preparation programs or universities
- ☐ Collaborated with alternative teacher preparation programs
- ☐ Offered signing bonuses or financial incentives
- ☐ Provided additional support or training for existing general education teachers to fulfill EL teaching requirements
- ☐ Recruited EL parents and community members to pursue teacher certification
- ☐ STATE waived EL-related requirements
- ☐ DISTRICT sought waiver from EL-related requirements
- ☐ Other (please specify)

- ☐ N/A - Did not experience teacher shortage.

If EL-related requirements were waived in response to teacher shortages in SY 2022-23, please indicate which requirements were waived. (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Licensure or endorsement (i.e., emergency credentials permitted)
- ☐ Coursework
- ☐ Certification/licensure exam
- ☐ Student teaching (i.e., practicum)
- ☐ Professional development
- ☐ Other (please specify)

- ☐ N/A - Did not waive requirements.

Optional: Clarifying Comments Regarding Teacher Requirements and Recruitment

Instructional Assistants Deployed to Support English Learners (SY 2022-23)

The next five questions gather information about how instructional assistants are deployed to support ELs by school level. For purposes of the survey, *instructional assistants* are defined as staff working in non-certificated positions, including paraprofessionals, tutors, and aides.

For SY 2022-23, indicate the ALLOCATED FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) of instructional assistants

supporting English learners during the formal school day (including extended day initiatives).

Provide this information for each school level (Elementary K-5, Middle 6-8, High 9-12), and specify the setting and primary purpose of their role, as described in the job description.

Individual instructional assistants who support ELs in a variety of settings can be counted in multiple columns (i.e., duplicated count permitted).

Type "0" if none, and type "999" if the number is unknown.

	Elementary (Grades K-5)			Middle (Grades 6-8)			High (Grades 9-12)		
	Instructional assistants in EL PROGRAMS (ESL, Dual Language, Sheltered English, Newcomer, etc.)	Instructional assistants in GENERAL EDUCATION classes with ELs	Instructional assistants in SPECIAL EDUCATION classes with ELs	Instructional assistants in EL PROGRAMS (ESL, Dual Language, Sheltered English, Newcomer, etc.)	Instructional assistants in GENERAL EDUCATION classes with ELs	Instructional assistants in SPECIAL EDUCATION classes with ELs	Instructional assistants in EL PROGRAMS (ESL, Dual Language, Sheltered English, Newcomer, etc.)	Instructional assistants in GENERAL EDUCATION classes with ELs	Instructional assistants in SPECIAL EDUCATION classes with ELs
Native Language Support Only	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Native Language Support <u>AND</u> Other Purposes	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Purposes <u>OTHER THAN</u> Providing Native Language Support	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

If instructional assistants are assigned for purposes other than providing native language support to support ELs, select the formal job responsibilities by school level and instructional setting. (Check all that apply.)

	Elementary (K-5)			Middle (6-8)		
	EL Program	General Education	Special Education	EL Program	General Education	Special Education
Providing academic support (e.g., tutoring, homework assistance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assisting with cultural orientation/integration (e.g., helping students navigate school culture, social norms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting family and parent engagement/communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting students with special education or 504 plan accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing administrative support for teachers (e.g., preparing materials, grading)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)						
<div></div>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N/A - No instructional assistants assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Optional: Clarifying Comments Regarding Instructional Assistants

EL-Related Professional Development (SY 2020-21 to SY 2022-23)

Please respond to the following questions about EL-related professional development (PD). Answer to the best of your ability, and feel free to clarify responses in the provided comment box at the end of this section. Type "0" to indicate none, and type "999" if the number is unknown.

Please indicate the number of individuals, by role, who participated in EL-related professional development **during SY 2022-23**, separately for those who did participate and those who did not. (Type "0" if none, and type "999" if the number is unknown.)

	<u>PARTICIPATED</u> in EL- related Professional Development	<u>DID NOT PARTICIPATE</u> in EL-related Professional Development	Unknown Participation Status
ESL Teachers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bilingual Education Teachers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Dual Language Teachers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Content Area Teacher of ELs	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
General Education Teachers of ELs	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Instructional Coaches / Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Principals	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (please describe) <div></div>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please indicate the topics of **EL-Specific Instructional Strategies** professional development PROVIDED over the past three school years. For provided topics, specify whether the topic was required. (Check all that apply.)

	School Years PD Provided				ESL/Bilingual Education Teachers
	N/ A	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	
EL-specific instructional strategies for accessing all content areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
EL-specific instructional strategies for rigor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Instructional strategies to support ELs in math or science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Instructional strategies to support ELs with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Instructional strategies to support newcomer students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Instructional strategies to support students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Language acquisition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Literacy/ELA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Foundational literacy skills development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting advanced language development and academic literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

interacy

Other
(please
describe)☐☐☐☐

Please indicate the topics of **Cultural and Social-Emotional Support** professional development PROVIDED over the past three school years. For provided topics, specify whether the topic was required. (Check all that apply.)

	School Years PD Provided				ESL/Bilingual Education Teachers
	N/ A	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	
Cultural competence and responsiveness in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies for ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Trauma-informed practices for ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Addressing language anxiety and supporting self-confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting ELs in higher education readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please indicate the topics of **Collaboration and Engagement** professional development PROVIDED over the past three school years. For provided topics, specify whether the topic was required. (Check all that apply.)

	School Years PD Provided				ESL/Bilingual Education Teachers
	N/ A	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	
Collaboration with families of ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Building school-wide inclusion and belonging for ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Involving ELs in extracurricular activities and school-wide events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Developing professional learning communities (PLCs) focused on ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please indicate the topics of **Assessment and Data Use** professional development PROVIDED over the past three school years. For provided topics, specify whether the topic was required. (Check all that apply.)

	School Years PD Provided				ESL/Bilingual Education Teachers
	N/ A	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	
Assessment protocols and development of assessment items for ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of achievement data to support ELs' growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Progress monitoring and intervention strategies within the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please indicate the topics of **Instructional Materials and EL Program** professional development PROVIDED over the past three school years. For provided topics, specify whether the topic was required. (Check all that apply.)

	School Years PD Provided				ESL/Bilingual Education Teachers
	N/ A	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23	
Development and selection of rigorous materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of instructional technology to support ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LAU compliance and legal requirements for ELs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
EL program models (e.g., pull-out, push-in, bilingual, dual-language)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If ongoing professional development is required for instructing English learners, please specify how many hours are required, the frequency of the requirement (e.g., annually, per certification renewal cycle, etc.), and the source/type of the requirement.

Type "0" if PD hours are not required; type "999" if the number of PD hours is unknown; and type "N/A" if the teacher type does not exist.

	How many hours are required?	What is the frequency of the requirement?	Other Frequency	Indicate the source
	Hours		Please describe.	
ESL Teachers	<input type="text"/>	✓	<input type="text"/>	
Bilingual Education Teachers	<input type="text"/>	✓	<input type="text"/>	
Dual Language Teachers	<input type="text"/>	✓	<input type="text"/>	
Content Area Teacher of ELs (e.g., sheltered instruction)	<input type="text"/>	✓	<input type="text"/>	
General Education Teacher of ELs	<input type="text"/>	✓	<input type="text"/>	
Special Education Teacher of ELs	<input type="text"/>	✓	<input type="text"/>	

Optional: Clarifying Comments Regarding EL-related Professional Development

You have reached the end of the survey.

If you desire to review responses or submit the survey at a later time, you may:

- Click the backward page navigation arrow to revisit questions now.
- Exit the survey and return later by using the link in the email that you received from the Council. All of your responses thus far will be saved.
- Forward the Council's email with unique survey link to colleagues to have them work on the survey.

If you are completely finished with the survey, please select "Yes" below. **Before submitting, please check to ensure that all questions have responses.** You will not be able to make any further changes once your survey is submitted.

We appreciate your time and look forward to reviewing responses in order to better serve you.
Thank you!

Please confirm that you have reviewed all questions for accuracy and completion. The survey will not allow for changes to be made once you navigate to the next page.

☐ Yes, I have reviewed all questions.

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DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Project Title

Playbook for Enhancing Access and Serving Dually Identified Students (ELs with Disabilities) in Dual Language Immersion Programs

Overview

This proposal seeks to develop a companion resource to the existing Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Playbooks created by WestEd for OELA.¹ While the DLI Playbooks provide valuable guidance for DLI programs, they do not specifically address the needs of dually identified students—English learners (ELs) with disabilities—who require targeted support to access native language instruction and learning opportunities fully. This gap presents a critical challenge for Council-member districts striving to improve curricular access and educational outcomes for both ELs and students with disabilities.

Background and Problem Statement

Council-member districts have consistently expressed the need for guidance in expanding opportunities for students with disabilities, accelerating their achievement, and increasing equitable access to DLI programs. Although this project focuses on dually identified students, its impact is expected to extend more broadly, creating greater access to language learning for all students.

District feedback underscores the urgency of this initiative:

- **Chicago Public Schools (CPS)** and **Atlanta Public Schools (APS)** have identified a pressing need for guidance to strengthen their DLI implementation.
 - **Atlanta** is already working to enhance its DLI programs and seeks targeted resources to support this expansion.
 - **Chicago** is developing its “Multilingual Pathways for All” Implementation Plan and requires aligned guidance for dually identified students in DLI programs.
- **Oakland** aims to improve access to DLI programs, particularly among underrepresented non-EL student populations.
- **Baltimore** is scaling a nascent DLI program to serve an increasingly diverse student population, ensuring access for all students, including non-ELs.
- **Los Angeles** has incorporated DLI program expansion into its strategic plan to promote broader access.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2024). *Dual language immersion playbooks*. Washington, D.C. <https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/oela-resources/playbooks/dual-language-immersion-playbook>

Despite the valuable insights provided in the existing DLI Playbooks, they lack specific guidance on how DLI programs can effectively serve dually identified students. Addressing this gap is essential to ensuring that ELs with disabilities receive high-quality education within dual language settings and have the same opportunities as other students. This project will provide districts with the necessary strategies and tools to create inclusive, effective DLI programs that support all learners.

Dually Identified Students as the Target Population

While this project will ultimately benefit a broader range of students, its primary focus on dually identified students provides a strategic and necessary starting point—particularly as an extension of the existing DLI Playbooks.

Dually identified students, a subgroup of ELs with disabilities, are disproportionately disconnected from opportunities such as DLI programming. However, these programs offer critical native language support that can enhance their access to academic content and improve learning outcomes.² Furthermore, this subgroup is overrepresented among ELs who do not reclassify within five years, often becoming long-term ELs (L-TELS).³ L-TEL status is associated with diminished academic achievement and graduation outcomes.⁴

Connection to Past Council Projects

This project aligns with a broader systems-level framework for sustainable DLI programming by addressing policy, practice, and capacity building at the district level. It represents a natural progression of past initiatives aimed at expanding educational access and improving outcomes for ELs and students with disabilities. Key areas of continuity include:

- **Expanding Access to Higher-Level Coursework (AP/IB):** Strengthening native language skills through DLI programming can increase ELs' readiness for advanced coursework, including in languages other than English, fostering greater academic achievement and college readiness.

² Steele, J. L., Slater, R. O., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Effects of dual-language immersion programs on student achievement: Evidence from lottery data. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 282S-306S.

³ Schissel, J. L., & Kangas, S. E. N. (2018). Reclassification of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: The intersectionality of improbabilities. *Language Policy*, 17(4), 567–589.

⁴ Umansky, I. M., & Avelar, J. D. (2023). Canaried in the coal mine: What the experiences and outcomes of students considered long-term English learners teach us about pitfalls in English learner education... and what we can do about it. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 28(1), 122-147.

- **Foundational Skills Development:** Research shows that strong native language skills support the acquisition of foundational literacy skills in English, reinforcing multilingualism as an asset.
- **Dyslexia Guidance:** Certain languages, such as Spanish, have more transparent orthographic systems, which can support native speakers in developing a deeper understanding of how written language functions, potentially mitigating reading difficulties.
- **Complex Thinking and Communication Courses (Professional Learning Platform):** Utilizing students' native languages in academic settings allows them to engage more deeply with content, leverage their linguistic assets, and develop a stronger understanding of language as a tool for critical thinking and communication.

Project Scope

The companion playbook will offer concrete, evidence-based strategies for districts to better serve dually identified students in DLI programs. The work will emphasize:

- Systems-level approaches that embed support for ELs with disabilities within district policies, instructional frameworks, and professional learning structures.
- Case studies and exemplars drawn from Chicago, Atlanta, and other districts throughout the Council.

Key Milestones, Deliverables, and Target Dates

Milestone	Description	Deliverables	Target Completion Date
MOU and Publication Plan	Finalize agreements on authorship, branding, and acknowledgements	Signed MOU and roles documented	April 15
Convene Working Group	Form working group with Atlanta, Chicago, and partners	Member list, calendar, and task assignments	April 30
Needs Analysis Virtual Pre-Meeting	Review district implementation plans, identify existing gaps in DLI services for dually identified students	Needs summary and preliminary outline of document	April 30
In-Person Work Sessions (3)	Conduct working sessions at BIRE in Baltimore (May 14 to May 16)	Meeting notes, feedback integration	May 17
Drafting Playbook	Develop content based on working group input, research review, and case examples	Full draft of Companion DLI Playbook	May 2025 to Sep. 2025
Progress Review (1 Virtual Meeting)	Convene working group virtually to present work and seek feedback	Feedback notes and integration into draft	Aug. 2025
Final Review and Dissemination	Gather final district feedback and prepare for dissemination via CGCS and other platforms	Final Playbook, dissemination plan	Oct. 2025

Oak Foundation Grant Application

In June 2025, Oak Foundation approved a \$20,000 grant to support the project. This section provides excerpts from key portions of the grant application.

Objectives

- **Objective 1.** Develop and publish a companion Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Playbook that provides evidence-based, systems-level strategies to support dually identified students (English learners with disabilities).
- **Objective 2.** Engage a national working group of district EL leaders to inform, co-develop, and validate inclusive dual language immersion (DLI) practices through structured collaboration and consultation.
- **Objective 3.** Disseminate the companion Playbook and implementation tools to Council-member districts by October 2025 to support immediate planning and professional development efforts.

Expected Outcomes

1. **Increased district capacity to serve dually identified students in DLI programs:** District leaders and educators will gain practical, evidence-based guidance that improves their ability to design and implement inclusive dual language immersion programs.
2. **Improved instructional coherence and equity in DLI program implementation:** Participating districts will adopt system-level strategies to ensure that ELs with disabilities are included in DLI planning, placement, and instruction, leading to more consistent and equitable access.
3. **Greater awareness and understanding of the unique needs of dually identified students among education leaders and practitioners:** Through the Playbook, case studies, and dissemination efforts, educators and administrators will deepen their understanding of inclusive practices and the potential of native language instruction for this student population.
4. **Stronger professional learning infrastructure to support inclusive DLI programming:** The project will foster ongoing professional development, peer learning, and the integration of inclusive practices into existing district training frameworks.
5. **Foundation for broader systems change and policy advancement:** By showcasing effective models and district-level innovations, the project will inform state and national conversations on equity in multilingual education and special education integration.

Activities

- **Collaborative Development:** Convene and facilitate a national working group of district EL leaders to co-develop content, share effective practices, and inform the design of the companion DLI Playbook.
- **Resource Design and Writing:** Develop, draft, and refine the companion DLI Playbook, incorporating evidence-based strategies, district case studies, and inclusive implementation tools.
- **Research and Field Consultation:** Gather insights from Council-member districts and relevant literature to identify current gaps, promising practices, and systemic barriers in serving dually identified students.
- **Professional Learning Integration:** Align the Playbook with ongoing district professional development efforts and support the integration of inclusive DLI strategies into local training systems.
- **Dissemination and Engagement:** Share the final Playbook with Council-member districts and other stakeholders through conferences, webinars, and targeted outreach to support adoption and implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will monitor progress through a combination of internal tracking, stakeholder feedback, and structured engagement with the working group. Key milestones—such as formation of the working group, completion of draft content, and publication of the Playbook—will be used to assess implementation progress. We will collect feedback from working group members at multiple points to evaluate the relevance, clarity, and utility of the Playbook content. Additionally, we will track how many Council-member districts access the resource and gather post-release feedback on early use, implementation planning, and any resulting policy or practice changes. While we do not plan a formal external evaluation, we will integrate monitoring into existing Council mechanisms for follow-up with districts and professional development.

Learning

Through this grant, we aim to deepen our understanding of how districts can more effectively serve dually identified English learners within DLI settings. Specifically, we hope to learn:

- What systemic barriers currently limit access for ELs with disabilities in DLI programs;
- What inclusive practices and policies are most effective across varied urban district contexts; and

- How professional development and instructional frameworks can be adapted to support both language development and special education needs in a dual language context.

This grant also offers the opportunity to test a new model of collaboration—bridging a research organization (WestEd) with practitioner expertise to co-design a practical resource for systems-level change. The learning generated will inform future work on inclusive education, help shape policy recommendations, and guide replication efforts in other programmatic areas where ELs and students with disabilities face barriers to equitable access.



Raymond Hart
Council of the Great City Schools
1331 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Ste
1100N
20004 Washington
DC
United States

Geneva, 23 June 2025

Dear Dr. Raymond Hart,

Re: Oak Foundation Grant Number: OFIL-25-116

We are pleased to inform you that Oak Foundation has approved a grant of USD 20,000 to Council of the Great City Schools (hereinafter “Grant Recipient” or “your organisation”) for your project “Dual Language Immersion for Multilingual Learners with Learning Differences” (the “Grant Purposes”). It has been determined that the Grant Purposes are charitable and for the public benefit. Attached as an Addendum to this grant letter is a summary of the objectives and activities described in the Grant Purposes.

Hereunder are the terms and conditions that apply to the grant:

- a) Grant Recipient represents and affirms that it has selected and determined the objectives and activities described in the Grant Purposes as summarized in the attached Addendum which reflect Grant Recipient’s own viewpoints, goals, and directives. All objectives and activities with respect to the Grant Purposes will be determined and controlled solely by Grant Recipient.
- b) Neither Oak Foundation nor any other person, party, or entity related to or acting on behalf of Oak Foundation will direct or control any of Grant Recipient’s personnel in carrying out such objectives or activities.
- c) Grant Recipient further understands and agrees it is not authorized to act as a representative or agent of Oak Foundation and further agrees it will not hold itself out to third parties or the public as representing or acting on behalf of Oak Foundation.
- d) Grant funds may be expended during the period June 2025 – May 2026 consistent with the Grant Purposes as set forth in the attached Addendum, Payment Schedule and Budget and subject to the satisfaction of these terms and conditions. Disbursement of grant funds will follow the attached Payment Schedule and Budget subject to evidence that Grant Recipient has met any specific conditions set forth in the Grant Purposes and summarized in the attached Addendum. By countersigning this grant letter, you confirm that the funds will be used for the Grant Purposes (and for no other purposes).
- e) Any subsequent scheduled payments require that Grant Recipient can demonstrate progress in reaching the expected objectives described in its Grant Purposes and subject to

the outlook of those objectives being met in the future. Additionally, these payments will only be made once Oak Foundation has received the annual narrative and financial reporting as described in f) hereunder, as well as a demonstration by you that the previous funds received from Oak Foundation have been used for the Grant Purposes (and for no other purposes) and have been, or shortly will be, exhausted.

Please note that in making this grant, Oak Foundation is making no commitment, implied or otherwise, to renew this grant at the end of the current grant period. For the avoidance of doubt, the terms and conditions herein shall not be affected or prejudiced by the accounting treatment of this grant on your or our books and records.

- f) Financial and narrative reporting on the use of these funds is required annually during the life of the grant with a final report due ninety days after the end of the grant. Please ensure that you complete Oak Foundation's Grant Progress Report form that you can obtain from your Oak Foundation contact (see g) below as you are required to submit the complete report electronically. In addition, and during the full grant period, half-yearly telephone conversations are to be held between Grant Recipient and Oak Foundation in order to apprise us of the successes and shortfalls that have occurred in the relevant six-month period.
- g) Correspondence, reports, and all other matters pertaining to this grant should be addressed to Rob Thompson (rob.thompson@oakfnd.org), Programme Officer for the Learning Differences Programme, at:

Oak Foundation
55 Vilcom Center Drive, Suite 340
NC 27514 Chapel Hill
North Carolina United States
Direct Telephone: +1 919 951 0577

- h) Grant funds may only be expended or committed for the Grant Purposes (and for no other purposes) and for the time period stated in this letter and the documents referenced above. Any amendment to the budget or the duration of the grant must be approved, in advance, in writing by Oak Foundation.
- i) Grant Recipient represents and affirms that with respect to this grant it will comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to: (1) anti-money laundering and counter the financial of terrorism laws enforced by the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, or other relevant regulatory authority (collectively, "AML/CFT Laws"); (2) economic sanctions administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United Nations (collectively "Sanctions Laws"); (3) anti-corruption laws enforced by the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, or any jurisdictions where grant funds are utilized ("Anti-Corruption Laws"); and (4) all other applicable civil and criminal prohibitions relating to fraud, money laundering, terrorism, and bribery.
- j) Grant Recipient further represents that Grant Recipient as well as its subsidiaries, affiliates, officers, and directors are not on the list of Specially Designated Nationals or the Foreign Sanctions Evaders List maintained by the U.S. Treasury's Department Office of Foreign Assets Control, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Denied Parties and Entity List, or the U.S. Department of State's Debarred Persons Lists, the United Kingdom's

Consolidated Sanctions List, the Consolidated List of persons, groups, and entities subject to European Union financial sanctions, or the United Nations Consolidated Sanctions List. Grant Recipient shall immediately notify Oak Foundation in the event that this representation is no longer accurate during the term of this grant.

- k) Grant funds shall not be used to commit any act or omission which would breach or could cause Oak Foundation to breach applicable AML/CFT Laws, Sanctions Laws, including any sectoral sanctions or any Anti-Corruption Laws. Grant Recipient will not contract with or make funds or economic resources available to any Sanctioned Parties, or any party/parties which you have reasonable cause to suspect may constitute a Sanctioned Party. You commit to inform Oak Foundation promptly of any breach, or reasonable suspicion of breach of this clause. If Grant Recipient is regranteeing Oak Foundation funds, it will take reasonable steps to ensure compliance with applicable AML/CFT Laws, Sanctions Laws, and Anti-Corruption Laws. Grant Recipient is required to cross-check all sub-grantees against sanctions and terrorism watch-lists and refrain from providing financial or material support to any listed individual or organisation.
- l) Where your Grant Recipient, its programmes, services and/or staff come into contact with or have impact on children, the organisation shall demonstrate their implementation of child safeguarding standards equivalent to those set out in the Oak Foundation Child Safeguarding Policy. Oak Foundation can offer technical support to organisations needing to improve their safeguarding arrangements and when safeguarding incidents arise. We invite you to contact us for additional support.
- m) Any grant funds not expended or committed for the Grant Purposes of this grant, or within the period stated above (or such longer period as agreed in accordance with paragraph d) above), will be returned to Oak Foundation International Ltd within ninety days of the expiration of the grant period (and for the avoidance of doubt, any grant funds which have been expended for purposes other than the Grant Purposes will be returned).
- n) Oak Foundation may include information on this grant in its periodic public reports. You are authorised to list this Oak Foundation grant in your financial statements and reports to regulators. Any mention of Oak Foundation beyond this acknowledgement requires prior written approval from the Communications Department (commdept@oakfnd.org). If your grant includes regranteeing to other organisations, the recipient of the funds must obtain approval from Oak Foundation's Communications Department in writing in every instance to reference Oak Foundation. Additionally, every use of Oak's logo must be approved in advance by the Communications Department. Recipients should review the full branding guidelines available on Oak Foundation's website.
- o) Oak Foundation may wish to make on-site visits from time to time. Upon request by Oak Foundation, you will provide Oak Foundation with necessary assistance, including assisting visiting representatives of Oak Foundation with visa invitation letters.
- p) By signing the copy of this letter, you are confirming your status as a public charity as defined under the internal revenue regulations in effect in your country. You also commit to notify us should there be any change to this status or to any other factor that would affect your ability to receive a grant from Oak Foundation.
- q) Should your organisation be in breach of any of the above clauses, Oak Foundation reserves the right to terminate the grant and this letter (and no forbearance, failure or delay

in exercising such right shall operate as a waiver thereof).

If this letter and its attachments correctly set forth your understanding of the terms of this grant, we kindly request that you indicate your organisation's agreement to such terms by having the attached copy of this letter signed by an appropriate officer and returning it to the Grants Administration Team, at the Oak Philanthropy Ltd, Geneva office at grantadmin@oakfnd.org

When corresponding with the Foundation concerning this grant, please use the Oak Foundation reference number noted at the beginning of this grant letter.

On behalf of the Foundation, may we extend our every good wish for the success of this endeavour.

Yours truly,

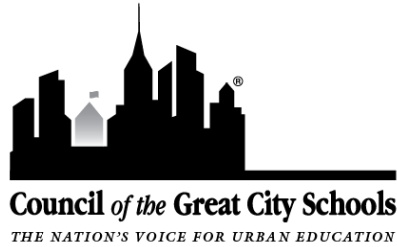

Géraldine Limborg (Jun 25, 2025 22:55 GMT+2)

Géraldine Limborg
Director of Operations
Oak Foundation


Heather Graham (Jun 23, 2025 13:21 EDT)

Heather Graham
Director
Oak Foundation

Invitation to Join: Dual Language Immersion Programs Working Group



Subject: Invitation to Join the DLI Working Group - CGCS & WestEd Partnership

Dear District English Learner/Multilingual Learner Director,

We are writing to invite you to join us for the **Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Programs Working Group**, a collaborative partnership between the Council of the Great City Schools and WestEd.

About the Project

While the DLI Playbooks provide valuable guidance for developing and sustaining DLI programs, Council-member districts continue to face persistent challenges of practice in implementation—particularly around meeting the needs of English learners (ELs) with disabilities.

The Council of the Great City Schools has partnered with WestEd to develop a resource to address this particular challenge of practice and build on the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Playbooks (2024) developed for the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) by WestEd. Consistent with how the Council's EL Team has led projects, the project includes a short-term working group composed of urban school district practitioners, led by the WestEd team—Gabriela Uro and Kate Wright with the goal of—

- Facilitating the use of the DLI Playbook for implementation planning and eliciting district needs around coherent and inclusive implementation during the 2025 Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education (BIRE) Meeting.
- Developing a companion DLI Playbook that offers evidence-based and actionable, system-level strategies to ensure that dually identified students are appropriately served in DLI programs, thereby supporting instructional coherence across programs.

About the Working Group

This professional learning community will bring together English Learner/Multilingual Learner Directors from school districts across the country to:

- Share effective practices for implementing and expanding inclusive dual language immersion programs to ensure dually identified students have access;
- Address common challenges in DLI program design and sustainability related to including the continuum of services (MTSS, special education);

- Collaborate on innovative approaches to biliteracy development; and
- Contribute to research and policy recommendations on inclusive and coherent dual language education that enable students of all abilities to participate.

Time Commitment and Structure

The timeline for this project kicks off at the Council's BIRE Meeting starting on May 14 and concludes on September 30.

Working group members will have the opportunity to engage in a joint examination of the DLI challenge of practice at the BIRE Meeting. Those who are unable to participate at BIRE will join the working group for virtual discussion and online feedback. The specific engagement expected of working group members is as follows:

- ★ **June**—attend a virtual 75-minute meeting to review the research and the findings resulting from the BIRE work session.
- ★ **July**—attend a virtual 75-minute meeting to provide feedback on the draft outline.
- ★ **August**—Asynchronously devote 3 to 4 hours to read shared research and the draft document for feedback.

Why Your Participation Matters

As a leader in English Learner/Multilingual Learner education in your district with experience in dual language programming, your expertise and insights are invaluable to ensure the resulting playbook is relevant and actionable. By joining this working group, you will:

- Have dedicated time to connect with Council-member peers implementing DLI programs across diverse contexts to jointly examine ongoing challenges.
- Contribute to the advancement of DLI nationally, particularly through strategic policy and program design recommendations that ensure participation of students with diverse abilities.

How to Join

To express your interest in participating, please complete the brief [Google form](#) by May 20, 2025. We particularly appreciate individuals who have experience or expert knowledge about serving dually identified students.

If you have questions about the project and/or the working group, please contact David Lai at dlai@cwcs.org at the Council of the Great City Schools, or Gabriela Uro at guro@wested.org and Kate Wright at kwright@wested.org at WestEd.

We look forward to working together to strengthen educational programs for multilingual learners across our nation's urban school districts.

Sincerely,

David Lai
Council of the Great City Schools

Welcome and Project Work Plan



We are excited that you have joined the **Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Programs Working Group** to contribute to the collaborative partnership between the Council of the Great City Schools and WestEd. Together, we will develop a companion “DLI playbook” to supplement the playbooks created for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA): <https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/oela-resources/playbooks/dual-language-immersion-playbook>.

This companion playbook will address the needs of dually identified students. As a leader in English Learner/Multilingual Learner education in your district with experience in dual language programming, your expertise and insights are invaluable to ensure the resulting playbook is relevant and actionable.

This memo includes a description of the project, the schedule for two virtual meetings, and the work plan to guide our collaboration.

About the Project

While the DLI Playbooks (2024) developed by WestEd for OELA provide valuable guidance for developing and sustaining DLI programs, Council-member districts continue to face persistent implementation challenges, particularly in meeting the needs of English learners (ELs) with disabilities.

The Council of the Great City Schools has partnered with WestEd to build on the existing DLI Playbooks and develop a resource focused on this area of need.

GOAL. Gabriela Uro and Kate Wright from WestEd will lead the working group to develop a resource that offers evidence-based and actionable, system-level strategies to ensure that dually identified students are appropriately served in DLI programs, thereby supporting instructional coherence across programs.

About the Working Group

A total of 24 educators representing 12 distinct districts have joined the working group. Most of the individuals bring expertise in dual language programming, and about three have specific expertise in serving dually identified students. The group will convene to:

- Share effective practices for implementing and expanding inclusive dual language immersion programs to ensure access for dually identified students;

DLI and Dually Identified Working Group

- Address common challenges in DLI program design and sustainability related to including the continuum of services (e.g., MTSS, special education); and
- Contribute to research and policy recommendations on inclusive and coherent dual language education that enable participation by students of all abilities.

Schedule and Work Plan

The project timeline commenced in May at the Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education (BIRE) Directors Meeting, where Kate and Gabriela joined the DLI Challenge of Practice group as thought partners. The work will continue through the summer and conclude with the final draft of the playbook by the end of September.

The specific engagement expected of working group members is as follows:

- ★ **June**— Virtual meeting on Thursday, June 26 at 2 p.m. EDT – this will be held jointly with the monthly EL Program Director meeting. We will extend the meeting time to 3:30 p.m. EDT with the expectation that DLI Working Group members will stay until 3:30 p.m. The joint meeting will include discussion of:
 - o BIRE feedback;
 - o Findings on dually identified students from the Council’s EL program reviews; and
 - o Issues and challenges related to dually identified students in DLI programs surfaced in research literature.

HOMEWORK:

1. Please access the [Research folder](#) to **read at least 3 articles** in preparation for the June discussion.
2. Please **bring insights** from your own observations and what you may have learned from colleagues about what the most pressing challenges are with serving dually identified students in DLI programs.
3. **Document share**: Please share district documents related to DLI outreach for dually identified students, screening such students, and serving dually identified students in DLI programs. You can upload documents here: [District documents - guidance](#).

- ★ **July**—Virtual meeting on Thursday, July 31st from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EDT. At this meeting, we will share the draft outline of the playbook and receive feedback from the group.

HOMEWORK: TBD

- ★ **August**—Asynchronously devote 3 to 4 hours to read shared research and the draft document for feedback.

If you have questions about the project and/or the working group, please contact David Lai at dlai@cgcs.org at the Council of the Great City Schools, or Gabriela Uro at guro@wested.org and Kate Wright at kwright@wested.org at WestEd.

We look forward to working together to strengthen educational programs for multilingual learners across our nation's urban school districts.

Sincerely,

DLI and Dually Identified Working Group

David Lai - CGCS & Gabriela Uro and Kate Wright - WestEd

DLI Programs and Dually Identified Students

Working Group Virtual Meeting #1

June 26, 2025



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Agenda

- I. BIRE Reflection (10 minutes)
- II. Revisiting and Framing for New Project: Meeting the Needs of Dually Identified (15 minutes)
 - I. Findings from CGCS SSTs – Delina, CGCS EL Fellow
 - II. Discussion of Emerging and Pressing Issues from SSTs
- III. Connecting to DLI Project (3 minutes)
- IV. **TRANSITION INTO WORKING GROUP (2 minutes)**
- V. Working Group Welcome and Purpose (3 minutes)
- VI. Recap and Reflection on SST Findings (Convergences between Dually Identified and DLI) – Delina (5 minutes)
 - I. Convergences and agreement on priorities/topics – random-assigned breakout
- VII. Connecting to Research and New Questions/Wonderings? (30 minutes)
 - I. Breakout Discussion by Issue/Topic (x2) - Notetakers at Each One
- VIII. Report Out and Discussion (20 minutes)
 - I. Report Out (15 minutes)
 - II. What are priority issues?
 - III. What's missing?
- IX. Consensus Next Steps: Asynchronous Feedback in Google Doc (2 minutes)
 - I. Current Guidance/Outreach for Dually Identified in DLI Programs
 - II. Gaps in DLI Services for Dually Identified Students

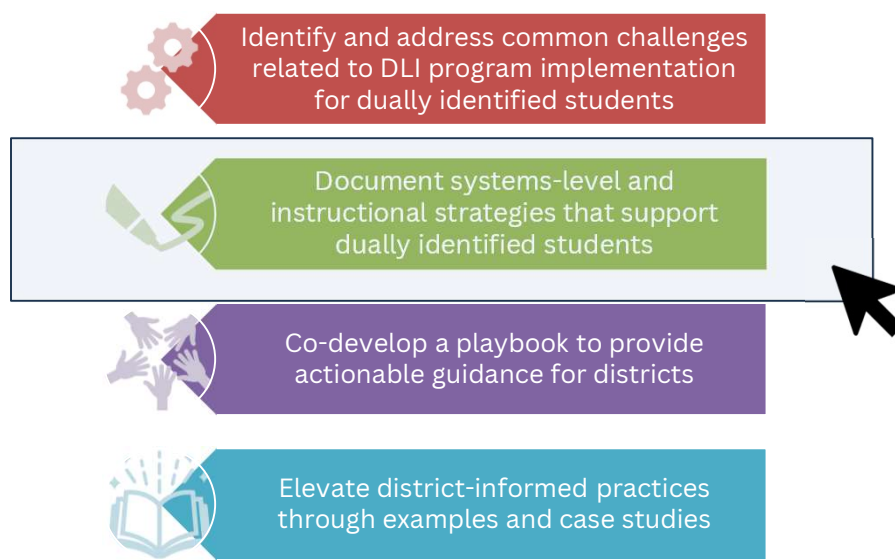
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Challenges Related to English Learners with Disabilities: Findings from Council EL and Special Education Reviews

12

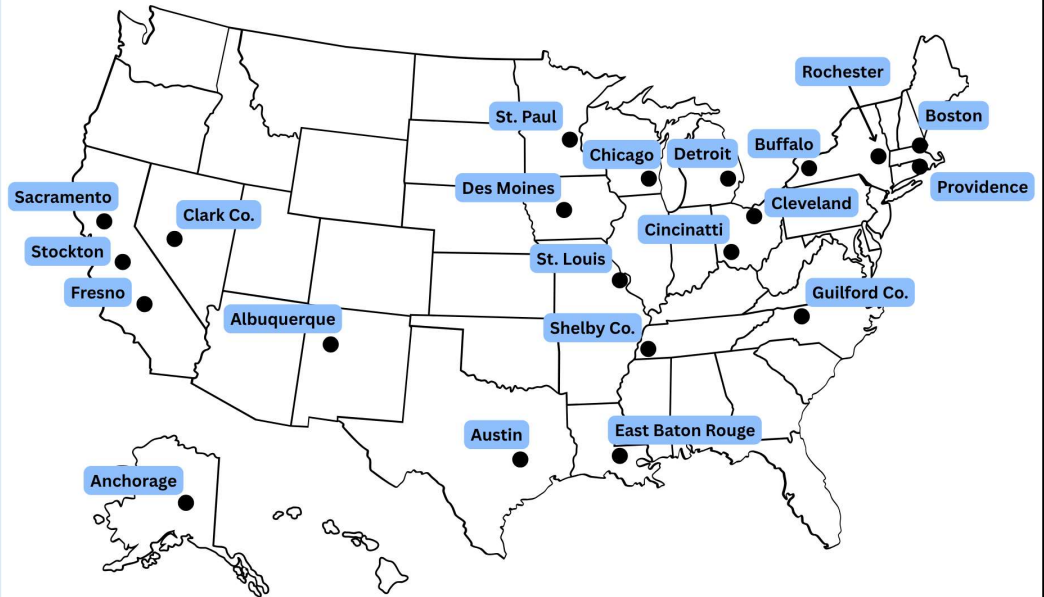
Background and Motivation



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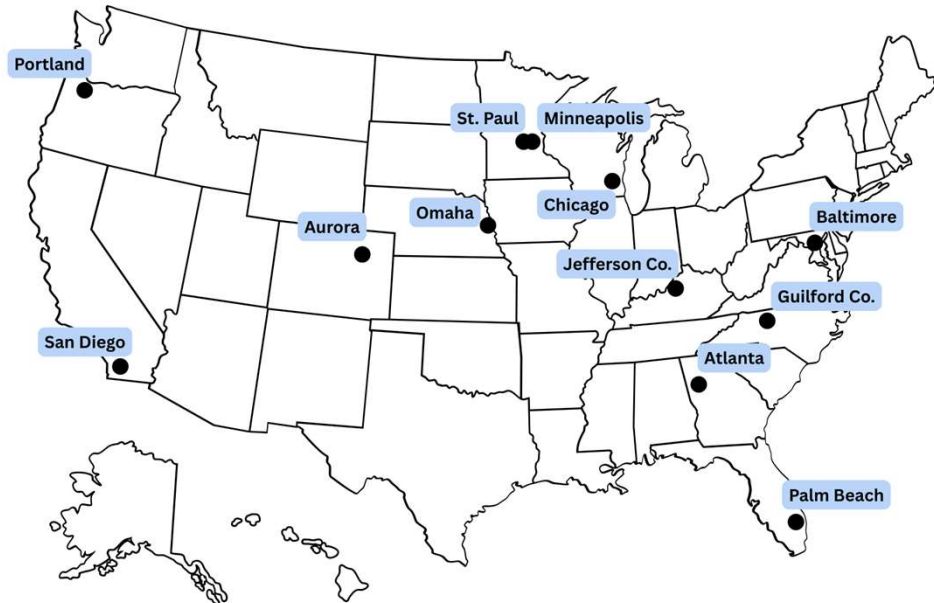
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Districts Reviewed



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Districts Participating in Working Group

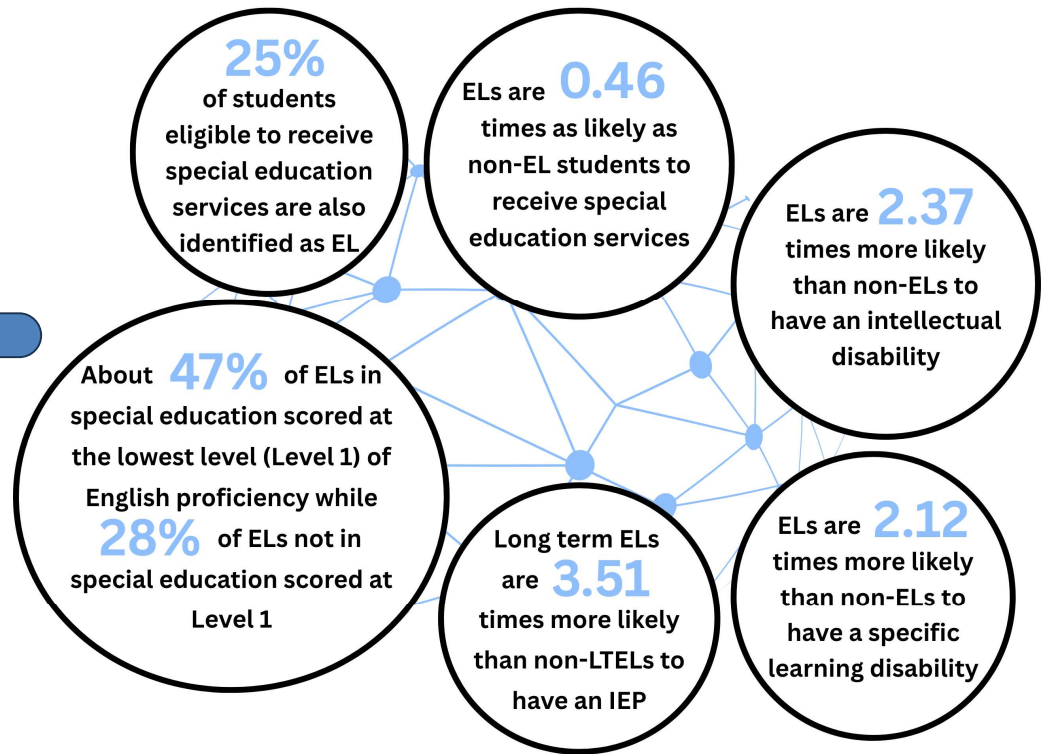


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Data at a Glance

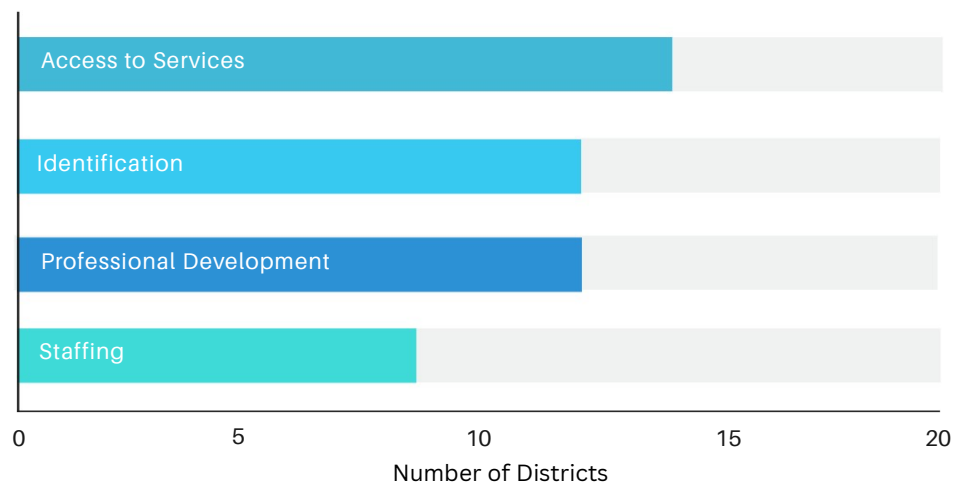
Stop and Jot (Choose 1)

- Do you know the risk ratio in your district?
- What factors might contribute to these realities?



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Prevalence of Issues by District



17

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

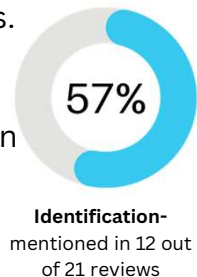
1. Knowledge Gap

- Staff are not adequately trained to evaluate English learners for disabilities.

2. Identification Process Lacks Specificity

- Special education referral processes, including child study and intervention implementation, are nonspecific, resulting in possible misidentification.

"The district has no systemwide plan or program for providing intervention services (or Child Study) for students before they are referred ..." (2004)



3. Undefined Identification Process and Metrics

- There is a lack of explicit criteria to test and identify English learners with disabilities.

"The district also lacks uniform criteria for referring students for special education services. It was reported to the team at the time of the visit that 90-95% of those referred for special education were found to be eligible..." (2004)

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ACCESS TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

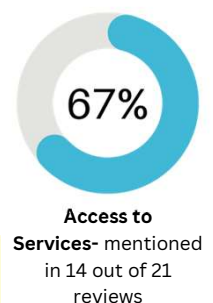
1. Skills Shortage among Staff

- Current staff do not hold the necessary skillset and certifications to provide accommodations for English learners with disabilities.

2. Insufficient Measurable Growth Metrics

- The performance or growth metrics for English learners are inadequate.

"There is a need for concrete metrics and indicators of progress... especially true for ELLs in the area of language and reading development." (2016)



3. Infrastructure Design Weaknesses

- Scheduling design and staff capacity prevent EI students from receiving English learner and special education services.

"An ELL with disabilities who is placed in an ESL class would need to waive his or her ESL language-support services in order to be placed in a general education or self-contained special education class..." (2012)

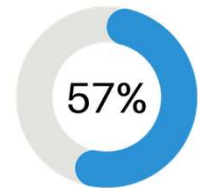
19

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

1. Misaligned Professional Development Resources

- Existing professional development for special education is not relevant.

“Others expressed concern, however, that training that did occur was focused on compliance and lacked adequate attention to instruction.” (2020)



Professional Development- mentioned in 12 out of 21 reviews

2. Limited Access to Professional Development

- Staff district-wide do not have access to professional development on servicing EL and SPED students.

3. Insufficient Collaboration Among Teams

- EL and SPED staff experience hardship finding opportunities to collaborate, including staff at schools and the central office.

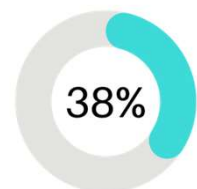
20

SUFFICIENT QUALIFIED STAFF WITH EXPERTISE

Insufficient Staff Capacity

- There are inadequate instructional and support staff to serve ELs with disabilities.

“The district does not have a sufficient number of teachers who are ESL-certified and able to effectively use strategies...” (2012)



Staffing- mentioned in 8 out of 21 reviews

- Districts face difficulties in recruiting instructional and support staff with appropriate certifications or expertise.

“There is a need for qualified staff with expertise in distinguishing language acquisition needs from reading or language development difficulties or disabilities...” (2016)

- Staff includes teachers, psychologists, speech pathologists, and administrators.

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BREAKOUT DISCUSSION

1. Inadequate identification process for English learners with disabilities

- Inadequate Knowledge in Evaluating English Learners for Special Education
- Special Education Referral Process Lacks Specificity
- Undefined Identification Process and Metrics

2. Inadequate access to language development and special education services

- Skills Shortage among Staff
- Insufficient Measurable Growth Metrics
- Infrastructure Design Weaknesses

3. Relevant professional development

- Misaligned Professional Development Resources
- Limited Access to Professional Development
- Insufficient Collaboration Among Teams

4. Adequate staffing with expertise

- Insufficient Staff Capacity

Group Processing (3 mins)

What are your reflections/reactions to the challenges re: dually identified students?

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Transition to
Working Group



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Agenda

EL Program Directors' Meeting

- I. BIRE Reflection (10 minutes)
- II. Revisiting and Framing for New Project: Meeting the Needs of Dually Identified (15 minutes)
 - I. Findings from CGCS SSTs – Delina, CGCS EL Fellow
 - II. Discussion of Emerging and Pressing Issues from SSTs
- III. Connecting to DLI Project (3 minutes)

TRANSITION INTO WORKING GROUP (2 minutes)

DLI Working Group

- I. Welcome and Purpose (3 minutes)
- II. Recap and Reflection on SST Findings (Convergences between Dually Identified and DLI) – Delina (5 minutes)
 - Convergences and agreement on priorities/topics – random-assigned breakout
- III. Connecting to Research and New Questions/Wonderings? (30 minutes)
 - Breakout Discussion by Issue/Topic (x2) - Notetakers at Each One
- IV. Report Out and Discussion (20 minutes)
 - Report Out (15 minutes)
 - What are priority issues?
 - What's missing?
- V. Consensus Next Steps: Asynchronous Feedback in Google Doc (2 minutes)
 - Current Guidance/Outreach for Dually Identified in DLI Programs
 - Gaps in DLI Services for Dually Identified Students

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Framing the Work: DLI as a Model



What the Data Say

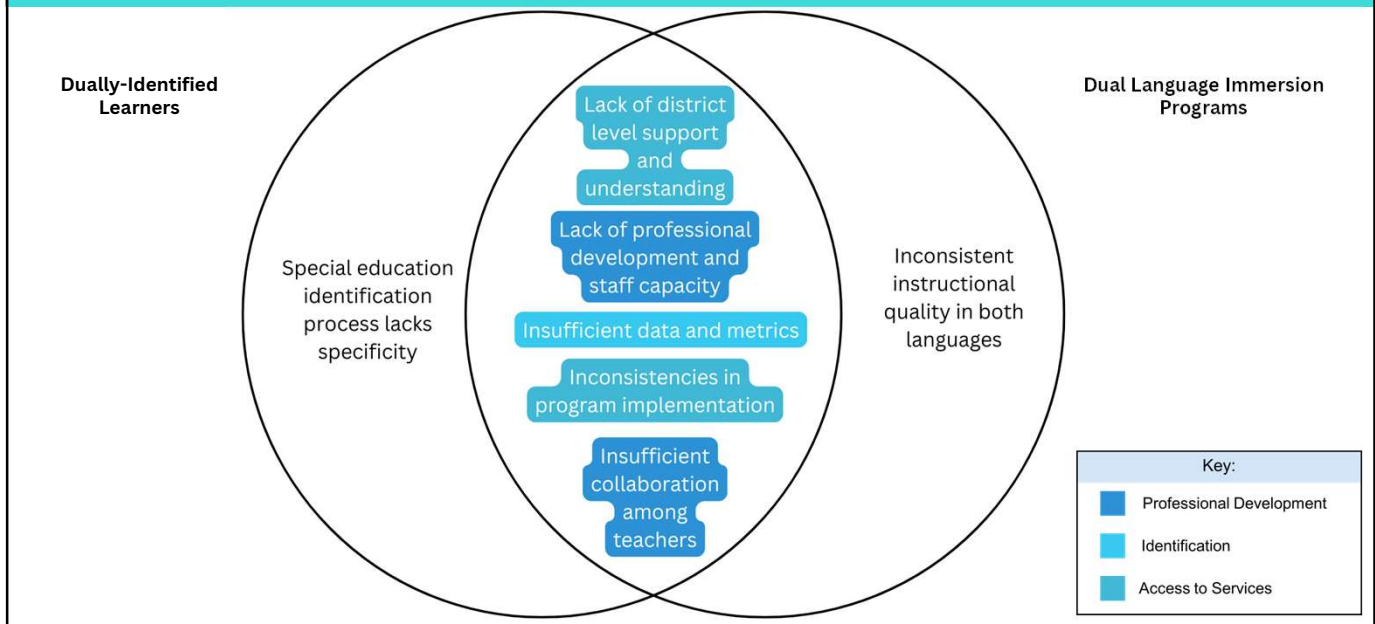
- Dually identified students face persistent systemic challenges across identification, placement, and instructional support.
- These patterns point to a need for coherent approaches that span both general and specialized services.

Why DLI?

- Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs offer a unique opportunity to reimagine inclusive, asset-based education.
- By focusing on dually identified students within DLI, we can explore what's possible when systems are intentionally designed to support linguistic, cultural, and learning diversity.

25

COMPARING CHALLENGES OF PRACTICE FOR DUALY IDENTIFIED STUDENTS AND DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS



26

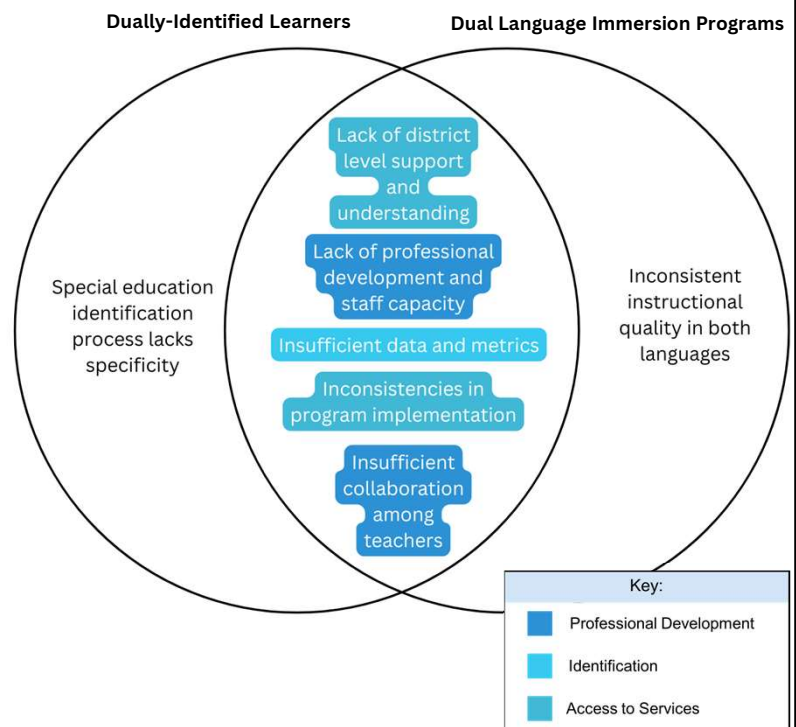
Convergences

The challenges of programming/services for dually identified students mirror those of dual language immersion programs.

Implication: Use DLI as a proof of concept for improving services for dually identified students.

Chat Feedback

1. What's missing?
2. Are these the right priorities/foci?



27

EXPLORING ISSUE & CONNECTING TO RESEARCH

Areas of Challenge:

- District Support & Understanding
- Staff Capacity and Professional Development
- Inconsistent Program Implementation
- Collaboration Among Educators
- Data and Metrics

Breakout Discussion

1. What do you think are the root causes or contributing factors? Which are important for DLI?
2. Are there any initiatives, strategies, or practices currently in place in your district to address the challenge that would be relevant to the DLI Playbook?
3. How do you envision the Playbook being used as a resource to address the challenge?



TWO 15 MIN. ROUNDS

Report out:

- What are priority issues?
- What's missing?

28

DISCUSSION REPORT OUT

Report Out

- I. What are priority issues that should be addressed in the DLI Playbook?
- II. What is missing?



Are there any new questions or wonderings?

Areas of Challenge

- District Support & Understanding
- Staff Capacity and Professional Development
- Inconsistent Program Implementation
- Collaboration Among Educators
- Data and Metrics

29

Consensus Next Steps: Asynchronous Feedback in Google Doc



Submit current guidance/outreach for dually identified in DLI programs



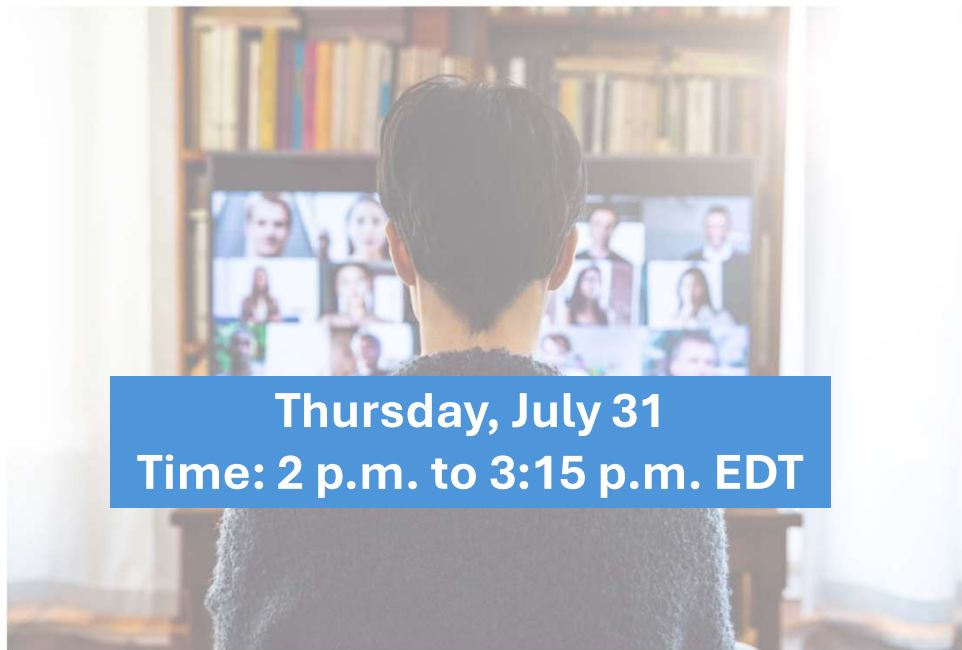
Identify gaps in DLI services for dually identified students

30

Next Virtual Meeting: July



Thursday, July 31
Time: 2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EDT



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OUTLINE OF WRITING COURSES

Outline of Courses on Teaching Academic Writing

COURSE 1: USING A COGNITIVE STRATEGIES APPROACH TO TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING TO ENGLISH LEARNERS

COURSE 2: THE READING, WRITING, AND LANGUAGE CONNECTION IN THE COGNITIVE STRATEGIES APPROACH

COURSE 3: WRITING AN **ANALYTICAL ESSAY** ABOUT THEME IN A LITERACY WORK

COURSE 4: TEACHING **ARGUMENTS OF OPINION** THAT SYNTHESIZE MULTIPLE TEXTS

COURSE 5: WRITING AND ANALYZING **NARRATIVE TEXTS**

COURSE 6: TEACHING **INFORMATIONAL WRITING** WHEN USING MULTIPLE TEXTS

COURSE 7: TEACHING TO **BLEND GENRES** THROUGH A MULTI-GENRE PROJECT

COURSE 1: USING A COGNITIVE STRATEGIES APPROACH TO TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING TO ENGLISH LEARNERS. This course provides an overview of research on cognitive strategies and the challenges English learners face in developing academic writing skills.

1. Introduction and Resources

2. Learn

2.1. Academic Nature of Writing

2.2. Understanding challenges: Who are English Learners?

2.2.1. The Constraints Faced by Students Writing in a New Language

2.2.2. The Importance of Focusing on Language in Teaching Writing

2.3. The Benefits of Cognitive Strategy Instruction

2.3.1. Introducing the Cognitive Strategies Approach and Tool Kit

2.3.2. Learning Cognitive Strategies Through Exemplar Text

2.4. Teaching in Action: Introducing the Cognitive Strategies

2.4.1. Thinking About Using the Cognitive Strategies in Your Context

2.5. The Power and the Promise

2.6. Pathway Courses Roadmap and Professional Learning Goals

3. Plan and Apply

3.1. A Guide to Planning for Instruction Using Cognitive Strategies

3.2. First Try with Cognitive Strategies

3.3. Additional Activities for Writing (Optional)

4. Reflect and Discuss

COURSE 2: THE READING, WRITING, AND LANGUAGE CONNECTION IN THE COGNITIVE STRATEGIES APPROACH. This course elaborates on the reading-writing connection and the importance of teaching language features for academic writing to English learners using a cognitive strategies approach.

4. Introduction and Resources

5. Learn A: Cognitive Strategies for Writing

- 2.1. Connecting Reading and Writing
 - 2.1.1. Research and Theoretical Foundations of Instructional Scaffolding
 - 2.1.2. Teacher Introduces Writing Tutorial to Students
- 2.2. Understanding the Prompt to Plan the Writing
 - 2.2.1. Language Focus: Prompt Analysis
 - 2.2.2. Structuring the Essay and a Road Map
- 2.3. Writing the Introduction: Hook, TAG, Story-Conflict, and Thesis
- 2.4. Examining Sample Student Essays
 - 2.4.1. Color-coding Papers

3. Learn B: Challenging Language Features for English Learners

- 3.1. Challenging Language Features for Writing in English
- 3.2. Introduction to Word-level Features
 - 3.2.1. Word Forms and Word Choice
 - 3.2.2. Fixed Expressions, Collocations, and Idioms
- 3.3. Introduction to Sentence-Level Features
 - 3.3.1. Nouns, Prepositional Phrases, and Verbs
 - 3.3.2. Sentence Structure, Boundaries, and Passive Construction
- 3.4. Discourse-level Features
- 3.5. Language Features Can Be Taught

4. Plan and Apply

- 4.1. Teaching in Action: Delivering the Writing Tutorial
- 4.2. Planning for Instruction
- 4.3. Apply What You've Learned

5. Reflect and Discuss

- 5.1. Reflect and Discuss
 - 5.2. Next Course Preview
-

COURSE 3: WRITING AN ANALYTICAL ESSAY ABOUT THEME IN A LITERACY WORK. In this course, teachers learn to apply the cognitive strategies approach and address language features for teaching specific writing genres, particularly argumentative writing in response to articles, texts, and information.

1. Introduction and Resources

2. Learn A: Argumentative/Analytical Writing

- 2.1. Overview of Argument Writing
- 2.2. Language demands for Argumentation
- 2.3. Structuring an Argumentative/Analytical Essay
 - 2.3.1. Completing the Analytical Essay on War of the Wall

3. Learn B: Reading and Writing an Argumentative Text Using Cognitive Strategies

- 3.1. Reading Using CS for Writing an Argumentative Essay about "The Horned Toad"
- 3.2. Prompt Analysis-Understanding the Prompt for an Analytical Essay
 - 3.2.1. Language Focus: Theme in Literary Analysis Essay
 - 3.2.2. Teaching in Action: Symbols and Topics That Lead to Theme
- 3.3. Introduction--Writing the Introduction: Hook, TAG, Story-Conflict, Thesis
- 3.4. Examining Sample Student Essays through Color-coding
- 3.5. Body--Writing an Effective Body Reflecting Student Interpretation
 - 3.5.1. Conveying Theme through Symbolism
 - 3.5.2. Teaching in Action: Textual Evidence Connecting Symbol and Theme
 - 3.5.3. Language Focus for Writing the Body
- 3.6. Conclusion--Writing an Effective Conclusion
 - 3.6.1. Language Focus for Writing the Conclusion

4. Plan and Apply

- 4.1. Pathway-developed Cognitive Strategies Tutorial on "The Horned Toad"
- 4.2. Planning for Instruction to Teach Writing an Analytical Essay
- 4.3. Apply What You've Learned

5. Reflect and Discuss

6. Learn C: Revision of Argumentative Writing

- 6.1. Examining Effective Writing
- 6.2. Instructional Response for Successful Revision
 - 6.2.1. Image Grammar: Writing with Brushstrokes
- 6.3. Scoring for Formative Assessment

7. Plan and Apply

- 7.1. Cognitive Strategies Tutorial for Revision
- 7.2. Planning for Instruction for Revising Writing
- 7.3. Apply What You've Learned

8. Reflect and Discuss

COURSE 4: TEACHING ARGUMENTS OF OPINION THAT SYNTHESIZE MULTIPLE TEXTS. In this course, participants learn to apply the cognitive strategies approach to teach students argumentative writing that synthesizes multiple texts and includes counterarguments.

1. Introduction and Resources

2. Learn: Part A - Cognitive Strategies for READING Multiple Texts

- 2.1. Teaching Students to Construct Arguments of Opinion Synthesizing Multiple Texts
- 2.2. Challenges English Learners Face when Writing Arguments of Opinion
- 2.3. Cognitive Strategies: Close Reading of Multiple Texts - Women's Suffrage Tutorial
 - 2.3.1. Using Selected Cognitive Strategies for Reading and Writing for History
 - 2.3.2. Addressing the Essential Question, Tapping Prior Knowledge, and Making Connections
 - 2.3.3. Reading Multiple Sources Using Cognitive Strategies
- 2.4. Optional - I Am Malala Tutorial (Reading)

3. Learn: Part B - WRITING an Argument Synthesizing Multiple Sources

- 3.1. Understanding the Prompt and Planning the Writing - Women's Suffrage
- 3.2. Formulating a Claim and Considering Counterarguments
 - 3.2.1. Claims and Reasoning in History
 - 3.2.2. Making Counterarguments
- 3.3. Structuring the Essay
 - 3.3.1. INTRODUCTION - Writing an Effective Introduction
 - 3.3.2. BODY - Writing the Body--Integrating Evidence and Reasoning to Support Argument
 - 3.3.2.1. Thinking About and Addressing Counterclaims
 - 3.3.3. CONCLUSION - Writing an Effective Conclusion
- 3.4. Language Focus for Writing Argumentation and Synthesizing Multiple Texts
- 3.5. Optional - I Am Malala Tutorial (Writing)

4. Learn: Part C - REVISION

- 4.1. The Importance of Revision and Student Reflection
- 4.2. Comparing More and Less Effective Essays
 - 4.2.1. Color-coding for Argumentative Writing
- 4.3. Revising for Academic Language

5. Plan and Apply

- 5.1. The Power and the Promise: Evolution of Student Writing
- 5.2. Pathway-Developed CS Tutorials: Women's Suffrage or I Am Malala
- 5.3. Planning for Instruction
- 5.4. Apply What You've Learned

6. Reflect and Discuss

COURSE 5: A COGNITIVE STRATEGIES APPROACH TO TEACH NARRATIVE WRITING. In this course, participants learn how the cognitive strategies approach helps teach students about the language features of narrative texts as a gateway to other types of writing, such as persuasive and report writing. Learning to write narrative texts helps students develop audience awareness, organizational skills, the ability to select and use specific, concrete details, and effectively apply the language conventions of this genre.

1. Introduction and Resources

2. Learn: Part A - Introduction to Narrative Writing

- 2.1. What Narratives Do: Exploring and Sharing One's Identity
 - 2.1.1. My Name, My Self Tutorial
- 2.2. The Characteristics and Elements of Narrative Writing
- 2.3. The Language Demands and Features of Narrative Writing

3. Learn: Part B - Understanding the Elements of Narratives by Writing an Autobiographical Incident Narrative

- 3.1. The Autobiographical Incident Narrative
- 3.2. Planning and Incorporating the Elements of the Narrative - Power of Descriptive Language
 - 3.2.1. Characters: Showing, Not Telling
 - 3.2.2. Setting: Building a Scene
 - 3.2.3. Point of View: Incorporating Dialogue
 - 3.2.4. Plot: Story Arc/Freytag Pyramid
- 3.3. Analyzing a Mentor Text
- 3.4. Writing an Autobiographical Narrative
- 3.5. Revision: STAR, Gallery Walk, Dear Friend Letter

4. Learn: Part C - READING a Narrative Using Cognitive Strategies and a Language Focus

- 4.1. Reading a Narrative Text Using Cognitive Strategies
- 4.2. Close Reading Focused on the Elements and Language Use in Narratives
 - 4.2.1. Understanding Symbols and Theme in Narrative Writing
 - 4.2.2. Symbolic Identity Vessel

5. Learn: Part D - WRITING and REVISING an Analysis of a Narrative

- 5.1. Tackling the Writing Task - Analyzing the Prompt (Do/What)
- 5.2. Planning and Writing an Analytical Essay: Writing about a Theme and Symbolism in a Narrative Text
 - 5.2.1. Writing the Introduction: Hook, TAG, and Story-Conflict/Thesis
 - 5.2.2. Learning from Sample Essays
 - 5.2.3. Writing the Body and Conclusion
- 5.3. Revision Strategies

6. Plan and Apply

- 6.1. Narrative Writing Pathway Tutorial
- 6.2. Planning for Instruction
- 6.3. Apply What You've Learned

7. Plan and Apply

COURSE 6: TEACHING INFORMATIONAL WRITING WHEN USING MULTIPLE TEXTS. This course covers how the cognitive strategies approach helps teach the text structures and language features of informative/explanatory writing, ensuring that students, especially English learners, can meet the genre's language demands.

COURSE 7: TEACHING TO BLEND GENRES THROUGH A MULTI-GENRE PROJECT. In this course, participants learn how to teach students to blend genres in a multi-genre project to elaborate on an idea.

**RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE OF CGCS
EL ACTIVITIES/STAFF**

Mentions, Citations, and Presentations of Council of the Great City Schools English Learners Documents

March 2024 to June 2025

State Education Agencies, Offices, and Support Centers

Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi (Region 7 Comprehensive Center)

Folsom, J., Goertzen, H., Norman-Goins, K., & Region 7 Comprehensive Center. (2024, May 1). *The science of reading for English learners (Part III)*.

<https://region7comprehensivecenter.org/the-science-of-reading-for-english-learners-part-iii/>

As the third part of a blog series on the “science of reading for English learners,” this piece references and includes an image of the Council’s theory of action for implementing a “comprehensive and connected” approach to foundational skills instruction for ELs. The foundational skills framework is cited in the reference list.

Maryland

Wright, C. M. (2024, April 30). *Adoption of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) identification frameworks* [Memo to Members of the State Board of Education].

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2024/0430/High-Quality-Instructional-Materials-Overview-A.pdf>

The memo to members of the Maryland State Board of Education seeking approval to adopt a newly developed materials selection framework, authored by Interim State Superintendent of Schools Carey Wright, includes a citation of the Council’s mathematics framework within the “Research & Scholarship Supporting the Framework” section of the supporting document entitled “Mathematics High-Quality Instructional Materials Selection Framework.”

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2024, August). *Stand-alone SEI endorsement course*

requirements. <https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/sei-standalone-requirement.pdf>

The document describing the requirements that a course must meet to qualify an educator for the SEI endorsement outside of an approved initial

licensure program specifies the Council’s foundational skills framework for English learners as “required reading.”

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2025, February 15). *SEI standalone submission requirements* 2024. <https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/sei-standalone-submission.pdf>

The memo outlining “SEI Stand-Alone Course Submission Requirements” TO Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) with approved initial teacher preparation programs that have an existing SEI course and wish to gain approval for a stand-alone SEI course lists the Council’s foundational skills framework for English learners as “required reading” for coursework leading to a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI).

New York

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, New York State Education Department. (2024, April). Leading the instructional shift in linguistically diverse schools. *Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages Newsletter*. <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/bilingual-ed/obewl-newsletter-april-2024-a.pdf>

The article references the need for a “comprehensive and connected approach” to foundational skills development for English learners as discussed in the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction. In the reference list, a citation of the document is included.

Articles and Reports

Escamilla, K., & Strong, K. (2024). *Voices from the field: Impact of the implementation of the science of reading instruction and policy on emergent bilingual/English learner literacy programs and teachers* [Report]. <https://californianstogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/24-Voices-from-the-Field-FINAL-digital.pdf>

The article references the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction for English learners to support the need for a literacy framework that is not limited to elements of “science of reading” policies.

Fierro, A. (2024, April 8). Ensuring equity in reading instruction. *Language Magazine*. <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2024/04/08/ensuring-equity-in-reading-instruction/>

The article references the role of oral language development in literacy instruction, discussed in the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction for English learners, and includes a citation for the document.

Mader, N., & Keillor, S. (2025). The uneven distribution of English learners and ESL-endorsed educators: Evidence from four districts in Tennessee. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 100(2), 198–208.

The article references demographic trends for English learners in Council-member districts.

Mosquera, A. (2024, July 17). Make a plan for oracy. *Language Magazine*.

<https://www.languagemagazine.com/2024/07/17/make-a-plan-for-oracy/>

The article explains the role of oral language development in literacy instruction, discussed in the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction for English learners, and includes a citation for the document.

Presentations

Assiraj, F., Ilk, M., Ortiz, A., & Kester, E. S. (2024, April 27). Leadership and systems: Putting it all together to develop sustainable evidence-aligned systems. *The Reading League Summit 2024*.

Council of the Great City Schools Chief of Teaching and Learning Farah Assiraj presented the foundational skills framework during a panel discussion at the Reading League’s summit.

English Learners Success Forum. (2024, February 7). *Science of reading & multilingual learners | Part 1 of 5* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBXb96UprMo&list=PLa6Gq6ljSp7xB--Dx5zHYamOwFL4Hz6K&index=1>

Council of the Great City Schools Chief of Teaching and Learning Farah Assiraj presented the foundational skills framework during a webinar hosted by the English Learners Success Forum.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD



November 2024

Impact of the Implementation of the
Science of Reading Instruction and Policy
on Emergent Bilingual/English Learner
Literacy Programs and Teachers

Kathy Escamilla, PhD
Kim Strong, PhD



National Committee
for Effective Literacy

in that it found that many schools are not providing adequate instruction to EBs/ELs in acquiring English proficiency nor are they providing access to academic subjects at their grade level. Finally, the report provided one more piece of evidence that longer-term effects of language of instruction on EB/EL outcomes favors benefits for bilingual programs compared with English-only approaches.

Added to the above, a large multi-year national study on reading comprehension titled “Reaping the Rewards of the Reading Understanding Initiative” (Pearson, Palincsar, Biancarosa & Berman, 2020) reported, among many other findings, that language drives every facet of comprehension, and that reading is an inherently cultural activity. Further, its major findings included emphasizing the important role that oral language plays in reading comprehension, that early language skills likely serve as a foundation for proficient reading comprehension in the elementary grades, and that sophisticated forms of linguistic knowledge and skill are associated with reading comprehension in early adolescence.

Studies on comprehension in the early grades (K-2) might conclude that phonemic awareness tends to be the most important predictor of reading achievement. Conversely, more meaning-based language variables, including receptive and expressive vocabulary, are more predictive of comprehension as students move into grades 2 and 3. Critically important for EB/ELs, however, is the evidence that reading comprehension is affected by many language factors beyond vocabulary including grammatical skills, orthography, morphosyntactic, register, argument, and discourse (Pearson et al, 2020).

Moreover, there is a dearth of research on comprehension for EB/ELs such that Pearson et al. (2020) said that a priority for future research should be on EB/ELs, “a growing but still underserved population. The irony of this population is that, even though they bring rich language experiences to the classroom, we seem unable to exploit their first language or interlingual (first to second language connections) linguistic resources to craft effective programs for deep reading experiences in English as a second language. Developing curriculum, and for that matter assessments, that exploit their linguistic resources, brought into relief by increasingly prominent and deeper understanding of the role of translanguaging and interlingual expertise (the special knowledge that accrues to students who work in more than one language), represents a real opportunity for scholars of comprehension to embrace in order to better exploit the special resources of bi- and multilingual students” (p. 7).

Applying the research to an instructional framework, the Council of Great City Schools (2023) published “A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for ELs” illustrating the need for a literacy framework for English learners that includes, but is not limited to, current SoR policies and instructional frameworks. This is a more comprehensive approach that includes the five pillars and adds components critical to literacy acquisition for EB/ELs.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly for the purposes of centering social justice in school programs for EBs/ELs, SoR state policies have been criticized as being:

- Monocultural and entrenched in Anglocentrism and Eurocentrism

References

August, D. and Shanahan, T., (eds.) (2006). *Developing Literacy in Second- Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language—Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Aukerman, M., & Chambers Schuldt, L. (2021). What matters most? Toward a robust and socially just science of reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56, S85-S103.

Blase, K., Fixsen, D., Sims, B., Ward, C. (2015). *Implementation Science – Changing Hearts, Minds, Behavior, and Systems to Improve Educational Outcomes*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Council of the Great City Schools (2023). *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills for English Learners Instructional Practice*.
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Cummins, J. (2011). Literacy engagement: Fueling academic growth for English learners. *The reading teacher*, 65(2), 142-146.

Cummins, J. (2012). The intersection of cognitive and sociocultural factors in the development of reading comprehension among immigrant students. *Reading and writing*, 25(8), 1973-1990.

Cyck, L.M., DeAnda, S., Moore, H. & Huerta, L. (2021). Cultural and linguistic adaptations of early language interventions: Recommendations for advancing research and practice. *American Journal of Speech and Language Pathology*, 30(3), 1224-1246.

Cyck, L. & Hammer, C. (2020). Beliefs, values, and practices of Mexican immigrant families towards language and learning in toddlerhood: Setting the foundation for early childhood education. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 50j, 157-178.

Flesch, R. (1955). *Why Johnny Can't Read ...and what you can do about it*. New York: Harper & Row.

Graham, S. (2018). Changing how writing is taught. *Review of Research in Education*. 43(1), 277-303.

The Uneven Distribution of English Learners and ESL-Endorsed Educators: Evidence from Four Districts in Tennessee

Nicole Mader^a and Samuel Keillor^b

^aVanderbilt University, Nashville, TN; ^bNorthwestern University, Evanston, IL

ABSTRACT

As many school districts across the United States adapt to growing and increasingly diverse English learner (EL) populations, access to highly qualified English as a second language (ESL) teachers has become a pressing policy concern. This study descriptively analyzes administrative data from four Tennessee school districts with rapidly growing EL populations to provide a landscape of the EL population, ESL-endorsed teachers, and their changes over time. We define a new measure to quantify the distribution of ESL-endorsed teachers between schools commensurate with the proportion of students who are ELs in those schools. We use this measure to employ a series of school fixed effects regression models on four academic outcomes for EL students. Findings include evidence that a relative gap of ESL-endorsed teachers compared to EL students at a school is negatively associated with average outcomes on the annual language proficiency exam for ELs but not on statewide standardized tests or graduation outcomes.

The enrollment figures and characteristics of English Learners (ELs) in many U.S. school districts have shifted considerably in recent years, with significant implications for policymakers, school leaders, and educators. Between 2011 and 2021, the number of ELs enrolled in public schools throughout the nation increased from 4.6 to 5.3 million or from 9.4% to 10.6% of all students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Spanish was the reported home language for over 4 million, or 76.5%, of these students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). “New destination states” such as Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee have not only seen rapid growth in the number of ELs but also have had to adapt to a growing number of home languages spoken by ELs, an increase in long-term ELs (LTELs), and an increase in the number of ELs who qualify for special education services (Sugarman, 2016). ELs are a growing population with diverse and unique learning needs.

At the same time, districts are facing teacher shortages, especially for populations with higher needs, like ELs (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). Furthermore, English as a second language (ESL) teachers are not always distributed within a district to match the distribution of ELs across schools. This paper uses data from four diverse school districts in Tennessee to ask the following research questions: (a) How are English Learners and ESL-endorsed teachers distributed across schools in Tennessee? (b) Is a school-level mismatch in the share of EL students and ESL-endorsed teachers associated with students’ academic outcomes?

After a review of the literature and the policy context specific to Tennessee, we answer these questions with a descriptive analysis of the EL population, ESL-endorsed teachers, and the

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school-level distribution of both. We then present findings from school fixed effects regression models on four academic outcomes for EL students and a discussion of the policy implications.

Background

Research on the unique experiences of ELs and the policies that implicate them have identified areas of special concern for researchers, policymakers, and relevant education authorities. This section explores equity concerns, classification and reclassification policies, and teacher quality.

Issues of equity and policy

ELs are often at risk of receiving an education inferior to their non-EL peers. Areas of concern include teacher and curriculum quality, appropriate funding models, segregation from non-EL peers, and validity of English language screeners and proficiency assessments (Gándara et al., 2003; Lavadenz et al., 2019; Zarate & Gándara, 2019). Issues of equity are amplified when considering intersections between race, language, disability, and other characteristics that color the environment that ELs navigate. ELs who are racially, linguistically, and economically marginalized may experience “triple segregation,” adding to barriers to their academic development (Gándara, 2020).

Relative to their non-EL peers, ELs can be overrepresented among special education services in some contexts and underrepresented in others (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020; Murphy & Johnson, 2023; Shin, 2020). By the end of the 2010s, many of the nation’s largest districts observed that ELs became equally or more likely to receive special education services than non-ELs (Uro & Lai, 2019). ELs identified as having a disability may lack appropriate support via both *de jure* and *de facto* administrative policy, with special education services often prioritized over language services (Kangas, 2014, 2018).

One subgroup of ELs that continues to require close attention are long-term English learners (LTEL). LTELs are typically defined as students who have received direct EL services for 7 or more years and make up a substantial portion of all EL students. Under Tennessee’s new state funding formula and newly adopted ELPA screener, discussed later in this paper, schools are incentivized to exit their students from the EL program before they are considered LTELs. These students often have strong English oral skills, weak home language and English literacy skills, poor grades, few disciplinary issues, and low expectations for themselves and are at-risk for dropping out (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020). Due to their slow academic and linguistic development, LTELs may be, to their detriment, misdiagnosed and removed from the mainstream learning environment (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020; Shin, 2020).

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The Uneven Distribution of English Learners and ESL-Endorsed Educators: Evidence from Four Districts in Tennessee

Nicole Mader^a and Samuel Keillor^b

^aVanderbilt University, Nashville, TN; ^bNorthwestern University, Evanston, IL

ABSTRACT

As many school districts across the United States adapt to growing and increasingly diverse English learner (EL) populations, access to highly qualified English as a second language (ESL) teachers has become a pressing policy concern. This study descriptively analyzes administrative data from four Tennessee school districts with rapidly growing EL populations to provide a landscape of the EL population, ESL-endorsed teachers, and their changes over time. We define a new measure to quantify the distribution of ESL-endorsed teachers between schools commensurate with the proportion of students who are ELs in those schools. We use this measure to employ a series of school fixed effects regression models on four academic outcomes for EL students. Findings include evidence that a relative gap of ESL-endorsed teachers compared to EL students at a school is negatively associated with average outcomes on the annual language proficiency exam for ELs but not on statewide standardized tests or graduation outcomes.

The enrollment figures and characteristics of English Learners (ELs) in many U.S. school districts have shifted considerably in recent years, with significant implications for policymakers, school leaders, and educators. Between 2011 and 2021, the number of ELs enrolled in public schools throughout the nation increased from 4.6 to 5.3 million or from 9.4% to 10.6% of all students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Spanish was the reported home language for over 4 million, or 76.5%, of these students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). “New destination states” such as Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee have not only seen rapid growth in the number of ELs but also have had to adapt to a growing number of home languages spoken by ELs, an increase in long-term ELs (LTELs), and an increase in the number of ELs who qualify for special education services (Sugarman, 2016). ELs are a growing population with diverse and unique learning needs.

At the same time, districts are facing teacher shortages, especially for populations with higher needs, like ELs (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). Furthermore, English as a second language (ESL) teachers are not always distributed within a district to match the distribution of ELs across schools. This paper uses data from four diverse school districts in Tennessee to ask the following research questions: (a) How are English Learners and ESL-endorsed teachers distributed across schools in Tennessee? (b) Is a school-level mismatch in the share of EL students and ESL-endorsed teachers associated with students’ academic outcomes?

After a review of the literature and the policy context specific to Tennessee, we answer these questions with a descriptive analysis of the EL population, ESL-endorsed teachers, and the

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school-level distribution of both. We then present findings from school fixed effects regression models on four academic outcomes for EL students and a discussion of the policy implications.

Background

Research on the unique experiences of ELs and the policies that implicate them have identified areas of special concern for researchers, policymakers, and relevant education authorities. This section explores equity concerns, classification and reclassification policies, and teacher quality.

Issues of equity and policy

ELs are often at risk of receiving an education inferior to their non-EL peers. Areas of concern include teacher and curriculum quality, appropriate funding models, segregation from non-EL peers, and validity of English language screeners and proficiency assessments (Gándara et al., 2003; Lavadenz et al., 2019; Zarate & Gándara, 2019). Issues of equity are amplified when considering intersections between race, language, disability, and other characteristics that color the environment that ELs navigate. ELs who are racially, linguistically, and economically marginalized may experience “triple segregation,” adding to barriers to their academic development (Gándara, 2020).

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MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Stand-Alone SEI Endorsement Course Requirements

August 2024

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370

www.doe.mass.edu

Using aligned language and content objectives; Developing academic language and vocabulary, literacy and reading comprehension, writing in content classrooms and oral language development; Using scaffolding and supports, and formative assessment techniques for ELs.

Practice

A field-based experience component is required where:

1. Strategies are modeled and practiced in course, then
2. Practiced with students in classroom (preferably ELs), then
3. Reflected upon and shared with course instructor for feedback. Peer feedback is also beneficial but optional.

Candidate should have at least four separate experiences to practice with students in a real classroom.

Required Readings

The following readings must be included in the course. Additional readings may be added but may not replace the readings listed below:

Calderón, M. (2011). *Teaching Reading K-5: Teaching Reading & Comprehension to English Learners, K-5*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press. Selected chapters: Chapter 6: Teaching Vocabulary; Chapter 7: Teaching Reading.

Calderón, M. and Slakk, S. (2018) *Teaching Reading to English Learners, Grades 6 - 12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Selected chapters: Chapter 3: Vocabulary Development; Chapter 4: Bridging Vocabulary and Reading; Chapter 5: Content Reading.

Council of Great City Schools. (2023). *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners: Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations*.

Gibbons, P. (2014). Learning to Write in a Second Language and Culture. *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning*. 2nd Ed., Portsmouth, NH: Heineman. P. 96-133

Instruction must cover the following topics related to the development of academic language and academic vocabulary development for ELs. Instruction must include the following topics and readings:

Required topics:

- Vocabulary strategies: Tiering vocabular for teaching ELs, 7-Steps for vocabulary development, sentence frames (see Appendix A)

Required reading:

- ELEMENTARY: Chapter 7: Teaching Vocabulary in Calderón (2011). *Teaching Reading K-5: Teaching Reading & Comprehension to English Learners, K-5*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- SECONDARY: Chapter 3: Vocabulary Development in Calderón and Slakk (2018) *Teaching Reading to English Learners, Grades 6 - 12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

6c. Developing reading comprehension

Instruction must cover ways to build literacy and reading comprehension in the content areas for ELs, including reference foundational literacy skills instruction for ELs.

Required topics:

- Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners
- Reading strategies: Think-Aloud, Partner Reading, Text-Dependent Questions, Reciprocal Teaching (See Appendix A)

Required reading:

- Chapter II: Envisioning a Comprehensive and Connected Approach to Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners (pp.23-36) in Council of Great City Schools. (2023). *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners: Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations*.
- ELEMENTARY: Chapter 7: Teaching Reading in Calderón (2011). *Teaching Reading K-5: Teaching Reading & Comprehension to English Learners, K-5*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- SECONDARY: Chapter 4: Bridging Vocabulary and Reading (pp.49-76) in Calderón and Slakk (2018) *Teaching Reading to English Learners, Grades 6 - 12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press
- ALL: Chapter 5: Content Reading (pp.77-92) in Calderón and Slakk (2018) *Teaching Reading to English Learners, Grades 6 - 12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

6d. Developing writing in the content areas

Instruction must include ways to promote writing in the content areas for ELs:

- Use of the WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors and writing rubrics to analyze ELs' writing. Participants must understand the purpose and structure of these tools and be given the opportunity to practice using them in class.
- Methods for engaging ELs at various English proficiency levels in the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing).
- Writing strategies: Write-Around, Ratiocination, Cut and Grow. (See Appendix A)

Required reading:

- Gibbons, P. (2014). Learning to Write in a Second Language and Culture. *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning. 2nd Ed.*, Portsmouth, NH: Heineman. P. 96-133

6e. Developing oral language

The organization may develop its own content for instruction covering ways to support speaking and oral language development in the content areas for ELs. This must include reference to Interactive Learning Activities (WIDA 2021) or Cooperative Learning (Calderon & Slakk 2018). Note that interactive learning and opportunities

SEI Stand-Alone Course Submission Requirements

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is interested in awarding the SEI endorsement to any educators who take and pass a SEI course offered by providers who have heretofore only been approved to provide the course as part of an initial licensure program. In support of this new SEI Endorsement option, ESE must ensure that the SEI stand-alone course meets a set of minimum requirements and includes specific content. The **outline** that follows describes the requirements that a course must meet to qualify an educator for the SEI endorsement outside of an approved initial licensure program.

Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) with approved initial teacher preparation programs that have an existing SEI course and wish to gain approval for a stand-alone SEI course to qualify educators for the SEI endorsement outside of an approved initial licensure program must submit the following to demonstrate to DESE that it meets course requirements:

- a. Completed checklist;
- b. A course syllabi that includes all the requirements outlined below and in the supplemental materials provided in a separate attachment;
- c. Assurance that any changes to the course submitted for this purpose (stand-alone SEI Endorsement course), has also been updated and included for initial licensure program(s).
- d. One course syllabi per SO, understanding the some SO's may have variations based on licensure area and level. Please note: the expectation is that any variations based on licensure area and level do not remove or modify any of the course requirements outlined below and in the attached supplemental information.

Submissions should be sent to: educatorpreparation@mass.gov (please include in the subject line: SEI Stand-Alone Course Submission). There is no deadline for submissions. The Office of Language Acquisition (OLA) will conduct a thorough review of the information provided to ensure that it meets the requirements. We expect reviews to take no more than 90 days. Review decision process will be as follows:

- If the course does not meet the requirements, the OLA will communicate any issues with the submission directly to the organization.
- Once approved, the organization will be notified by the Educator Preparation office and be provided with the procedures that will be used to endorse course-completers.

Ongoing monitoring of the course will be done through the Formal Review process.

SEI stand-alone course requirement checklist:

<u>SEI Course Requirements</u>	<u>Page(s) in Syllabi where this requirement has been addressed:</u>
Course Duration: At least 45 hours of direct instruction not including the field-based component	
Course Content:	
1. SEI Strategies: The following core strategies must be taught during the course:	
1a. Tiering vocabulary	
1b. 7-steps vocabulary	
1c. Think-aloud	
1d. Partner reading	
1e. Reciprocal teaching	
1f. Text-dependent questions	
1g. Write Around	
1h. Ratiocination	
1j. Cut and grow	
2. WIDA ELD Standards and Frameworks: Explanation of how to use the WIDA standards and assessment framework for planning instruction, including Performance Definitions, Can-Do Descriptors, Model Performance Indicators, and ACCESS Test Results.	
3. SEI Instructional Framework: Explanation of the Sheltered English Immersion program model as defined in MA and Sheltered Content Instruction.	
4. Foundational Understandings	
4a. Basic second language acquisition	
4b. Asset-based approach to English Learner Education.	
4c. Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices	
4d. Federal and state laws and regulations regarding the education of ELs.	
5. English Learners and special populations	
5a. Definition of “English Learner” and related terms	
5b. EL Special populations, including Newcomers, SLIFE, Long-term ELs, and ELs with Disabilities.	
5c. EL Data in Massachusetts	
6. English Language Development in Content Classrooms	
6a. Aligned language and content objectives	
6b. Developing academic vocabulary	
6c. Developing reading comprehension	
6d. Developing writing in the content areas	
6e. Developing oral language	
6f. Scaffolding and supports for ELLs in content classes	
6g. Formative assessment techniques for ELLs	

<p>Practice: A field-based experience component where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies are modeled and practiced in course, then • Practiced with students in classroom (preferably ELLs), then • Reflect and share with course instructor for feedback (peer feedback good as well). • Candidate should have at least four separate experiences to practice with students in a real classroom. 	
<p>Required Readings: The following readings must be included in the course:</p>	
<p>Calderón, M. 2011. Teaching reading and comprehension to English learners, K–5Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6, Teaching Vocabulary, 67-83. • Chapter 7: Teaching Reading, 85-103. 	
<p>Calderón, M. and S. Slakk (2018) Teaching Reading to English Learners, Grades 6 - 12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 3, Vocabulary Development, 29-48. • Chapter 4, Bridging Vocabulary and Reading, 49-76. • Chapter 5, Content Reading, 77-92. 	
<p>Council of Great City Schools. (2023). <i>A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners: Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations.</i></p>	
<p>Gibbons, P. (2014). Learning to Write in a Second Language and Culture. <i>Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning. 2nd Ed.</i>, Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 96-133.</p>	

VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

Council of the Great City Schools Meetings with English Learners Program Directors

SY 2024-25: August 2024 to June 2025

Performance on Purpose Learning Session 1

08-02-2024 | 03:00 PM - 04:30 PM ET | Virtual

EL Program Directors Meeting

09-26-2024 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

EL Program Directors Meeting

10-24-2024 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

Performance on Purpose Learning Session 2

11-01-2024 | 03:00 PM - 04:30 PM ET | Virtual

EL Program Directors Meeting

12-05-2024 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

Impact of Federal Immigration Policy Shifts on Public School Districts

12-12-2024 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Webinar (Husch Blackwell and CGCS)

U.S. Department of Education and WestEd on DLI Playbooks

01-10-2025 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

Performance on Purpose Learning Session 3

01-31-2025 | 03:00 PM - 04:00 PM ET | Virtual

EL Program Directors Meeting

02-13-2025 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

EL Program Directors Meeting

03-27-2025 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

2025 Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education Directors Meeting

05-13-2025 - 05-17-2025 | Lord Baltimore Hotel (Baltimore, MD)

EL Program Directors Meeting + DLI Working Group

06-26-2025 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

Upcoming Scheduled Meetings

EL Program Directors Meeting

09-25-2025 | 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM ET | Virtual

SY 2024-25 Virtual Meeting Registrants

September 2024 to June 2025

A total of **135 individuals** from **61 Council-member districts** registered to participate in the monthly virtual meetings for English learners program directors and staff during SY 2024-25.

Participating District	Unique Staff Members
Albuquerque Public Schools	3
Anchorage School District	3
Atlanta Public Schools	3
Aurora Public Schools	2
Austin Independent School District	1
Baltimore City Public Schools	4
Birmingham City Schools	1
Boston Public Schools	1
Broward County Public Schools	5
Buffalo Public Schools	3
Charleston County School District	1
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	3
Chicago Public Schools	5
Clark County School District	4
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	2
Dayton Public Schools	2
Denver Public Schools	3
Des Moines Public Schools	1
Detroit Public Schools Community District	1
District of Columbia Public Schools	3
Durham Public Schools	1
Duval County Public Schools	1
East Baton Rouge Public Schools	1
Fayette County Public Schools	2
Fort Worth Independent School District	3
Fresno Unified School District	2
Guilford County Schools	3
Hawaii State Department of Education	1
Hillsborough County Public Schools	1
Houston Independent School District	1
Indianapolis Public Schools	1
Jackson Public Schools	1
Jefferson County Public Schools	2

Participating District	Unique Staff Members
Jersey City Public Schools	1
Kansas City Public Schools	2
Little Rock School District	1
Long Beach Unified School District	3
Los Angeles Unified School District	3
Madison Metropolitan School District	3
Memphis - Shelby County Schools	2
Metro Nashville Public Schools	1
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	1
Minneapolis Public Schools	3
New York City Public Schools	4
Newark Public Schools	1
Oklahoma City Public Schools	1
Omaha Public Schools	8
Orange County Public Schools	2
Pinellas County Public Schools	1
Portland Public Schools	3
Richmond Public Schools	1
Rochester City School District	1
San Antonio Independent School District	5
San Diego Unified School District	2
Santa Ana Unified School District	2
Seattle Public Schools	1
St. Paul Public Schools	2
The School District of Palm Beach County	5
The School District of Philadelphia	2
Toledo Public Schools	1
Tulsa Public Schools	2
Grand Total	135

The districts that did not participate in the SY 2024-25 meetings were—

Arlington Independent School District, Bridgeport Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, Columbus City Schools, El Paso Independent School District, Milwaukee Public Schools, NOLA Public Schools, Norfolk Public Schools, Oakland Unified School District, Phoenix Union High School District, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Providence Public School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, San Francisco Unified School District, St. Louis Public Schools, Washoe County School District, Wichita Public Schools, and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

BIRE MEETING

2025 Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education Directors Meeting

May 13-17, 2025

Attendees

The event saw strong participation from 30 unique member districts. Non-member districts made up a smaller portion of attendees, representing 4 unique districts. An additional 18 attendees came from CGCS staff, consultants, and education-related

Table 1. Attendees by School District or Organization

Type and Organization Name	Number
Member District	111
Albuquerque Public Schools	3
Anchorage School District	3
Atlanta Public Schools	3
Aurora Public Schools	2
Baltimore City Public Schools	7
Boston Public Schools	2
Broward County Public Schools	3
Chicago Public Schools	2
Clark County School District	8
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	8
Denver Public Schools	4
District of Columbia Public Schools	17
Fayette County Public Schools	6
Guilford County Schools	3
Jackson Public Schools	1
Jefferson County Public Schools	5
Madison Metropolitan School District	3
Memphis Shelby County Schools	3
Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools	3
Newark Public Schools	1
Oklahoma City Public Schools	1
Omaha Public Schools	3
Orange County Public Schools	3
Pinellas County Schools	1
St. Paul Public Schools	4
The School District of Palm Beach County	2
The School District of Philadelphia	2
Tulsa Public Schools	2
Washoe County School District	5
Wichita Public Schools	1

Type and Organization Name	Number
Non-Member District	15
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	1
Lackawanna Public Schools	1
Montgomery County Public Schools	11
Sampson County Schools	2
CGCS Staff and Consultants	11
Council of the Great City Schools	6
New York University, Steinhardt	1
Schooling Justice Initiative	1
The City University of New York	1
WestEd	2
Sponsor	65
Grand Total	202

Meeting Evaluation Survey Results Summary

Respondent Characteristics (n = 20)

- **Roles:** 85% were central office administrators; 5% were school-based leaders; 10% identified as “Other.”
- **Primary Focus Areas:**
 - EL Program Administration: 70%
 - English Language Development: 20%
 - Other: 10%

General Sessions (n = 20)

General sessions were a cornerstone of the event. The five most highly rated sessions—based on the number of participants who found them “Very Helpful” or “Helpful”—were:

1. **Rising Together to Welcome Newcomers** – 18 of 20 respondents
2. **Supporting Foundational Skills Instruction for ELs** – 18 of 20 respondents
3. **Understanding EL Trends and Identifying Challenges of Practice** – 16 of 20 respondents
4. **Thinking Outside the Box: Promoting Multilingualism** – 16 of 20 respondents
5. **Advancing EL Success Through Systems, Data, and Schoolwide Support** – 15 of 20 respondents

These sessions reflected strong interest in both welcoming practices and systemic approaches to EL success.

Breakout Sessions (n = 20)

Breakout sessions allowed participants to explore specific topics in smaller groups. While attendance varied, several sessions stood out:

- **Welcoming Newcomers** – 9 attendees; 7 rated it “Very Helpful” or “Helpful”
- **Strategic Scheduling and Targeted Support** – 11 attendees; 7 rated it positively
- **Embedding Support Across Content Areas** – 11 attendees; 9 rated it positively

These sessions provided actionable strategies for improving EL support structures at the school and district levels.

Speaker Composition (n = 20)

Participants evaluated the mix of presenters:

- **Urban District Presenters:** 80% said “Just Right”
- **Outside Experts/Researchers:** 75% “Just Right,” 15% “Too Many”
- **Council Staff Presenters:** 90% “Just Right”

This balance ensured that sessions were grounded in both research and real-world practice.

Identified Areas for Change: Priorities for District Action (n = 20)

Attendees reflected on areas in their districts that may require change. The most frequently cited areas needing **major changes** included:

- **Building Educator Capacity Across Content Areas** – 7 respondents
- **Enhancing PD for Reading and Writing Instruction** – 7 respondents
- **Developing Pathways to Multilingualism** – 6 respondents
- **Using AI and Translation Technologies** – 5 respondents

Interaction and Collaboration (n = 20)

- **50%** of participants felt there were sufficient opportunities for interaction.
- **45%** wanted more time for discussion and collaboration.

- 5% had no opinion.
-

Materials Review Sessions (n = 20)

Participants explored a range of educational products. The most attended sessions included:

- **Curriculum Associates, Participate Learning, TalkingPoints, TranslateLive** – each attended by 5 participants

Top factors influencing attendance (n = 17):

- Relevance of materials – 10
 - Interest in vendor – 7
 - Clarity of session descriptions – 7
 - Relevance to district role – 7
-

Challenge of Practice Practicum: Collaborative Problem Solving in Action (n = 19)

Daily participation numbers (n=17):

- **Day 1:** 17
- **Day 2:** 16
- **Day 3:** 12

Most popular topic area among survey respondents (n = 18):

- **Dual Language and Multilingual Programming** – 11 participants

Top benefits (n = 17):

- Exchanging ideas with colleagues – 12
- Time to plan with district teams – 12
- Hearing new perspectives – 10
- Consulting with experts – 9

Post-Meeting Actions (n = 17)

Participants plan to:

- **Convene teams** to explore challenges – 12
- **Share insights** with colleagues – 9
- **Use session protocols** – 8
- **Pilot new strategies** – 3
- **Other:** 1 participant plans to propose dual language expansion to their school board

Follow-Up Engagement (n = 17)

Interest in continued collaboration was strong:

- **Periodic updates with other districts** – 9
- **Thought partner meetings** – 9
- **Monthly progress reports** – 4
- **Not interested** – 2

One participant noted that while follow-up would be valuable, time constraints for district leaders may limit participation.

Social Media Coverage





Council of the Great City Schools

9,428 followers

3w • 🌐

Day 2 of #BIRE25 centered on critical reflection, understanding our history and educational context, and the launch of Challenge of Practice sessions. Participants engaged deeply with data and uncovered key challenges facing English learners in their districts. Through dialogue and collaboration, new insights emerged and areas for strategic improvement were identified. We're excited about the tangible solutions that will emerge from our collective efforts in the days ahead.





Council of the Great City Schools

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3w •

At Day 3 of [#BIRE25](#), powerful sessions highlighted trauma-informed approaches to immigrant mental health, strategies to expand access and strengthen Dual Language Immersion programs, and data systems that drive English learner success. Student and family voices shared real challenges and hopes, while district teams translated learning into bold, actionable plans.





Council of the Great City Schools

9,428 followers

3w • 🌐

The Council of the Great City Schools and [Curriculum Associates](#) are proud to announce Kevin Barton as the [#BIRE25](#) recipient of the Valeria Silva Award for Outstanding Contributions to English Learner Achievement. Kevin's leadership in [Clark County School District](#) has transformed what's possible for multilingual learners. He has built innovative and sustainable systems that center access and student voice. From newcomer programming to L-TEL course pathways and cross-department collaboration, his work is changing lives and shifting mindsets. Congratulations, Kevin.





Council of the Great City Schools

9,428 followers

2w • Edited •

What an incredible week at the Council's [#BIRE25](#)! We learned so much from one another through rich sessions, collaboration, and action planning. Leaders have returned home energized with new strategies to advance opportunity for English learners nationwide.



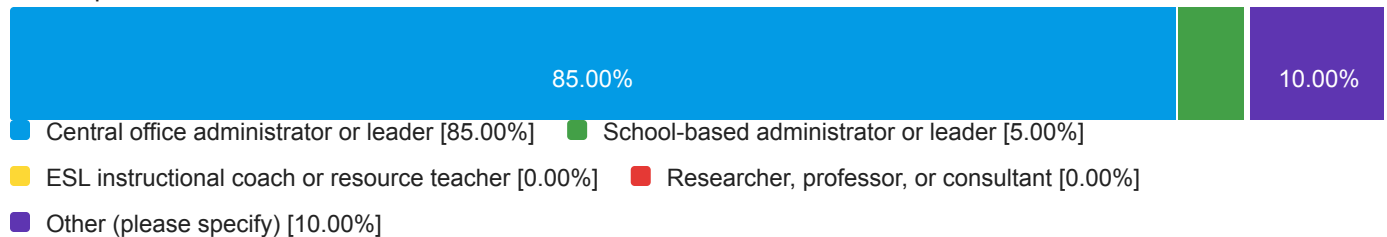
2025 Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education Directors Meeting

Evaluation Survey Summary

Respondent Characteristics

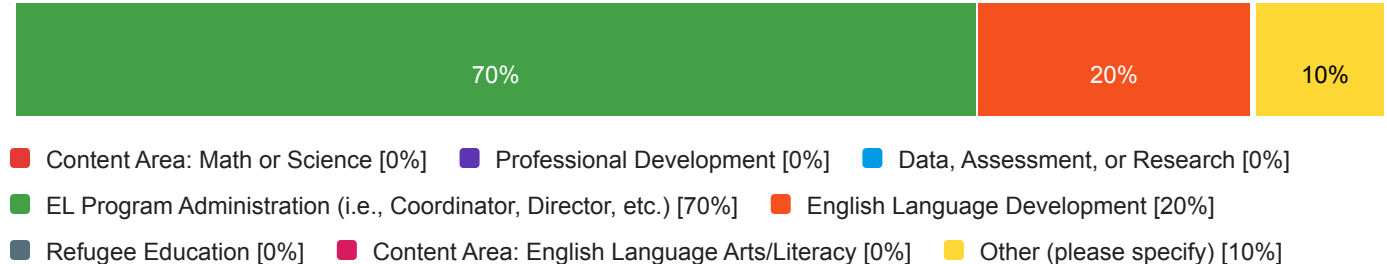
Please indicate your role. - Selected Choice

20 Responses



Please indicate the primary focus of your work. - Selected Choice

20 Responses



General Sessions and Breakouts

How would you describe the content of the following GENERAL SESSIONS?

20 Responses

Session Name and Presenters	Very Helpful	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Did Not Attend
RISING TOGETHER TO WELCOME NEWCOMERS AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES (Kerri Evans, Assistant Professor, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Qi Shi, Professor, Loyola University; Joan Dabrowski, Chief Academic Officer, Baltimore)	8	10	1	0	1
SHAPING BELONGING: U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW AND MIGRATION (Julian Lim, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins University)	8	4	6	1	1
SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS (David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS; Tina Ruiz, EL Coordinator, Baltimore; Jennifer Walker, Educational Associate, Baltimore; Vongmany Edmonds, Manager of Instruction, Office of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY); Jill Handley, Assistant Superintendent of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY))	8	10	1	0	1
UNDERSTANDING EL TRENDS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES OF PRACTICE (De'Aysia Barner, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS; David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS)	8	8	2	1	1
OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE (Valeria Silva, Independent Consultant; Jen Chard, City University of New York; Farah Assiraj, CEO and Founder, cairEducation; Okhee Lee, New York University; Tammy Alsace, Independent Consultant; Gabriela Uro, Program Director, WestEd; Kate Wright, Project Director, WestEd)	7	7	3	2	1
SUPPORTING REFUGEE YOUTH: TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS (Nouf Bazaz, Clinical Assistant Professor, Loyola University)	6	6	5	1	2

Session Name and Presenters	Very Helpful	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Did Not Attend
THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: PROMOTING MULTILINGUALISM FOR ALL IN A CHANGING WORLD (Sarah Shin, Professor of Education, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Margaret McKenzie, Director, Multilingual Programs & Services, Atlanta; Olimpia Bahena, Deputy Chief, Multilingual-Multicultural Education, Chicago)	6	10	2	0	2
ADVANCING ENGLISH LEARNER SUCCESS THROUGH SYSTEMS, DATA, AND SCHOOLWIDE SUPPORT (Vongmany Edmonds, Manager of Instruction, Office of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY); Justin Matson, Executive Director of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY); Jill Handley, Assistant Superintendent of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY))	7	8	4	1	0
ASSET-BASED ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (Danyang Wang, Assistant Professor, Speech-Language Pathology, Towson University; Margarita Gomez, Associate Professor of Literacy Education, Loyola University)	4	7	8	0	1
A JUSTICE-CENTERED APPROACH TO STEM EDUCATION TO EMPOWER MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (Okhee Lee, Professor, New York University)	6	6	3	0	5
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CONNECTING READING AND WRITING (Vanina Hackett, EL Director, Guilford County (NC); Soledad Lardies-Dunst, EL Coordinator, Guilford County (NC))	3	6	4	1	6

How would you describe the content of the following BREAKOUT SESSIONS?

20 Responses

Field	Very Helpful	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Did Not Attend
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS: IDENTIFICATION, SUPPORT, AND ENGAGEMENT (David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS; Jen Chard, RISLUS Research Associate, City University of New York; Beata Arceo, Director of International Student Services, Chicago; Erika Pereira, Director, Academic Planning & Itinerant ESOL Services, DC)	3	4	2	0	11
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION (Vanina Hackett, EL Director, Guilford County (NC); Soledad Lardies-Dunst, EL Coordinator, Guilford County (NC); Sophie Ly, Assistant Director of Multilingual Learning, St. Paul)	3	3	3	0	11
POSSIBILITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS: AI AND TRANSLATION/INTERPRETATION TECHNOLOGIES (Molly Hegwood, Executive Director, Office of English Learners, Metro Nashville; Manuel Diaz De Leon, Coordinator, Office of English Learners, Metro Nashville; Rose Santiago, Director, Multilingual & Gifted and Talented Services, Fayette County (KY); Jessica Sanchez, Liaison of Interpretation and Translation Department, Fayette County (KY); Marisol Diaz, Director, Bilingual, ESL, and World Language Education, Newark)	3	4	2	1	10
WRITING OUR NARRATIVES: TELLING AND LEADING WITH IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES (Saima Sitwat, Assistant Director of Ecumenical and Interfaith Ministries, Loyola University)	2	3	5	0	10
MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH STRATEGIC SCHEDULING AND TARGETED SUPPORT (Patricia Ordóñez-Feliciano, Executive Director, Multicultural Education & School Transformation, Palm Beach; Raquel Ortiz, Director, DCPS Welcome Center, DC; Ana Acevedo, Foreign Transcript Specialist, DC)	4	3	4	0	9

Field	Very Helpful	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Did Not Attend
EMBEDDING SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS ACROSS CONTENT AREAS (Megan Waugh, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County (NV); Maria Reamore, Director, Multilingual Learners, Baltimore; Jalima Alicea, Executive Director, Teaching & Learning, Baltimore)	4	5	2	0	9

How would you describe the mix of general session and breakout speakers?

Field	Not Enough	Just Right	Too Many
Urban district presenters	3	16	1
Outside experts/researchers	2	15	3
Council staff presenters	0	18	1

Based on your learning in the general and breakout sessions, please indicat...

Action	No Changes Needed	Some Changes	Major Changes
Screening and placement of ELs in advanced coursework	8	9	1
Creating welcoming environments that expand opportunities for newcomers	4	11	2
Promoting awareness of the impacts of navigating U.S. immigration law on ELs and families	6	9	1
Supporting foundational literacy development for ELs	3	11	3
Developing or expanding pathways to multilingualism	2	10	6
Leveraging systems, data, and schoolwide supports to advance EL success	1	13	4

Action	No Changes Needed	Some Changes	Major Changes
Training teachers on asset-based assessments of language development	1	15	1
Implementing justice-centered STEM education for multilingual learners	4	12	2
Enhancing professional development that connects reading and writing instruction for ELs	3	8	7
Developing protocols and guidance for using AI and translation technologies with ELs	4	6	5
Enhancing scheduling and targeted supports to improve student access	2	9	5
Building capacity of educators to support ELs across content areas	1	10	7

Were there sufficient opportunities to interact with colleagues, share information, and discuss lessons learned during the general and breakout sessions? (Provide additional comments or suggestions below.) - Selected Choice



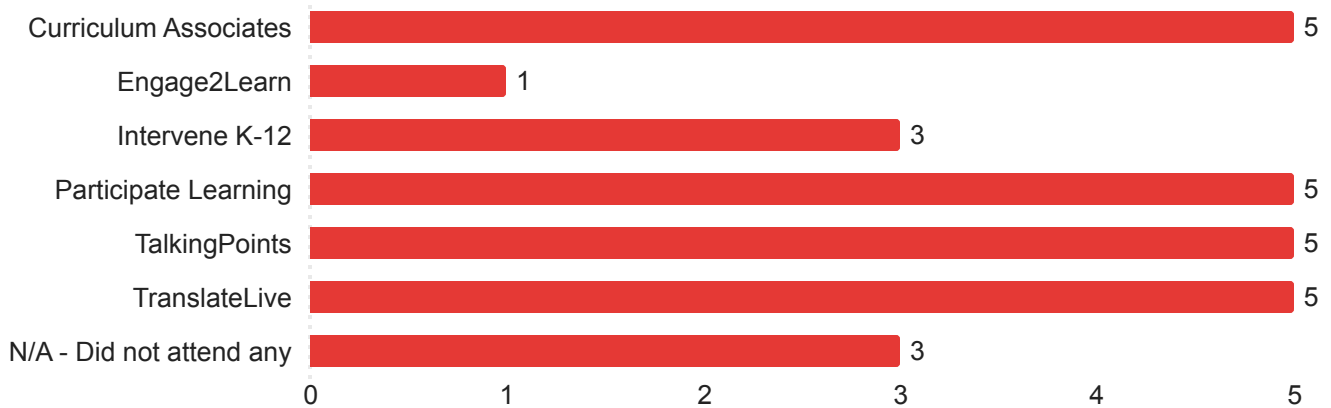
■ YES, there were sufficient opportunities for interaction, sharing, and discussion. [50%]

■ NO, I would like to see MORE opportunities for interaction, sharing, and discussion. ... ■ N/A - No opinion. [5%]

Materials Review Sessions

Which materials review sessions did you attend? (Check all that apply.)

20 Responses



What factor/s impacted your decision of which materials review sessions to attend? - Selected Choice

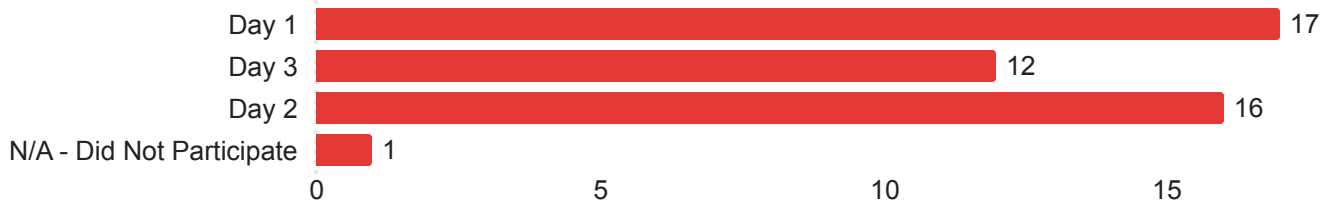
17 Responses

Field	Choice Count
Relevance of material/s presented	10
Experience with material's (e.g., already adopted, rejected in prior review, etc.)	1
Interest in vendor/company overall	7
Content of session description (e.g., clarity, specificity, etc.)	7
Relevance to role in district	7
Materials adoption cycle in district (e.g., adoption cycle passed, etc.)	0
Other (specify below)	1

Challenge of Practice Exercise/Practicum

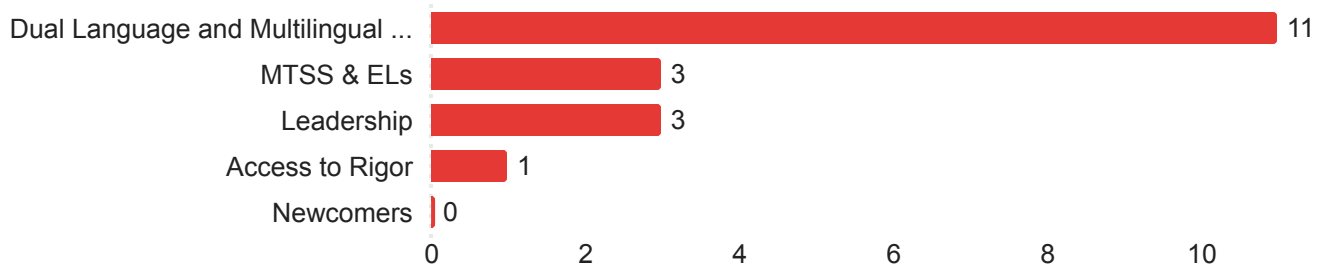
In which days of the challenge of practice exercise/practicum did you participate? (Select all that apply.)

19 Responses



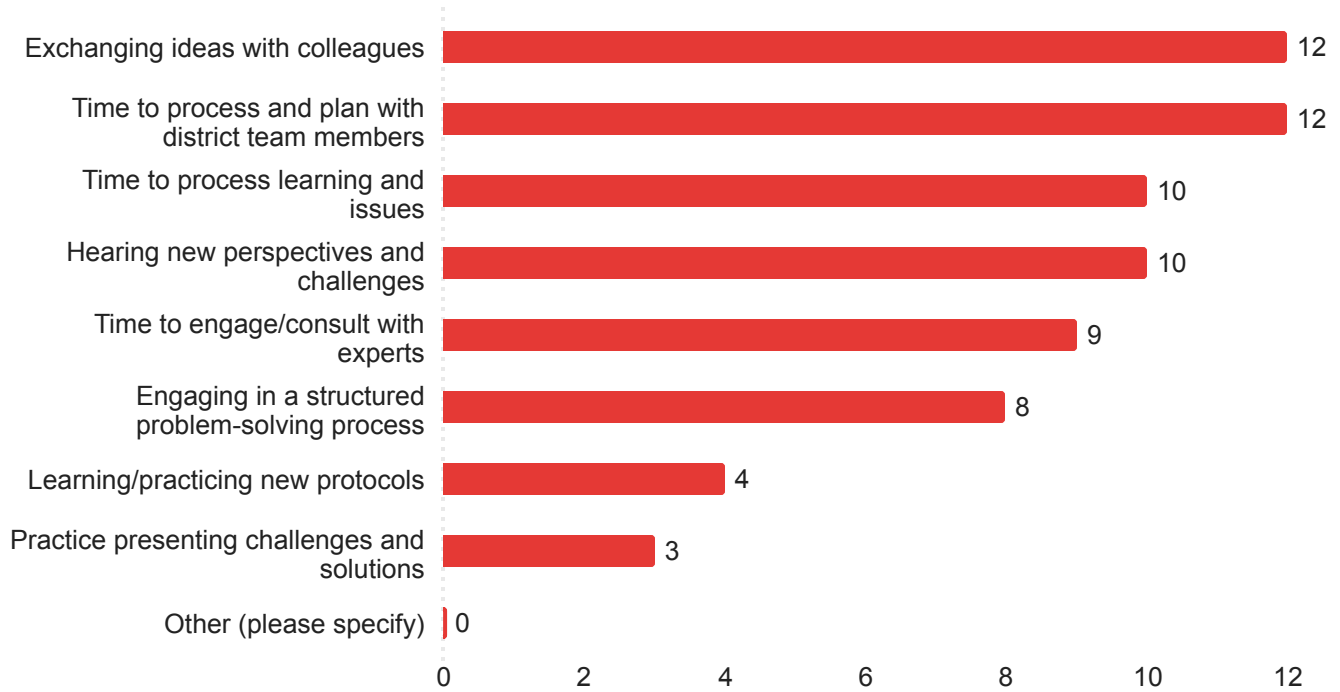
In which challenge of practice topic area group did you participate?

18 Responses



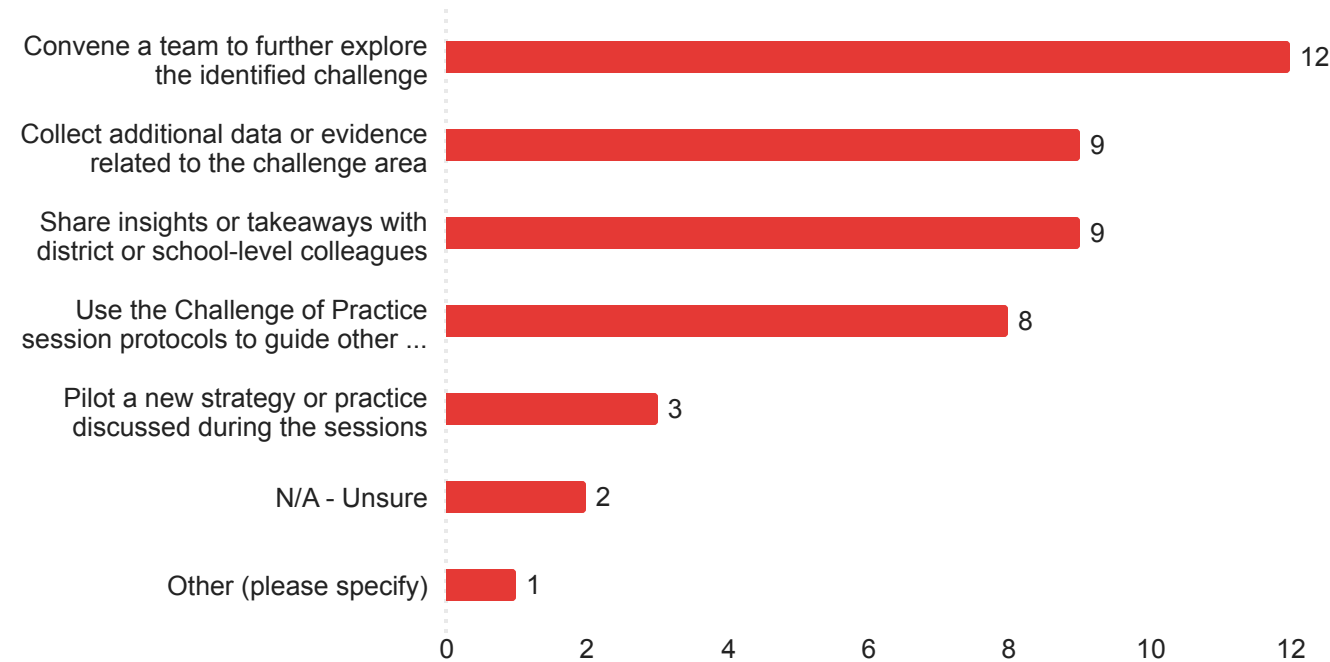
What did you find to be beneficial about the challenge of practice exercise/practicum experience? (Select all that apply.) - Selected Choice

17 Responses



What actions do you intend to take in your district as a result of the challenge of practice exercise/practicum experience? (Select all that apply.) - Selected Choice

17 Responses



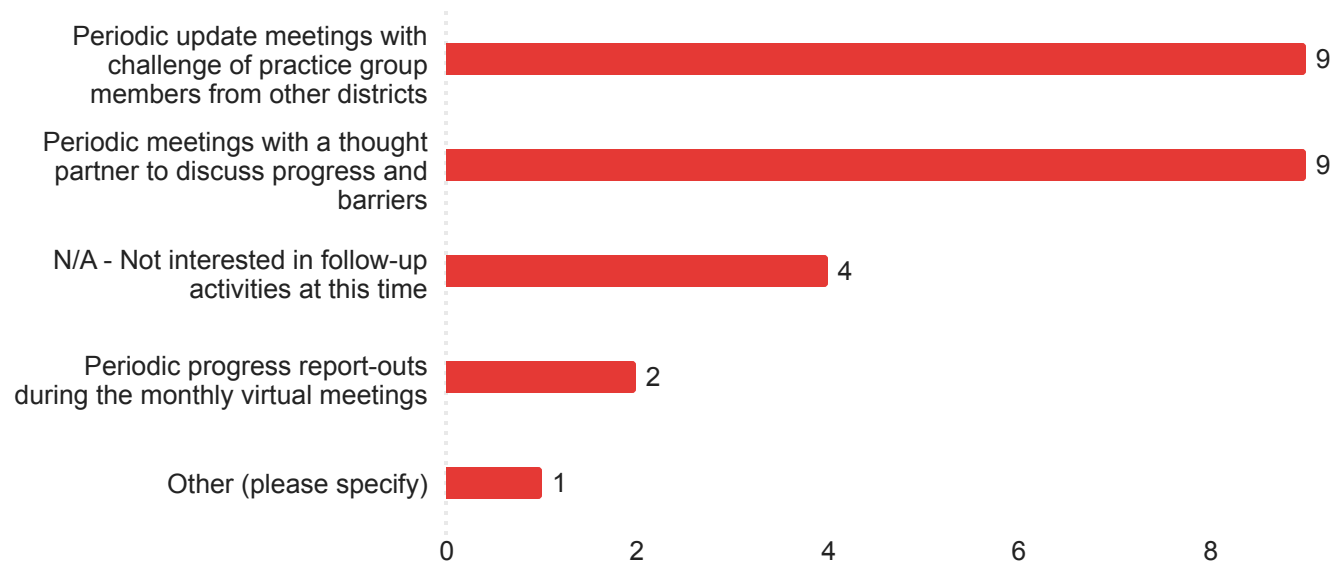
Q36_7_TEXT - Other (please specify) - Text

Other (please specify) - Text

Develop proposal for DL expansion to bring to the Board.

What types of follow-up activities would you participate in to continue the work started in the challenge of practice exercise/practicum? - Selected Choice

17 Responses



Q37_5_TEXT - Other (please specify) - Text

Other (please specify) - Text

The meeting and updates would be great but I also know that those in leadership positions carry many hats and are extremely busy and may not be able to commit to a certain schedule.



Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education Meeting

Baltimore, MD | May 13-17, 2025

Rising Together: Shaping a Future of Equity

MEETING AGENDA

<i>Tuesday, May 13, 2025 – Baltimore School Visits</i>		
7:00 am – 8:00 am	BREAKFAST AND CHECK-IN	LB TAVERN
8:00 am – 3:00 pm	SCHOOL VISITS – PRE-REGISTERED ATTENDEES ONLY	
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	BREAK	
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	SCHOOL VISIT DEBRIEF	BALTIMORE THEATER
5:30 pm – 7:00 pm	PRE-MEETING RECEPTION	LB SKYBAR

<i>Wednesday, May 14, 2025</i>		
7:00 am – 12:00 pm	REGISTRATION	CALVERT FOYER
7:00 am – 8:00 am	BREAKFAST	VERSAILLES
8:00 am – 8:15 am	BALTIMORE AND COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS WELCOME Representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools and the Council of the Great City Schools will welcome attendees and provide opening remarks.	SALON ACD
	<p>PRESENTERS:</p> <p><i>Joan Dabrowski</i>, Chief Academic Officer, Baltimore</p> <p><i>Ray Hart</i>, Executive Director, CGCS</p>	
8:15 am – 8:45 am	KEYNOTE ADDRESS This keynote will set the stage for BIRE 2025 by highlighting the strengths of immigrant and refugee families and the power of community partnerships. Catalina Rodriguez-Lima, Director of Baltimore’s Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA), has led initiatives to expand language access, strengthen trust between immigrant communities and city agencies, and develop policies that promote economic inclusion. She spearheaded the creation of the New Americans Task Force and co-authored <i>The Role of Immigrants in Growing Baltimore</i> report. Her leadership has helped position Baltimore as a national model for immigrant integration, ensuring that multilingual communities thrive.	SALON ACD
	<p>PRESENTER:</p> <p><i>Catalina Rodriguez-Lima</i>, Director, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Baltimore</p>	
8:45 am – 9:00 am	CGCS ENGLISH LEARNERS TEAM WELCOME AND MEETING LOGISTICS The Council’s English Learners (EL) Team will welcome attendees and provide an overview of the meeting logistics. Participants will learn about the <i>Challenge of Practice Work Sessions</i> —dedicated daily time to work on a challenge of practice in small groups with the assistance of expert thought partners.	SALON ACD
	<p>PRESENTERS:</p> <p><i>David Lai</i>, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS</p> <p><i>De’Aysia Barner</i>, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS</p>	
9:00 am – 9:50 am	RIISING TOGETHER TO WELCOME NEWCOMERS AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES This session explores the barriers to opportunity faced by English learners and strategies for supporting these students in K-12 settings. Kerri Evans will share insights on creating safe, supportive environments that foster social-emotional well-being, address systemic barriers, and build pathways to higher education and workforce opportunities. Qi Shi will highlight the	SALON ACD

persistent challenges English learners face in accessing STEM and advanced coursework, presenting opportunities for expanding participation through an asset-based lens. Joan Dabrowski will offer a district-level perspective on initiatives to improve access for English learners and the outcomes of these efforts. Together, these discussions emphasize the collective responsibility to expand opportunities for all students to thrive.

FACILITATOR:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Kerri Evans, Assistant Professor, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Qi Shi, Professor, Loyola University

Joan Dabrowski, Chief Academic Officer, Baltimore

9:50 am – 10:00 am **REFLECTION AND TRANSITION**

10:00 am – 10:50 am **SHAPING BELONGING: U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW AND MIGRATION** **SALON ACD**
 This session explores the history of U.S. immigration law and its profound impact on race, migration, and belonging, particularly for immigrant and refugee students in schools. Julian Lim will draw from her research in *Porous Borders: Multiracial Migrations and the Law in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* to examine how shifting policies and perceptions have shaped the treatment of immigrants. By analyzing exclusionary immigration policies and their ongoing impact, this session will provide essential historical context to understand and address the challenges faced by immigrant students and their families.

PRESENTER:

Julian Lim, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins University

10:50 am – 11:00 am **REFLECTION AND TRANSITION**

11:00 am – 11:50 am **SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS** **SALON ACD**
 This session highlights how Baltimore and Jefferson County are implementing structured approaches to support English learners in foundational literacy development. The Council of the Great City Schools will first provide an overview of the CGCS *Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners* (Spring 2023), which defines a vision for foundational literacy skills instruction for ELs, outlines six guiding principles, and offers criteria for evaluating instructional materials. Baltimore's initiatives focus on equipping ELD and early childhood educators with best practices to ensure MLs develop strong literacy skills. Jefferson County utilizes a *Reading Intervention Decision Tree* to guide instruction, professional development, and coaching at the school level. Grounded in this framework, the session provides practical strategies to enhance foundational literacy instruction and improve outcomes.

FACILITATOR:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS

Tina Ruiz, EL Coordinator, Baltimore

Jennifer Walker, Educational Associate, Baltimore

Vongmany Edmonds, Manager of Instruction, Office of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY)

Jill Handley, Assistant Superintendent of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY)

11:50 am – 12:00 pm	REFLECTION AND TRANSITION	
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	LUNCH AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE	VERSAILLES
	<p>PERFORMERS:</p> <p><i>Highlandtown Elementary/Middle School No. 215 (Kelly Weber, Music Teacher and Middle School Band Director)</i></p>	
1:00 pm – 1:50 pm	UNDERSTANDING EL TRENDS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES OF PRACTICE This session explores key findings from the Council of the Great City Schools' updated 2025 report, <i>English Learners in America's Great City Schools: Demographics, Achievement, and Staffing</i> . Participants will examine national and district-specific data on EL demographics, achievement, and staffing, considering implications for program improvement. Through a guided exercise, attendees will identify trends within their districts to explore further in the upcoming challenge of practice sessions, beginning with a root cause analysis to deepen understanding and drive meaningful responses.	SALON ACD
	<p>PRESENTERS:</p> <p><i>De'Aysia Barner</i>, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS <i>David Lai</i>, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS</p>	
1:50 pm – 2:00 pm	REFLECTION AND TRANSITION	
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE TOPICS Experts and practitioners will provide an overview of the challenge of practice topic areas, highlighting the importance of each topic, discussing persistent challenges, and sharing available, relevant resources. The overview will help participants select a topic area for the challenge of practice work sessions.	SALON ACD
	<p>FACILITATOR:</p> <p><i>David Lai</i>, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS</p> <p>PRESENTERS:</p> <p>Leadership – <i>Valeria Silva</i>, Independent Consultant Newcomers – <i>Jen Chard</i>, City University of New York MTSS & ELs – <i>Farah Assiraj</i>, CEO and Founder, cairEducation Access to Rigor – <i>Okhee Lee</i>, New York University Dual Language and Multilingual Pathways – <i>Tammy Alsace</i>, Independent Consultant; <i>Gabriela Uro</i>, Program Director, WestEd; <i>Kate Wright</i>, Project Director, WestEd</p>	
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	BRIEFING ON CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE SESSION PROTOCOLS AND MILESTONES Participants will receive an overview of the protocols and milestones for the challenge of practice sessions. The session will also cover the role of expert thought partners and provide tips for maximizing the effectiveness of the work sessions.	SALON ACD
	<p>PRESENTER:</p> <p><i>David Lai</i>, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS</p>	
3:15 pm – 3:30 pm	BREAK AND TRANSITION	
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm	CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE WORK SESSION: PROBLEM DEFINITION Participants will select an area of focus and determine a challenge of practice based on an examination of current practices and the extant data or metrics that substantiate the identified challenge of practice.	ASSIGNED ON SITE
Salon C		
Salon B		
Salon E		
Hanover Suite A	FACILITATORS:	
Hanover Suite B	<p>Leadership – <i>Valeria Silva</i>, Independent Consultant Newcomers – <i>Jen Chard</i>, City University of New York MTSS & ELs – <i>Farah Assiraj</i>, CEO and Founder, cairEducation</p>	

Access to Rigor – *Okhee Lee*, New York University
Dual Language and Multilingual Pathways – *Tammy Alsace*, Independent Consultant;
Gabriela Uro, Program Director, WestEd; *Kate Wright*, Project Director, WestEd

5:00 pm – 5:30 pm **CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE WORK SESSION PROGRESS REPORT AND GALLERY WALK** **SALON ACD**
Groups from each challenge of practice topic area will share their progress on the challenges of practice they have been exploring, including the problems they have defined and key insights from their work session. Through a gallery walk and structured feedback, participants will learn from one another, offer constructive input, and refine their focus. The session will conclude with time for teams to strategize their next steps and prepare for the final two work sessions, ensuring that they are positioned to develop meaningful, actionable solutions.

FACILITATORS:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS
De'Aysia Barner, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm **WELCOME RECEPTION** **LB SKYBAR**

Thursday, May 15, 2025

7:00 am – 4:00 pm **REGISTRATION** **CALVERT FOYER**

7:00 am – 8:00 am **BREAKFAST** **VERSAILLES**

8:00 am – 8:55 am **SUPPORTING REFUGEE YOUTH: TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS** **SALON ACD**
Addressing refugee mental health in schools requires culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches. Drawing from work with the *HEAL Refugee Health & Asylum Collaborative*, this session will explore the critical role of schools in supporting refugee youth and their families. Participants will gain insights into the mental health needs of immigrant students, the impact of trauma, and the importance of holistic, community-centered care. The session will highlight expressive arts therapies as a powerful tool for healing and engagement. Through interactive discussions, attendees will explore practical strategies for fostering inclusive learning environments and strengthening school-based mental health support for refugee students.

PRESENTER:

Nouf Bazaz, Clinical Assistant Professor, Loyola University

8:55 am – 9:00 am **TRANSITION**

9:00 am – 9:55 am **THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: PROMOTING MULTILINGUALISM FOR ALL IN A CHANGING WORLD** **SALON ACD**
Developing and expanding Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs with equity and community in mind requires planning and advocacy. Sarah Shin will provide a framing for the session, setting the stage for district leaders from Atlanta and Chicago to share insights on mobilizing communities, ensuring equitable expansion, and leveraging multilingualism for workforce readiness. They will discuss lessons learned, challenges faced, and what they would do differently. Participants will engage in interactive discussions on tailoring DLI programs to diverse contexts and expanding pathways, such as IB bilingual diplomas and the Seal of Biliteracy, to benefit all students. This session will provide actionable strategies for growing multilingual opportunities and strengthening DLI programs across different district settings.

FACILITATOR:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Sarah Shin, Professor of Education, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Margaret McKenzie, Director, Multilingual Programs & Services, Atlanta
Olimpia Bahena, Deputy Chief, Multilingual-Multicultural Education, Chicago

9:55 am – 10:00 am **TRANSITION**

10:00 am – 10:50 am **ADVANCING ENGLISH LEARNER SUCCESS THROUGH SYSTEMS, DATA, AND SCHOOLWIDE SUPPORT** **SALON ACD**
 As EL enrollments continue to grow, districts must implement intentional systems to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction and wraparound support. This panel highlights how three districts are adapting and improving schools through strategic planning, data-driven decision-making, and targeted school support. Jefferson County will share its innovative model for identifying and supporting high-density ML schools, detailing how district leaders provide professional development, build instructional capacity, and set clear expectations for school transformation. Clark County will showcase its multi-tiered, data-informed framework for integrating language supports, collaborating across departments, and providing essential services through its Family Support Center and Newcomer Support Team. Omaha will present its approach to school improvement through a multilingual lens, focusing on data review protocols, the development of targeted “boost groups” for language proficiency growth, and the alignment of professional learning to enhance student outcomes.

FACILITATOR:

De’Aysia Barner, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Vongmany Edmonds, Manager of Instruction, Office of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY)

Justin Matson, Executive Director of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY)

Jill Handley, Assistant Superintendent of Multilingual Learners, Jefferson County (KY)

Erick Casallas, Assistant Superintendent, English Language Learner Division & Services, Clark County (NV)

Carrie Cunningham, Multilingual Learner Teaching and Learning Consultant, Omaha

10:50 am – 11:00 am **BREAK AND TRANSITION**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm **MATERIALS REVIEW SESSION I**

Breakout 1 **CURRICULUM ASSOCIATES** **SALON C**

Breakout 2 **PARTICIPATE LEARNING** **SALON B**

Breakout 3 **TRANSLATELIVE** **SALON E**

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm **LUNCH AND VALERIA SILVA AWARD PRESENTATION**

VERSAILLES

1:00 pm – 1:50 pm **CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS I**

Breakout 1 **WELCOMING NEWCOMERS: IDENTIFICATION, SUPPORT, AND ENGAGEMENT** **SALON ACD**

Effectively responding to the needs of newcomer students requires a deep understanding of their educational backgrounds, language development, and support systems. This session introduces a new publication from the Council of the Great City Schools that guides districts in defining and identifying newcomer students, gathering essential educational and linguistic information, and using data to inform instructional placement and wraparound services. Chicago Public Schools will share practical strategies for engaging newly arrived communities, including fostering partnerships with newcomer families, navigating the educational system, and connecting families to vital community resources. DC Public Schools will discuss their experience supporting schools with historically low populations of multilingual learners, focusing on professional development for general education teachers, coaching for school leaders, and adjustments to the itinerant ESOL model to meet the needs of newcomer students and create an inclusive school culture.

FACILITATOR:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

David Lai, Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS

Jen Chard, RISLUS Research Associate, City University of New York

Beata Arceo, Director of International Student Services, Chicago

Erika Pereira, Director, Academic Planning & Itinerant ESOL Services, DC

Breakout 2

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

SALON B

This session highlights district approaches to professional learning that enhance instruction for English learners and all students. Guilford County Schools will share their approach to planning and sustaining professional development aligned with rigorous content standards, emphasizing targeted coaching, curriculum alignment, and learning communities. St. Paul Public Schools will present the *CLIP Framework*, designed to operationalize WIDA 2020 and expand instructional capacity among non-ESL teachers, incorporating evidence-based practices from *Long-Term Success with Experienced Multilinguals*.

FACILITATOR:

De'Aysia Barner, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Vanina Hackett, EL Director, Guilford County (NC)

Soledad Lardies-Dunst, EL Coordinator, Guilford County (NC)

Sophie Ly, Assistant Director of Multilingual Learning, St. Paul

Breakout 3

POSSIBILITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS: AI AND TRANSLATION/INTERPRETATION TECHNOLOGIES

SALON E

Emerging technologies offer new opportunities to enhance support for English learners and their families. This session highlights district-led efforts to implement these tools with English learner needs at the center. Metro Nashville Public Schools will present their work in developing district guidance on the use of translation and interpretation devices, ensuring alignment with civil rights obligations and meaningful communication with English learner families. Fayette County Public Schools will share their approach to rolling out translation and interpretation devices in schools, including strategies for training school staff, supporting implementation, and fostering inclusive communication between schools and multilingual families. Newark Public Schools will share how AI technologies are being used to increase student agency, support teachers in planning scaffolded lessons for English learners, and help families engage with the school system and advocate for their children.

FACILITATOR:

Tammy Alsace, Independent Consultant, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Molly Hegwood, Executive Director, Office of English Learners, Metro Nashville

Manuel Diaz De Leon, Coordinator, Office of English Learners, Metro Nashville

Rose Santiago, Director, Multilingual & Gifted and Talented Services, Fayette County (KY)

Jessica Sanchez, Liaison of Interpretation and Translation Department, Fayette County (KY)

Marisol Diaz, Director, Bilingual, ESL, and World Language Education, Newark

1:50 pm – 2:00 pm

TRANSITION

2:00 pm – 2:50 pm

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS II

Breakout 1

WRITING OUR NARRATIVES: TELLING AND LEADING WITH IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES

SALON ACD

Saima Sitwat will share her narrative as an immigrant, through her works *American Muslim: An Immigrant's Journey* and the *Becoming American* project to explore trauma, identity, and belonging among immigrant families. She will highlight how educators can humanize the immigrant experience and create inclusive, supportive school communities. Participants will also engage in a guided workshop activity, reflecting on their experiences with culture and belonging. Through structured prompts, they will practice honing and sharing personal or professional stories, gain tools to use storytelling to build empathy, strengthen relationships, and advocate for immigrant students and families.

PRESENTER:

Saima Sitwat, Assistant Director of Ecumenical and Interfaith Ministries, Loyola University

Breakout 2 **MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH STRATEGIC SCHEDULING AND TARGETED SUPPORT** **SALON B**

This session highlights two impactful approaches to curricular access and acceleration. The School District of Palm Beach will share an approach to student scheduling, which ensures all students, including those traditionally underserved, have intentional opportunities for acceleration. Through strategic master scheduling and monitoring, this approach has led to increased student achievement and graduation rates. DC Public Schools will focus on how small, targeted changes in policy and practice have improved outcomes for over-age and under-credited newcomer students. These changes include equitable foreign transcript evaluations, credit recovery options, and alternative pathways like GED and CTE programs, demonstrating positive trends for graduation rates among newcomer students.

FACILITATOR:

Tammy Alsace, Independent Consultant, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Patricia Ordóñez-Feliciano, Executive Director, Multicultural Education & School Transformation, Palm Beach

Raquel Ortiz, Director, DCPS Welcome Center, DC

Ana Acevedo, Foreign Transcript Specialist, DC

Breakout 3 **EMBEDDING SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS ACROSS CONTENT AREAS** **SALON E**

This session will explore strategies from two districts focused on enhancing the success of English learners across content areas. Washoe County School District is reimagining English learner instruction by shifting from traditional pull-out models to a teacher capacity-building framework, where English Language Facilitators (ELFs) collaborate with educators to integrate language development into content instruction. Participants will learn about the impact of this approach on student outcomes. Additionally, Baltimore City Schools will discuss efforts to support the continuum of learners in schools, including multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and gifted/advanced learners. Efforts to support multilingual learners have encompassed integrating ML-focused strategies into professional learning across content areas, enhancing parent and family engagement, strengthening operational supports such as scheduling and grading, and fostering partnerships across multiple offices.

FACILITATOR:

De'Aysia Barner, EL Policy Fellow, CGCS

PRESENTERS:

Megan Waugh, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County (NV)

Maria Reamore, Director, Multilingual Learners, Baltimore

Jalima Alicea, Executive Director, Teaching & Learning, Baltimore

2:50 pm – 2:55 pm

TRANSITION

2:55 pm – 4:25 pm

CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE WORK SESSION

ASSIGNED ON SITE

Salon C
Salon B
Salon E
Hanover Suite A
Hanover Suite B

The second day of the challenge of practice practicum/exercise will be devoted to elaborating on the proposed responses or solutions to the identified challenge of practice, detailing specific actions needed, required district resources and support, as well as anticipating intended and unintended outcomes for distinct stakeholders. District teams will weigh all of these factors to select the final response or solution to be implemented.

FACILITATORS:

Leadership – *Valeria Silva*, Independent Consultant

Newcomers – *Jen Chard*, City University of New York

MTSS & ELs – *Farah Assiraj*, CEO and Founder, cairEducation

Access to Rigor – *Okhee Lee*, New York University
 Dual Language and Multilingual Pathways – *Tammy Alsace*, Independent Consultant;
Gabriela Uro, Program Director, WestEd; *Kate Wright*, Project Director, WestEd

4:25 pm – 4:30 pm	TRANSITION	
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	STUDENT AND FAMILY VOICES TO INFORM SERVICES AND INSTRUCTION	SALON ACD
	Baltimore City Public Schools students and families will share their aspirations and experiences within English learner programs. The panelists will inform participants about bright spots in programs and raise potential blind spots or persisting challenges to address.	
	FACILITATORS: <i>Maria Reamore</i> , Director, Multilingual Learners, Baltimore <i>Jalima Alicea</i> , Executive Director, Teaching & Learning, Baltimore	
	INTERPRETER: <i>Larisa Avellaneda</i> , Educational Associate – English Language Development, Baltimore	
5:30 pm – 6:00 pm	BREAK AND TRANSITION	
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm	RECEPTION	PRATT STREET ALE HOUSE (206 W PRATT ST)

Friday, May 16, 2025

7:00 am – 8:00 am	BREAKFAST	VERSAILLES
8:00 am – 8:50 am	ASSET-BASED ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	SALON ACD
	Danyang Wang, a researcher in bilingual language development and assessment, will discuss how schools can distinguish language development trajectories from language-related disabilities in multilingual learners. She will share formative assessment strategies that help educators monitor language skills while avoiding misidentification. Margarita Gomez, an expert in writing development and sociolinguistic justice, will explore how writing assessments can validate multilingual students' linguistic knowledge rather than penalize them. Drawing from research on translanguaging and asset-based assessment, this session will offer practical strategies for designing more equitable evaluations that recognize students' full linguistic repertoires and enhance instructional practices.	
	FACILITATOR: <i>Tammy Alsace</i> , Independent Consultant, CGCS	
	PRESENTERS: <i>Danyang Wang</i> , Assistant Professor, Speech-Language Pathology, Towson University <i>Margarita Gomez</i> , Associate Professor of Literacy Education, Loyola University	
8:50 am – 9:00 am	TRANSITION	
9:00 am – 10:00 am	MATERIALS REVIEW SESSION II	
Breakout 1	TALKINGPOINTS	SALON C
Breakout 2	ENGAGE2LEARN	SALON B
Breakout 3	INTERVENE K-12, INC.	SALON E
10:00 am – 10:05 am	TRANSITION	
10:05 am – 11:10 am	CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE FINAL WORK SESSION	ASSIGNED ON SITE
Salon C	The third day of the challenge of practice practicum/exercise will be devoted to detailing the next steps of an overall plan to address the challenge of practice as part of a broader implementation plan. District teams will also outline a corresponding communication plan that generates buy-in and sustained organizational support/resources to achieve the desired outcomes.	
Salon B		
Salon E		
Hanover Suite A		
Hanover Suite B		
	FACILITATORS: Leadership – <i>Valeria Silva</i> , Independent Consultant	

Newcomers – *Jen Chard*, City University of New York
 MTSS & ELs – *Farah Assiraj*, CEO and Founder, cairEducation
 Access to Rigor – *Okhee Lee*, New York University
 Dual Language and Multilingual Pathways – *Tammy Alsace*, Independent Consultant;
Gabriela Uro, Program Director, WestEd; *Kate Wright*, Project Director, WestEd

11:10 am – 11:15 am	TRANSITION	
11:15 am – 12:00 pm	CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE WRAP-UP: ACTION PLANS AND NEXT STEPS	SALON ACD
	District teams will present the results of their Challenge of Practice practicum/exercise. One district team from each focus area will present their identified Challenge of Practice, the proposed response or solution (including detailed steps and resource requirements), and a draft communication plan. Non-presenting district teams will share their work on flip charts posted around the room. Time for a gallery walk will be provided at the end of the session.	
	FACILITATOR: <i>David Lai</i> , Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS	
	PRESENTERS: Volunteer District Teams (Selected on Site)	
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	LUNCH	
1:00 pm – 1:55 pm	A JUSTICE-CENTERED APPROACH TO STEM EDUCATION TO EMPOWER MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	SALON ACD
	This session explores a justice-centered approach to STEM education that engages students in addressing real-world challenges. Drawing on recent research, Okhee Lee will discuss how integrating STEM disciplines—including data and computer science—with language learning can empower multilingual learners by leveraging their transnational knowledge and diverse meaning-making resources. The session will highlight key insights on preparing educators to support students in challenging systemic injustices, as well as potential obstacles. Participants will gain practical strategies to create more inclusive and impactful STEM learning experiences for all students.	
	PRESENTER: <i>Okhee Lee</i> , Professor, New York University	
1:55 pm – 2:00 pm	TRANSITION	
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CONNECTING READING AND WRITING	SALON ACD
	Guilford County Schools will showcase how they integrated the National Writing Project (NWP)/Council hybrid courses on Teaching Academic Writing to English Learners (ELs) into professional learning, highlighting the impact on educators and students. Participants will engage in a hands-on learning activity using course materials and explore specific training practices that support language development across all domains while meeting rigorous content standards. The session will also break down the structure of a unit and lesson flow, designed to intentionally address both language and content learning needs. Additionally, participants will observe a modeled lesson demonstrating effective instructional strategies for integrating language and content learning.	
	FACILITATOR: <i>David Lai</i> , Director of ELL Policy and Research, CGCS	
	PRESENTERS: <i>Vanina Hackett</i> , EL Director, Guilford County (NC) <i>Soledad Lardies-Dunst</i> , EL Coordinator, Guilford County (NC) <i>Carlos Bartesaghi</i> , EL Lead Teacher, Guilford County (NC)	
EVENING ON YOUR OWN		

Saturday, May 17, 2025		
8:00 am – 9:00 am	BREAKFAST	VERSAILLES
9:00 am – 9:30 am	COUNCIL PROJECTS UPDATE Ongoing projects will be shared for discussion and feedback. Attendees will be invited to share pressing issues to inform upcoming projects.	VERSAILLES
9:30 am – 10:00 am	BIRE DEBRIEF AND 2026 PLANNING Goals, issues, and venues for future meetings will be discussed.	VERSAILLES
10:00 am	MEETING ADJOURNMENT	