

DATA BULLETIN

English Language Learners, School Year 2009-10

Despite its Yankee pedigree, Connecticut has a rich cultural diversity which is mirrored in its student population. In the 2009-10 school year, one of every seven public school students (72,592 out of 563,796) had a dominant language other than English. However, only 29,993 of these students with a dominant language other than English were identified as English Language Learners (ELL), that is, students who lacked sufficient mastery of English to “assure equal educational opportunity in the regular school program” (CGS 10-17e).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and Connecticut law all establish that ELL students are entitled to receive English language services from Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), bilingual certified teachers or other personnel who have received training in English language acquisition. This right is protected by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights. ELL students are also entitled to the same core academic education received by all students. Therefore, their education is not just the responsibility of TESOL and bilingual teachers but also regular education faculty. While Federal (Title III) grants are available to districts and consortia (groups of smaller districts), not all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) receive these funds. Yet, all LEAs must provide English language support services to ELL students, even at a time of tightening local budgets. Furthermore, in Connecticut the ELL population has recently become more geographically diffuse. ELL students are now enrolling in smaller districts, magnet and charter schools, and regional educational service centers that in the past had few, if any, ELL students. Despite challenges, nearly 97 percent of all ELL students received English support services

Quick Facts about Connecticut's English Language Learners (ELLs), 2009-10:

- There were 29,993 ELL students in 162 public LEAs
- While there were 133 dominant languages among ELL students, Spanish accounted for 73 percent of ELLs
- 96.7 percent received English language services
- Over half were in grades K-4
- 4,195 were also identified for Special Education
- 75 percent were eligible for either free or reduced price meals
- For the 2008-09 school year, Connecticut received \$4.6 million in Title III funds for English language services
- In the 2008-09 school year, 97.3 percent of ELL students took the annual English language proficiency assessment (LAS Links); 81.2 percent made progress from the prior year and 43.6 percent demonstrated English proficiency
- In the 2008-09 school year, 3,917 ELL students (13 percent) met the CSDE's English Mastery Standard
- The four year graduation rate for ELL students in the class of 2009 was 53.4 percent

(parents refused services for 3.4 percent of ELLs) and 13 percent reached the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE's) English Mastery Standard by demonstrating their English proficiency and academic mastery. However, standardized assessments and graduation rates also illuminate a significant achievement gap between ELL students and their peers.

Linguistic Diversity in Public Schools (Grades K-12)

Under Connecticut law C.G.S. 10-17f and NCLB, LEAs must ascertain the dominant language of all new K-12 students.

Table 1: Top 10 Dominant Languages (Grades K-12), School Years 2005-06 to 2009-10

Language	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Change 2005-06 to 2009-10
English	492,514	488,928	484,186	479,586	475,603	-3.4%
Spanish	47,775	47,515	47,933	47,762	47,730	-0.1%
Portuguese	3,036	2,986	2,977	2,937	2,819	-7.1%
Polish	2,451	2,460	2,433	2,358	2,289	-6.6%
Chinese	1,912	2,042	2,108	2,097	2,153	12.6%
Creole-Haitian	1,472	1,453	1,426	1,494	1,570	6.7%
Albanian	1,098	1,110	1,154	1,219	1,242	13.1%
Vietnamese	1,152	1,133	1,139	1,174	1,156	0.3%
Urdu	943	961	1,021	1,052	1,059	12.3%
Arabic	832	876	898	944	1,017	22.2%
All Others	10,611	11,022	11,396	11,528	11,557	8.9%
Totals	563,796	560,486	556,671	552,151	548,195	-2.8%

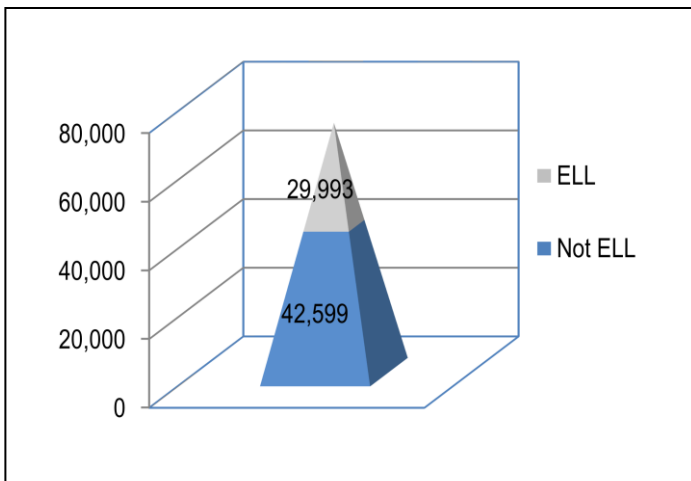
¹ In the 2009-10 school year, 72,592 students spoke 168 languages other than English. Over the last five years, the number of students with dominant languages other than English increased by 1.8 percent while English speakers declined by 3.4 percent, and total students also had a 2.8 percent decline (Table 1). The number of speakers of the four largest languages also declined during this period, fostering increased linguistic diversity. Conversely, among the larger languages, the number of students with Arabic as their dominant language grew by 22.2 percent, Albanian by 13.1 percent, Chinese by 12.6 percent and Urdu by 12.3 percent.² Increased linguistic diversity was also driven by the rapid growth in the number of speakers of smaller languages. For example, the number of Nepali speakers increased by 135.2 percent, Bangla by 116.1 percent, Pashto by 96.4 percent, Tamil by 85.7 percent and Karen grew from one speaker in 2005 to 128 in 2009.

English Language Learners

NCLB and Connecticut law also require LEAs to determine the English proficiency of students whose dominant language is not English. Following CSDE (Connecticut State Department of Education) guidance, their ELL identification procedures should include the use of a language proficiency test, interviews and a review of the student's record. In practice, LEAs vary in how they implement the CSDE's ELL identification guidance. The identification procedure should be done within 30 days for students who have been enrolled since the beginning of the school year and two weeks for those who transferred in after the beginning of the school year. Determining the ELL status of transfers into the district can pose a particular challenge, as the exchange of student records across districts may be delayed or the record itself may be incomplete. As a result, LEAs sometimes implement their ELL identification procedure for students whose ELL status has already been determined by another LEA.

In the 2009-10 school year, 72,592 students had a dominant language other than English; however, only 29,993 of these (41.3 percent) were identified as ELLs (Figure 1). As the number of public school students declined over the last five years, the number of ELL students grew by 1.5 percent. In the 2009-10 school year, ELL students accounted for 5.5 percent

Figure 1: ELL Status of Students with a Dominant Language Other Than English, 2009-10



English Language Support Services

Federal and state laws establish the right of all ELL students to receive English language support services so that they may attain English proficiency, reach academic achievement in English and realize mastery of the same academic content as other students.³ Instructional services may be provided in or outside of the classroom. ELL students are entitled to receive English language support services until they meet the CSDE's English Mastery Standard.

The CSDE annually identifies schools with 20 or more ELL students who have the same dominant language and, under Connecticut law, these schools are required to provide a bilingual program in the following school year. Schools must offer bilingual programs even if they no longer have 20 ELL students speaking the same language. Based upon 2008-09 enrollment figures, 222 schools in 29 different LEAs were identified for bilingual programs for the 2009-10 school year. Spanish accounted for 219 bilingual programs, followed by Portuguese (9), Creole-Haitian (3) and one each in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Polish and Vietnamese. Nearly 29 percent of all ELL students were enrolled in bilingual programs (Table 2).

There are two types of bilingual programs. The first is the Transitional Bilingual Education Program, which utilizes the students' dominant language (decreasing over time) and English in instruction so that the student ultimately attains English language proficiency. Under Connecticut law, students may be in this program for a maximum of 30 months. The second type of bilingual program is the Dual Language Program, which also utilizes students' dominant languages and English in instruction, but with the aim of developing proficiency in both languages. There is no time limit for students in this type of program.

Students who have exhausted their eligibility for participation in a Transitional Bilingual Education Program but have not met the English Mastery standard receive language transition support services (LTSS). As bilingual students declined over the last five years, LTSS students also declined by 3.7 percent. Nearly half of all ELL students received English as a Second

Table 2: ELL Students by English Language Services, 2009-10

Service	Students	Change in Students 2005-06 to 2009-10	Percent of ELL Students
Bilingual program	8,634	-2.5%	28.8%
Language transition support services	5,470	-3.7%	18.2%
English as a Second Language (ESL) or other type of English language services	14,885	5.3%	49.6%
Parental refusal of all English language services	1,004	14.5%	3.4%
Totals	29,993	1.5%	100%

Language (ESL) or other types of English language support services. These include: ESL Pull-out (ELL students meet with TESOL certified teachers); ESL Push-in/Co-teaching (TESOL certified teachers provide instruction in the general education classrooms); Sheltered English Instruction (teaching English through content areas); and other services, including tutoring. ESL and other services accounted for the largest numeric increase in ELL students (+747). In part, this reflects the growth in the number of ELL students in the smaller districts whose ELL student population is too small to be identified for a bilingual program.

In the 2009-10 school year, 1,004 ELL students did not receive English language support services because their parents refused them. There may be many personal reasons for parents to refuse English language services, including a preference for “English immersion” as the option for their children to become proficient in English. Twenty-eight percent of ELL students who did not receive English language services were also identified for special education.

Bilingual and TESOL Teaching Positions

The CSDE’s Fall Hiring Survey for the 2009-10 school year found that there were 25 available public school positions for bilingual education, 16 of which were filled by October 1. For TESOL, there were 24 positions available of which 20 were filled by October 1. Over the last two years, the number of available bilingual positions declined by 26.5 percent and TESOL positions by 17.2 percent. Total bilingual full time equivalent (FTE) positions, also declined by 8.6 percent while those for TESOL remained virtually the same. LEAs that sought to staff bilingual education positions gave the applicant pools that they reviewed the lowest possible quality rating.⁴ LEAs reported that all nine bilingual October vacancies were due to a lack of qualified applicants. Bilingual and TESOL positions had some of the smallest applicant pools per available position (median applicants of six and 10, respectively). Based upon applicant pool size, vacancies due to the lack of qualified applicants, the number of teaching certificates issued per available position and other factors, the CSDE designated bilingual education as a shortage area for the 2010-11 school year.⁵

ELL Student Demographics Dominant Language

In the 2009-10 school year, the ELL subpopulation had 133 dominant languages, although only 20 of these languages were spoken by 100 or more ELLs. Over the last five years, seven of the top 10 most common languages among ELL students declined (Table 3). However, the largest subgroup of ELL students, Spanish, continued to grow and accounted for nearly 60 percent of the overall growth in ELLs. As a result, the share of Spanish-speaking ELL students increased from 70 percent to 72.6 percent. Other prevalent languages among ELL students that experienced significant growth included Arabic (23.1 percent), Bengali (43 percent), Hindi (36 percent), Gujarti (14 percent) and Creole-Haitian (9.7 percent).

Table 3: Top 10 Dominant Languages of ELL Students, 2009-10

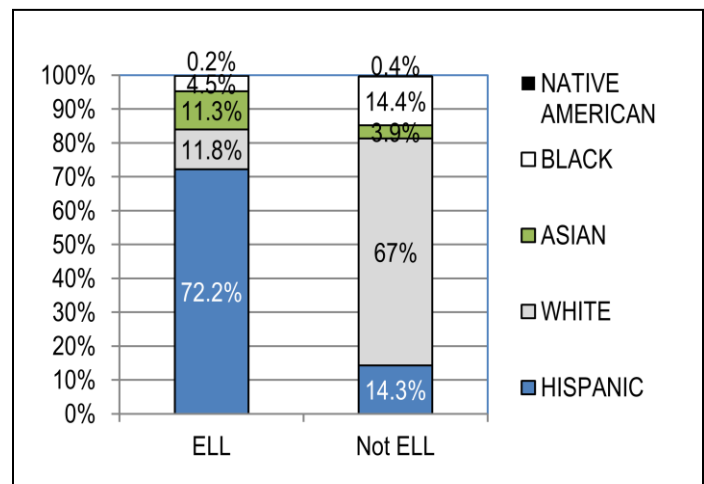
Language	Students	Change in Students 2005-06 to 2009-10	Percent of All ELL Students
Spanish	21,762	5.5%	72.6%
Portuguese	950	-24.1%	3.2%
Chinese*	644	-4.3%	2.1%
Creole-Haitian	634	9.7%	2.1%
Polish	552	-32.6%	1.8%
Albanian	494	-15.4%	1.6%
Arabic	453	23.1%	1.5%
Vietnamese	380	-11.6%	1.3%
Urdu	355	-1.4%	1.2%
Russian	288	-2.7%	1.0%
All Others	3,481	-2.0%	11.6%
Totals	29,993	1.5%	100.0%

*This does not include 40 ELL students whose dominant language was Cantonese or the 78 whose dominant language was Mandarin.

Race

Hispanic students accounted for 72.2 percent of ELL students, which was well above their share of non-ELL students (Figure 2). In fact, 23 percent of all Hispanic public school students were identified as ELL. Along with Hispanics, Asian students were also a larger percent of ELLs (11.3 percent) than non-ELL students (3.9 percent). Conversely, whites, blacks and Native Americans all were a smaller share of ELL than non-ELL students. Over the last five years, the number of ELL students who were Hispanic grew by 5.5 percent, black by 11.8 percent, Asian by 5.8 percent and Native American by 65.8 percent. White ELL students declined by 21.6 percent. The different racial and ethnic character of the ELL subpopulation highlights the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity on the part of teachers and administrators to facilitate the integration of ELLs into the school community.

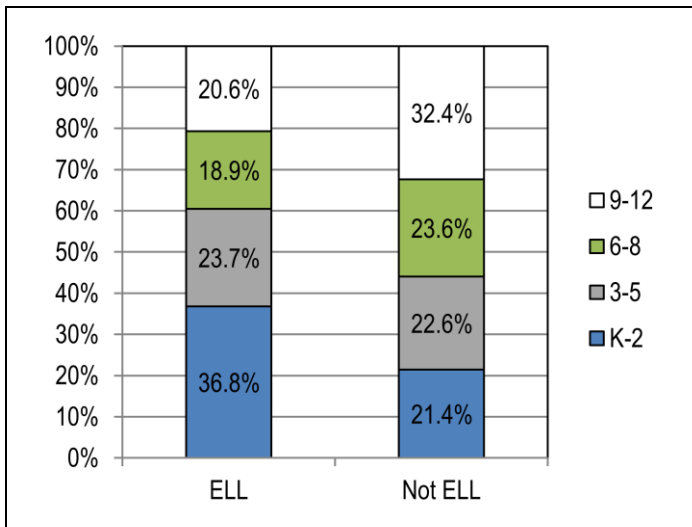
Figure 2: Race of ELL and Non-ELL Students, 2009-10



Grade

ELL students were more heavily concentrated in the lower grades than other students (Figure 3). Conversely, far fewer ELL students were in high school. Over the last five years, the number of ELLs in Grades K-2 increased by 10.6 percent while those who were not ELL decreased by 5.2 percent. As a result in the 2009-10 school year, 9 percent of all K-2 students were ELL (compared to 5.5 percent of all students).

Figure 3: Percent of ELL and Non-ELL Students by Grade, 2009-10

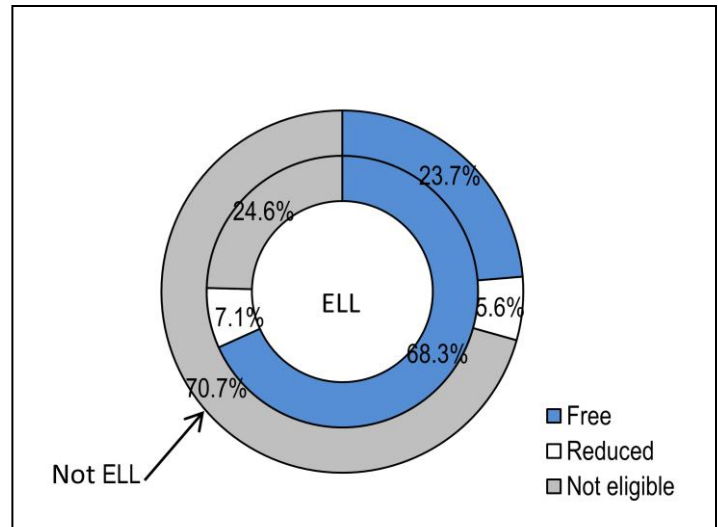


Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Meals

Three-quarters of ELL students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the 2009-10 school year, compared with just 29 percent of other students (Figure 4). This suggests that a large percentage of the ELL student population has multiple service needs. Over the last five years, the number of ELL students eligible for either free or reduced-price meals

increased by 12.7 percent. Interestingly, within the ELL subpopulation, eligibility rates varied by race. While most Hispanics (84.6 percent) and black (76 percent) ELL students were eligible, less than half of whites, Asians and Native American ELL students were eligible.

Figure 4: Percent Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals by ELL Status, 2009-10



Identification for Special Education

In the 2009-10 school year, 4,195 ELL students were also identified for special education (Table 4).⁶ Special education students accounted for a larger share of ELLs (14 percent) than of non-ELL students (11 percent). The most prominent, primary diagnoses among ELL students were Specific Learning Disabilities (43.1 percent) and Speech/Language Impairment (27.5 percent). Both of these primary diagnoses, along with Intellectually Disabled, were more common among ELL than non-ELL students.

Over the last four years, the number of ELL students also identified for special education increased by one-third while,

Table 4: Public School ELL Students also Identified for Special Education (Grades K-12), 2009-10

Primary Disability	ELL Special Education Students, 2009-10	Change in Students 2006-07 to 2009-10	Primary Disability's Percent of ELL Special Education Students	Primary Disability's Percent of Non-ELL Special Education Students
Specific Learning Disabilities	1,807	25.9%	43.1%	34.6%
Speech/Language Impairment	1,155	29.8%	27.5%	19.6%
Intellectually Disabled	255	49.1%	6.1%	3.7%
ADD/ADHD	250	73.6%	6.0%	10.7%
Other Health Impairment	217	38.2%	5.2%	8.1%
Emotional Disturbance	140	38.6%	3.3%	7.4%
Developmental Delay	120	33.3%	2.9%	2.3%
Autism	108	217.6%	2.6%	8.4%
Multiple Disabilities	87	58.2%	2.1%	3.7%
Hearing Impairment	31	-16.2%	0.7%	0.9%
Visual Impairment	11	22.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Traumatic Brain Injury	8	60.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Orthopedic Impairment	5	-16.7%	0.1%	0.1%
Deaf-Blindness	1	-	0.0%	0.0%
Totals	4,195	33.9%	100%	100%

the number of special education students who were not ELL declined by 3.7 percent. Autism (217.6 percent) and ADD/ADHD (73.6 percent) experienced the largest percentage growth, and Specific Learning Disabilities (+372) and Speech and Language Impairment (+265) had the largest numeric increases.

ELL special education students had both the same median number of special education hours per week (six) and percent of time with non-disabled peers (89 percent) as other special education students. However, fewer ELL students received related services (46.6 percent compared to 51.5 percent for all others). The most common related services ELL students received were: Speech/language pathology and audiology (24 percent of all ELL special education students); social work services (12.3 percent); counseling (12.3 percent) and physical and occupational therapy (7 percent).

The variety of dominant languages among ELL students may pose a challenge to special education service providers. In all, they had 73 dominant languages with Spanish (83.7 percent), Portuguese (2.5 percent) and Creole-Haitian speakers (1.5 percent) being the most prevalent.

LEA ELL Student Volume

In the 2009-10 school year, twelve LEAs accounted for 68 percent of ELL students, down from 70 percent five years ago (Table 5). Since the 2005-06 school year, ELL enrollment declined for seven of the 12 LEAs with the largest ELL populations, and New Britain's ELL enrollment remained relatively unchanged. Although the majority of public school ELL students has been concentrated in these dozen LEAs, a geographic dispersion of the ELL population has also occurred over the last five years, with an increase in the number of LEAs with smaller ELL subpopulations. Indicative of this trend, the number of LEAs with ELL students increased from 146 to 162, while those without any fell from 49 to 35 (Figure 5).⁷ The most significant change was the increase in the number of LEAs that have between 10 to 49 ELL students, which grew from 38 LEAs in 2005 to 56 in 2009.

During the last five years, 27 LEAs experienced a doubling in the number of their ELL students, and ten others had between 50 percent to 95 percent growth. Only five of these LEAs had more than 20 ELL students in the 2005-06 school year, indicating that most of this rapid growth occurred among LEAs with smaller ELL subpopulations.

The geographic dispersion of ELL students has challenged LEAs that traditionally had few, if any, ELL students to develop ELL identification procedures and ESL instructional programs, administer the annual English language proficiency assessment and build data systems for tracking ELL students and meeting all reporting requirements.

Figure 5: Distribution of LEAs by Size of ELL Enrollment, 2005-06 and 2009-10

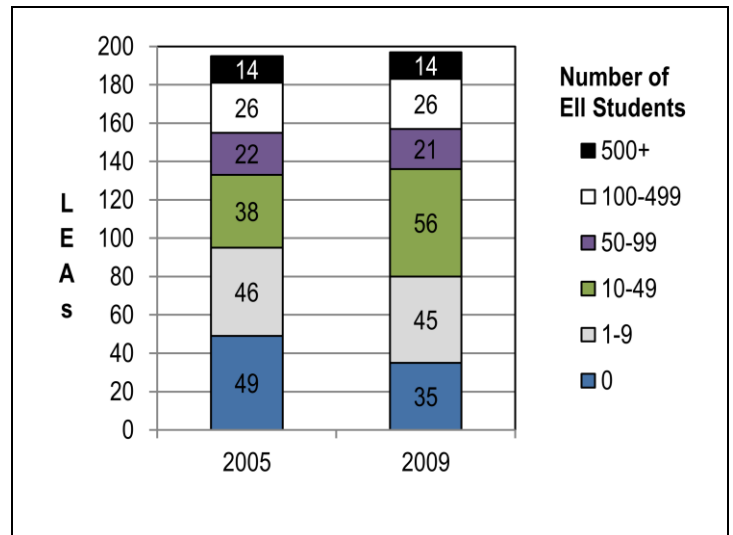


Table 5: LEAs with the Largest ELL Enrollments, 2009-10

LEA	ELL Students	Change in Total ELL Students 2005-06 to 2009-10	ELLs as a Percent of LEA's Total Students	Percent of Connecticut's ELLs
Hartford	3,708	-3.6%	18.2%	12.4%
Bridgeport	2,619	-15.5%	13.5%	8.7%
New Haven	2,393	14.3%	13.2%	8.0%
Stamford	2,037	-3.9%	13.6%	6.8%
Waterbury	1,989	-7.9%	11.4%	6.6%
Danbury	1,894	14.0%	19.0%	6.3%
New Britain	1,656	0.3%	16.8%	5.5%
Norwalk	1,255	-5.1%	11.8%	4.2%
Meriden	926	36.2%	11.5%	3.1%
Windham	812	10.9%	25.1%	2.7%
New London	644	-11.2%	21.7%	2.1%
West Hartford	631	-2.8%	6.3%	2.1%
All Others	9,429	7.0%	2.3%	31.5%
Totals	29,993	1.5%	5.4%	100%

School Disciplinary Incidents

During the 2008-09 school year, 14.8 percent of ELL students were cited for school disciplinary infractions, which was slightly higher than for non-ELL students (10.8 percent). Similar to others cited for an offense, ELL students were largely male (66.9 percent) and in Grades 6 through 10 (66.4 percent). A slightly higher percent of ELL students cited for disciplinary offenses were also in special education as opposed to non-ELL students (23 percent vs. 18.8 percent). Specifically, almost 13 percent of ELL students cited for a disciplinary offense had been identified with specific learning disabilities, compared with seven percent of non-ELL student offenders. Nearly all ELL students cited were Hispanic (86.6 percent).

Similar to all others, ELL students were mainly cited for school policy violations (72 percent, e.g., insubordination, attendance problems and classroom disruptions). Other prevalent offenses included fighting (11.4 percent) and physical/verbal confrontations (7.1 percent). One percent of ELL students' incidences involved drugs or weapons. Three-quarters of their incidences resulted in either in- or out-of-school suspensions and 10 percent ended with a warning.

It is important to bear in mind with school discipline, as well as with identification for special education, that many ELL students have fled civic disorder and natural disasters and may, therefore, have post-traumatic stress disorder. They may also have different cultural and social norms and come from situations where access to the educational system may be limited, or the system itself may not be functioning. The CSDE's Bureau of School and District Improvement advises that discipline rates for ELL students may decline as teachers and administrators heighten their sensitivity to the cultural backgrounds of these students.

Standardized Assessments

Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment

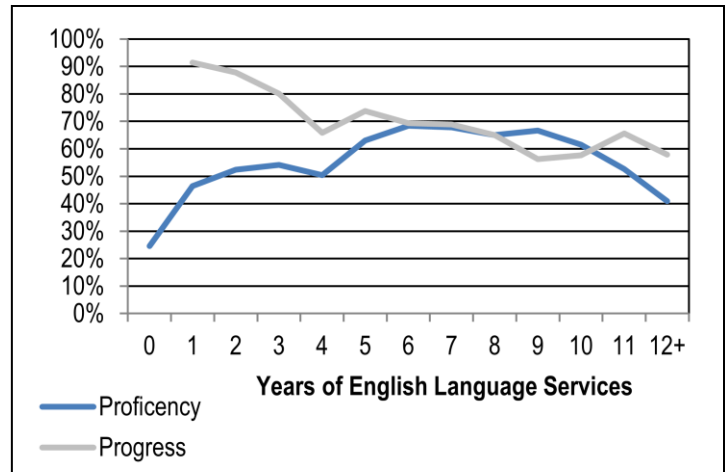
NCLB requires that the English language proficiency of all ELL students be assessed annually, regardless of whether they received English language services. The CSDE reports these assessment results to the U.S. Department of Education. In Connecticut, the mandated assessment instrument is the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) Links, which districts can administer between January and early May. This instrument includes grade-level reading, writing, listening and speaking subsections, and is designed to assess English language acquisition as opposed to academic mastery.

In the 2008-09 school year, just over 97 percent of ELL students who were in public LEAs during the Spring testing period took the LAS Links. Reasons for not taking the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) included: long-term absences (0.8 percent), student or parental refusal (0.3) and other reasons (1.5 percent). Among those who completed the LAS Links, 43.6 percent demonstrated English proficiency. In addition, 81 percent of students who took the LAS Links for at least two years made progress as they increased their overall test scores. The percentages of ELL students that attained proficiency and showed progress have remained fairly consistent over time.

As the length of time that ELL students received English

language services increased, generally, so did the percent of students who achieved proficiency (Figure 6). Conversely, the percent of students who made progress was higher for those who had received fewer years of service. When looking at service time, it is important to note that half of all ELL students received less than two consecutive years of services and 90 percent received less than five years.⁸

Figure 6: Percent of ELL Students that Made Progress and Attained Proficiency on LAS Links by Years of English Language Services, 2008-09

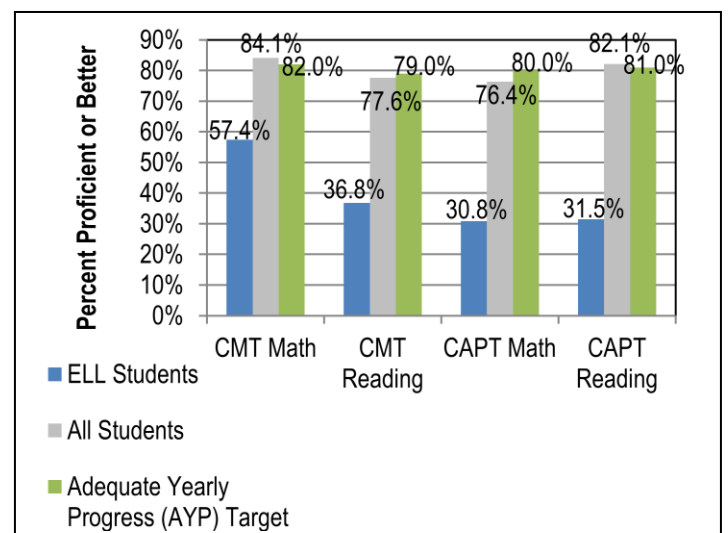


ELL students identified for special education were less likely to achieve proficiency than other students (27.1 percent vs. 46.7 percent). Similarly, students eligible for free or reduced price meals were also less likely to achieve proficiency than others (41.7 percent vs. 51.9 percent). These disparities remained even when service time was taken into consideration.

Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)

While only ELL students take the LAS Links, all students must take the CMT (Grades 3-8) or CAPT (Grade 10). CMT and CAPT results starkly illustrate the achievement gap between ELL students and the state as a whole (Figure 7).⁹

Figure 7: Percent Attaining Proficiency or Better on the CMT and CAPT, 2009



ELL students are in the process of English language acquisition and, therefore, a mastery test of academic content in English is a significant challenge. Despite the significant achievement gap between current ELL students and their peers, former ELL students who have met the CSDE's English Mastery standard achieved proficiency rates similar to those for all students (e.g., CMT math 85.9 percent and reading 74.9 percent).

It is interesting to note that unlike the LAS Links, the number of years of English language services do not seem to be related to the percent of ELL students who attained proficiency on any of the CMT or CAPT subject areas. In fact, the median years of service were identical for those who were proficient and those who were not.¹⁰

Proficiency on the LAS Links was not necessarily correlated with proficiency on either the CMT or CAPT. For example on the CMT, only 32 percent of all ELL students who achieved overall proficiency on the LAS Links were also proficient on reading, 61 percent on math and 60 percent on writing (CAPT results were similar: 48 percent, 45 percent and 64 percent, respectively).¹¹ Similarly, only 44 percent of students who were proficient on the LAS Links reading subsection were proficient on the CMT reading and 68 percent of those proficient on the LAS Links writing subsection were proficient on the CMT writing.¹² This illustrates the fundamental difference between the LAS Links (i.e., test of English language acquisition) and the CMT and CAPT (i.e., tests of academic content).

Title III Accountability

Title III of ESEA provides federal funds to states and their subgrantees (districts and consortia of districts) to ensure that ELL students attain English proficiency and "meet the same academic content and achievement standards that all children are expected to meet."¹³ Every five years, the CSDE files an Accountability Plan with the U.S. Department of Education that establishes Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), including: The percent of ELL students receiving Title III services that made progress in English language acquisition (AMAO 1) and, the percent of these students who attained English proficiency (AMAO 2). AMAO 3 indicates whether the ELL subgroup met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets specified under the CSDE's Title I Accountability Plan. This means that unlike AMAO 1 and 2, AMAO 3 is not based upon the LAS Links but rather the CMT and CAPT. Under Title III, AMAO targets must annually increase (Table 6).

The CSDE annually calculates AMAOs for all Title III subgrantees. Beginning in 2009, it incorporated ELL service time into its AMAO 1 and AMAO 2 calculations. Specifically, students with fewer years of service who do not make progress or achieve proficiency are "weighted" to have less effect on AMAO scores.¹⁴ This method was adopted based upon the U.S. Department of Education's Notice of Final Interpretation of Title III Accountability Regulations. The CSDE annually reports the AMAO performance of its subgrantees, as well as the progress and proficiency rates of Title III and the number of all ELL students, to the U.S. Department of Education.

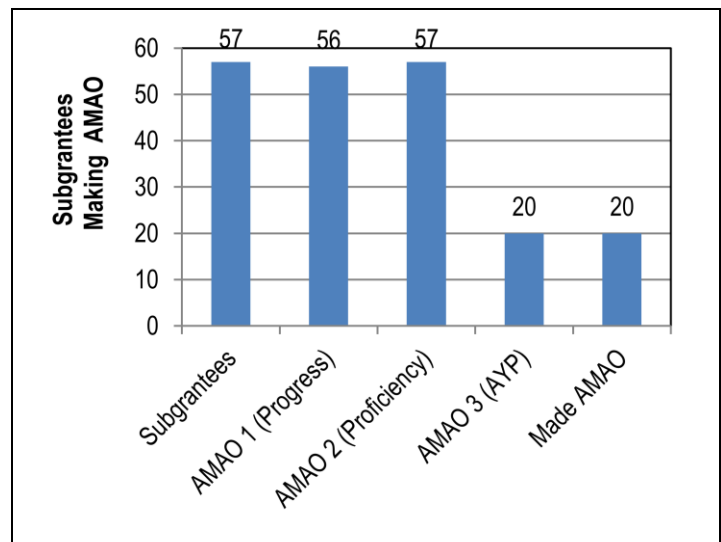
Title III districts and consortia must meet all three AMAOs in order to be considered to have made AMAO overall. NCLB includes corrective actions to be implemented by Title III subgrantees that do not achieve this. Parental notification that the district or consortium did not make AMAO is always required. Other corrective actions vary by the number of consecutive years that the Title III subgrantees have not achieved AMAO. These actions include the creation or amending of an improvement plan, modification of curriculum or programs, and even personnel replacement. The CSDE's Bureau of School and District Improvement provides technical assistance to LEAs with regard to ELL instruction, support services and the development of improvement plans.

Table 6: AMAO Targets, School Years 2008-09 to 2012-2013

School Year	AMAO 1 (Progress)	AMAO 2 (Proficiency)
2008-09	72%	22%
2009-10	74%	24%
2010-11	76%	26%
2011-12	78%	28%
2012-13	80%	30%

There were 20 Title III subgrantees in the 2008-09 school year that met the targets for all three AMAOs and, therefore, made AMAO overall. Typically, all subgrantees meet the targets for AMAO 1 (Progress) and AMAO 2 (Proficiency), but most do not meet AMAO 3 (AYP).¹⁵ As previously noted, the LAS Links (AMAO 1 and 2) assess the English language acquisition while the CMT and CAPT (AMAO 3) are mastery tests of academic content. Among the 37 subgrantees that did not make AMAO overall in 2009, 12 have not made it for six consecutive years, three for five years, eight for four years, two for three years, four for two years and eight for one year. Connecticut met AMAO 1 and AMAO 2 targets but did not meet AMAO 3 and, therefore, did not make AMAO overall.

Figure 8: Title III Subgrantee AMAO Performance, 2009

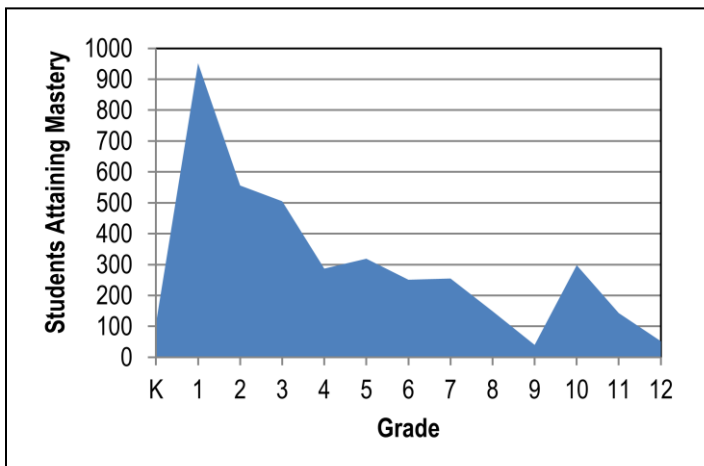


The CSDE's English Mastery Standard

Following NCLB, the CSDE instituted an English Mastery Standard that all ELL students must meet before they can exit ELL status (Table 7). It established grade-specific criteria, including indicators of English language acquisition (LAS Links) and mastery of academic content (Direct Reading Assessment [DRA 2, CMT or CAPT]). Students must meet both criteria in the same school year in order for the LEA to determine that they have met the Standard.¹⁶ Until they do so, students remain as ELL and, as such, are entitled to receive language services, and their English proficiency must be annually assessed.

In the 2008-09 school year, LEAs reported that 3,917 ELL students reached the English Mastery Standard, which was 13 percent of all those who completed the LAS Links. Nearly one-quarter of those who attained English Mastery were in the 1st grade and the majority were in Grades 1 through 3 (Figure 9). Fewer students in Grades 4 through 9 attained English Mastery; however, the number spiked in Grade 10 with students taking the CAPT. Two-thirds of those who attained mastery had received less than three consecutive years of English language services. Students with two years of service, but less than three, were the most likely to attain mastery (20 percent), while those with less than a year of service were the least likely (6.7 percent).

Figure 9: ELL Students Who Attained English Mastery by Grade, School Year 2008-09



Graduation Rate

In 2010, the CSDE reported a new, four-year graduation rate for the class of 2009. The new methodology was developed under the auspices of the National Governor's Association and is designed to more accurately capture student transfers into and out of the original freshman cohort over the course of the four years of high school. Illustrative of the achievement gap, the four-year graduation rate for ELL students in the class of 2009 was 53.4 percent, as compared with 80.6 percent for non-ELL students. The ELL graduation rate was lower than other AYP subgroups, such as Individualized Educational Program (IEP) students (61.3 percent) and students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (59.9 percent).¹⁷

Addressing the Achievement Gap

This Bulletin has highlighted the achievement gap between ELL students and their peers. With the increased dispersion of the ELL student population throughout Connecticut, narrowing this gap poses a significant challenge for an increasing number of LEAs, as well as the CSDE.

While effective bilingual and ESL programs are essential, an important approach to narrowing the achievement gap should focus upon the general education classroom, where ELL students receive most of their instruction. ELLs in general education classrooms need to receive differentiated instruction and ongoing support so that they may simultaneously acquire academic vocabulary and content, as well as English language skills. To facilitate this, the CSDE is currently creating professional development programs for general education teachers. These sessions will utilize data analysis to inform instruction, and will also review research and provide examples of second-language acquisition strategies that effectively support ELLs.

A second approach to tackling this challenge is linking specific ELL instructional programs with standardized assessment results to gauge their effectiveness. To accomplish this, the CSDE worked collaboratively with a subcommittee of the Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL) to revise the current ELL program codes used by the CSDE's Public School Information System (PSIS), so that they more accurately reflect current instructional programs. With the revised program codes and descriptions, the CSDE will be better able to link current ELL programs with outcomes.

Table 7: CSDE English Mastery Standard

Grade	English Language Proficiency	Mastery of Academic Content		
		Mathematics	Reading	Writing
K-2	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 & 5)	-	Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (K: Level 4; Grade 1: Level 18; Grade 2: Level 28 Nonfiction Selection)	-
3-8	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 & 5)	CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5)	CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5)	CMT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)
9	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 & 5)	School Secure CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5)	School Secure CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5)	School Secure CMT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)
10-12	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 & 5)	CAPT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)	CAPT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)	CAPT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)

Footnotes

¹The CSDE recommended a three-question survey to determine the dominant language, including: The first language spoken by the student; the primary language spoken by the student at home; and the primary language spoken by the parent(s) or guardian(s) at home. The dominant language is the answer to two of these questions. LEAs may also use student observation and/or testing to make the final determination of the dominant language.

²The figures for Chinese do not include students whose dominant languages were: Mandarin (168), Cantonese (95), Fukien (2) and Fujianese (1).

³U.S. Department of Education: Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Notice of Final Interpretation, federal Register (V:73 N: 202) October 17, 2008.

⁴The median applicant pool rating for bilingual positions was 1: “Few or no minimally-qualified applicants.” See the CSDE’s *Fall Hiring Report, 2009-10*. The median divides a distribution of numbers in half, i.e., half are higher and half are lower.

⁵The teacher shortage area designation provides LEAs with greater flexibility to staff positions in shortage areas. Teachers in shortage areas may also qualify for mortgage assistance through CHFA and student loan deferral or forgiveness.

⁶The CSDE stresses that ESL instruction is part of the Tier I core instruction and only those ELL students for whom Tier I and II interventions have failed should be referred for Tier III services.

⁷This also reflects a net increase of two LEAs, from 195 in the 2005-06 school year to 197 in the 2009-10 school year.

⁸Service time is based upon the most recent, consecutive period of time students received services during their current registration with the LEA they were in when the student took the LAS Links. That is, ELL services received in other LEAs or during prior registrations with the student’s current LEA are not included in the student’s service time. Interruptions in services, particularly depending upon their length, may affect students’ English language acquisition. ELL students who have been in multiple LEAs may have received services that varied significantly by content, intensity and frequency. Therefore, the CSDE does not hold LEAs accountable for service time their students received other LEAs when calculating AMAO scores.

⁹Under NCLB, ELL students in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school (less than 12 months in attendance) may be exempt from taking the reading and writing subsections of the CMT and CAPT, but must take the math and science subsections. Schools in Puerto Rico are not considered to be U.S. schools. Schools can request such test accommodations for ELL students as readers, time extensions, word-to-word translation dictionaries or particular test settings. Based upon their IEP, ELL students who are also receiving special education services may take the Skills Checklist. They may also be eligible for accommodations based upon their disabilities.

¹⁰Median years for those who were proficient versus those who were not proficient: CMT: reading (3 vs. 3), writing (3 vs. 3), math (3 vs. 3); CAPT: reading (2 vs. 2), writing (2 vs. 2), math (2 vs. 2).

¹¹These are the actual percentages of all students who took the LAS Links and were proficient on either the CMT or CAPT. Therefore, they should not be compared with the proficiency rates in Figure 7, which have been adjusted. Based upon Title I regulations, the adjusted figures in Figure 7 are the upper boundary of the 95 percent confidence interval of students who were proficient. Furthermore, the adjusted rates in Figure 7 are not based upon all students but rather those who were in the district as of October 1st. ELL students who have been in the country less than one year may also be excluded from language arts testing.

¹²ELLs who were proficient on the LAS Links were still more likely than those who were not proficient to attain proficiency on the mastery tests (e.g., CMT: reading 32 percent versus 6 percent; writing: 61 percent versus 22 percent; math: 60 percent versus 22 percent). The correlation between the LAS Links and the CAPT was stronger, as 67 percent of those who were proficient on the LAS Links reading were proficient on CAPT reading and 71 percent who were proficient on the writing subsection were also proficient on CAPT writing.

¹³See Footnote 2

¹⁴Students with less than one year of services who do not make Progress or Proficiency are weighted .2 and those with more than one year but less than 2 full years are weighted .4 in the denominators for calculating AMAO 1 and AMAO 2. These weights were selected based upon cohort analysis of LAS Links data, which showed that typically 20 percent of first-year ELL students attained proficiency and 40 percent did so in their second year.

¹⁵Following Title I AYP standards, Connecticut does not calculate AYP results for subgroups with fewer than 40 students. For AMAO purposes, districts with fewer than 40 students in the ELL subgroup that, therefore, had no AYP score are by default considered to have made AYP. Of the 20 districts whose ELL subgroup was considered to have met AMAO 3 (AYP), 11 made AYP or Safe Harbor while 9 had fewer than 40 ELL students in their ELL AYP subgroup.

¹⁶The exceptions to this are students who meet the CAPT requirement but are not proficient on the LAS Links. If these students achieve proficiency on the LAS Links in the next academic year, they can be considered to have met mastery without retaking the CAPT. The reason is that the academic content does not change by grade for those who retake the CAPT, unlike the CMT.

¹⁷IEP students are those with an Individualized Education Program. An IEP is a written education program for a child with a disability that is developed by a team of professionals (administrators, teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child’s parents.

Data Notes: General public school data and ELL figures, program statistics and demographics are from the Public School Information System (PSIS) October Collection. Teacher shortage area information is from the ED 156 Fall Hiring Survey. Special education data is from the Special Education Data Application and Collection (SEDAC). School discipline data is from the ED 166 Disciplinary Offense collection. LAS Links and English Mastery results are from the ELL database. CMT and CAPT data are from the CSDE’s official test files.

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