

BLUEPRINT
FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

Blueprint for Maryland's Future:

Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools

Final Report

November 2022



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Note from the Chair

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed by the 2021 Maryland General Assembly session and now serves as a driving force for the Maryland State Department of Education as MSDE makes significant and lasting changes in the State's transformation to a world-class instructional system to improve the quality of education in Maryland. With its emphasis on equity, the Blueprint established the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools and charged it to study the availability of and access to resources for English learners and their families and make recommendations that will accelerate their academic achievement. As a multilingual, first-generation college graduate, former urban middle school English as a second language teacher, and district official who has worked in high-poverty school systems that have accelerated the achievement of English learners at scale, this work is a priority for me. Maryland's population of English learners is fast-growing and will shape the demographics of the State and country for years to come.

I was honored to serve as Chair of the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools as one of my first responsibilities upon the start of my tenure as Maryland's State Superintendent. The commitment and expertise of this diverse group of legislators, educators, stakeholders, and national experts have enabled us to engage in conversations around the policies and practices in multiple states that guide their core initiatives for educating and supporting English learners.

This final report builds on the 2021 interim report and includes background information, national best practices, and research shared at the sixteen Workgroup meetings held starting in August 2021 through October 2022. Most importantly, this report presents a set of recommendations designed to evolve Maryland's existing policies and practices to focus on the assets of our English learners and ensure the best-in-class education for them.

This is not just another report. These recommendations will have serious implications for how the State chooses to educate English learners going forward. I will ensure that MSDE continues to move forward with implementing each of the recommendations listed in this report to ensure high-quality outcomes for English learners.

The success of English learners will determine Maryland's future success. Multilingualism is an asset, and how to educate English learners at scale is not a mystery. We are only as strong as our lowest achieving students, and the ultimate judge of the Blueprint's effectiveness will be the performance of the historically underserved populations. Our future is at stake.

We will get this right, whatever it takes.

Best,

Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

Executive Summary

Established in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act during the 2021 Maryland General Assembly session, the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools (Workgroup) was charged with collecting data on English learners (ELs) in the State, reviewing national research and current practices, and making recommendations to improve the education of English learners in the State. Maryland is home to over 98,000 English learners in grades K-12. These students speak 189 different languages, adding rich cultural and linguistic diversity to every local education agency (LEA) in the State.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future charged the Workgroup to complete a number of tasks, including: collecting data on the number of English learners and their share of the overall student population, the services and staff currently available to English learners, reviewing the methods of teaching and providing services for English learners, making recommendations on improvements to the education that English learners receive, how funding should be adjusted, addressing learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and submitting reports on the Workgroup's findings and recommendations.

The Workgroup, chaired by State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury, held 16 meetings from August 2021 through October 2022. Each meeting began with a guiding question on a topic aligned with the legislative requirements, and experts and practitioners provided national best practices and research on the topic. In addition, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff presented existing State policies and practices. Most meetings also included an examination of State data related to the discussion. Time was built into each meeting for Workgroup members to engage with the presenters and with each other by asking clarifying questions and generating recommendations aligned with the research. Workgroup meeting agendas and resources were posted on the MSDE website.¹

This final report provides demographic and achievement data about English learners in Maryland, information on existing practices and policies in the State, and financial and professional learning implications. This information, along with presentations and discussion by national and state experts and partners about national best practices informed the development of the recommendations that will transform the education of English learners in the State moving forward.

The recommendations that are explained in detail in later chapters in this report are:

RECOMMENDATION 1: SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN MULTILINGUALISM BY PROMOTING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Workgroup discussions have centered on engaging in an asset-based approach, which instead of defining ELs as lacking in English proficiency values English learners' home languages and cultures and reframes the narrative of EL data and achievement in content areas. To shift from this deficit mindset, **Maryland should develop and implement a statewide strategy to promote and formally reinforce asset-based perspectives regarding ELs at every level from the Maryland State Department of Education to individual educators and staff.**

¹ <https://marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/ELBlueprintWorkgroup/index.aspx>

RECOMMENDATION 2: EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION WITH MULTILINGUAL FAMILIES

While federal and state mandates require equal access to public services for individuals in a language they can understand, currently Maryland has no formal regulations or policies in place. Communication that is not linguistically and culturally appropriate is a barrier to family engagement. To ensure equity and access for multilingual parents and guardians, **Maryland should explore legislation and/or regulations to establish a mandated comprehensive language access policy for MSDE and public schools.**

RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT ELS

Recommendation 3a: Scale Two-Way Immersion Programs

Two Maryland local education agencies (LEAs) offer two-way immersion programs where English speakers and native Spanish speakers are integrated for content and literacy instruction in both languages. Data demonstrates opportunities to expand these programs in other schools and LEAs in the State. To maximize the number of students who can benefit from these research-based programs, **Maryland should develop, fund, and implement a statewide approach to expansion of two-way immersion programs.**

Recommendation 3b: Literacy Instruction Aligned to The Science of Reading That Meets the Needs of English Learners

MSDE, through its Maryland Leads Initiative, has identified seven high-leverage strategies that have been proven to be effective and transformative for schools and LEAs including the science of reading. **Maryland should implement a structured literacy policy that incorporates effective English language development practices to improve reading outcomes for English learners.**

Recommendation 3c: Effective English Language Development (ELD) Programs

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for English learner programs states that LEAs must have instructional and curricular materials. Currently, MSDE does not provide guidance to LEAs on selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials for English language development programs. **Maryland should develop resources and formally reinforce that LEAs ensure all College and Career Ready curricula and high-quality instructional materials across all content areas meet the needs of English learners.**

RECOMMENDATION 4: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT ELS

Recommendation 4a: Equitable and Valid Assessments for English Learners

Maryland is taking steps to translate and transadapt several of its state assessments; however, there is a need to continue evaluating best practices for providing equal access to assessments for more ELs. Additionally, the State needs to support English learners' linguistic and academic development in the most effective way possible by measuring, engaging, and fostering their unique linguistic skills as early as possible. To ensure equity and inclusion in the state assessment program, **Maryland should expand the development of assessments in English learners' dominant language(s) that will accurately demonstrate their academic achievement and language proficiency.**

Recommendation 4b: Transparent and Equitable Accountability and Reporting for ELs at All Stages of English Language Development

Maryland's accountability system includes data on English learners and their non-English learner peers. The Maryland accountability system measures a variety of aspects of school performance for all students and reports the results to the public. Currently, the accountability system provides data on academic achievement and academic progress of ELs, reclassified ELs (REs), and non-English learners at elementary and middle schools. For high schools, academic achievement is reported for ELs, REs, and non-English learners. To better understand and accelerate academic outcomes for ELs, **Maryland should hold MSDE, local education agencies, and schools accountable for EL achievement at all stages of English language development by enhancing the reporting of data on English learners.**

Recommendation 4c: New and Expanded Ways to Reclassify ELs

Currently, the state's English language proficiency (ELP) assessment is the only criterion used to determine reclassification of ELs as English proficient, a high-stakes decision. To ensure that ELs are reclassified at the optimal time and to better understand and support the state's English learners, **Maryland should revise its policy to provide multiple measures to reclassify ELs.**

RECOMMENDATION 5: TEACHER PREPARATION POLICIES TO SUPPORT ELS

Recommendation 5a: All Teachers Prepared to Serve English Learners

All teachers in Maryland are likely to educate an English learner at some point in their careers. General education teachers are usually the teachers of record who spend the most time with English learners in PreK-12 settings. Therefore, they must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to support English learners. To ensure all teachers are prepared to serve English learners, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Require that all educator preparation programs provide training in EL-related teacher competencies and provide EL student clinical opportunities for pre-service educators.**
- ii. **Expand dual certification offerings (English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] combined with another certification area).**
- iii. **Invest in training for all current educators focused on the assets of multilingualism and improving academic outcomes for ELs.**

Recommendation 5b: Maryland Bilingual Teacher Certification

Maryland does not offer a bilingual education certification or endorsement, unlike twenty other states that do offer a bilingual education certification or endorsement. If dual language programs are to expand in the State, Maryland will need bilingual teachers with expertise in second language acquisition and pedagogy. To ensure an adequate supply of effective bilingual teachers, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Adopt a bilingual certification.**
- ii. **Ensure that unnecessary barriers do not limit multilingual candidates from becoming certified teachers in Maryland.**

Recommendation 5c: Teacher Pipeline

Maryland's nine approved ESOL teacher preparation programs and two approved alternative teacher preparation programs will not meet the need for ESOL and bilingual teachers in the State. To ensure that all ELs have the benefit of a certified ESOL and bilingual teacher, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Expand grow your own programs and other research-based efforts to recruit and train ESOL and bilingual educators.**
- ii. **Support LEAs in increasing the number of conditionally certified ESOL teachers who earn certification.**

RECOMMENDATION 6: IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LEARNERS

Maryland has no policy or procedure in place for identifying and serving English learners enrolled in public PreK programs. To ensure early childhood education and childcare programs are responsive to the experiences and needs of English learners, **Maryland should adopt:**

- i. **A standardized, comprehensive method for identifying, collecting, and sharing information about young English learners that is required across all LEAs and childcare providers.**
- ii. **A statewide plan for supporting young English learners in PreK and early childhood settings that provides guidance, service models, and strategies for meeting their instructional needs and family engagement.**

RECOMMENDATION 7: SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED OR INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SLIFE)

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) face unique challenges and are likely to need additional instruction and social-emotional support as they strive to meet success in classrooms with increasingly complex academic language while simultaneously building their English proficiency. **Maryland should implement specialized programs and customized supports for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) that ensure that all students have equal access and opportunities for success.**

RECOMMENDATION 8: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS (CCR) CURRICULUM AND PATHWAYS

To implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's goal of ensuring that all Maryland public school students benefit from rigorous curricula aligned to the College and Career Readiness standards, are College and Career Ready, and will succeed in Post-CCR Pathways, **Maryland should implement specialized programs and customized supports for ELs that ensure that English learners are accurately identified for gifted and talented services, have access to advanced coursework, and have equal access and opportunity to achieve success in a Post-CCR Pathway.**

RECOMMENDATION 9: FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND SPENDING DECISIONS THAT SUPPORT SUCCESS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

This report groups funding allocation policy options into three levels. Each level reflects the inclusion of additional policy options that, together, could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced English Learner funding formula allocation. Formula amendments to the Blueprint formula English learner weight would ensure the Blueprint for Maryland's future can provide the resources necessary to ensure proper opportunities for English learners regardless of the local prevalence of their native language, diseconomies

of scale associated with low EL enrollments not generating the per-pupil revenue necessary to serve ELs, and the relative English proficiency level of a local education agency's EL population. These additional resources would position Maryland's LEAs to implement the best-in-class instructional opportunities the Blueprint envisions. **Maryland should adopt policy level three, which recommends amending the formula to provide additional funding weights.**

Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools

MEMBERS OF WORKGROUP

Chair

Mohammed Choudhury, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

Appointed by Senate President

Honorable Cheryl Kagan

Appointed by House Speaker

Honorable Alonzo Washington

Appointed by State Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Libia Gil, Former Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director for OELA at the US Department of Education, Founding Board Member, Sobrato Early Academics Language Model

Dr. Eric Louérs-Philips, Executive Director of Public Affairs, Frederick County Public Schools

Diego Toledo, Goucher College student, graduate of Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Isela Vidals, Academic Dean of Cesar Chavez Dual Language Spanish Immersion School, Prince George's County Public Schools

Judith Walker, Early Learning Branch Chief, Maryland State Department of Education

Conor P. Williams, PhD, Senior Fellow, The Century Foundation

Min Woo, Specialist, International Student Family Outreach, Howard County Public Schools

At Least One Advocate For English Learners

Drew S. Fagan, Ed.D., First Vice President, Maryland TESOL Association; Associate clinical Professor, Applied Linguistics and Language Education, Coordinator of TESOL Programs, University of Maryland, College Park

Matthew Peters, Executive Director, Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center

At Least One Expert In Education From A Diverse Area Of The State

Dr. Anjali Pandey, Professor, Applied Linguistics, Project director: TARGET TESOL program, Salisbury University

Niki Hazel, Associate Superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Montgomery County Public Schools

Dr. Kia McDaniel, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Prince George's County Public Schools

Paula Moore, ESOL and World Languages Supervisor, Washington County Public Schools

Appointed By The Maryland State Education Association

Anne Marie Foerster Luu, English and ESOL Teacher, Montgomery County Public Schools

Maryland State Department of Education Staff

Yousuf Ahmad, Executive Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, Education Policy, and External Relations

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Laurel Williams, Specialist, EL/Title III

Dylan Winslow, Computer Information Specialist

Ilhye Yoon, Coordinator, EL/Title III

SUMMARY OF EL WORKGROUP REQUIREMENTS

The following are the charges assigned to the Workgroup by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future:

- *Collect data on:*
 - *the number of English language learners at each public early childhood, primary, and secondary school in the State;*
 - *the percent of English language learners in the total student population at each public early childhood, primary, and secondary school in the State;*
 - *the services available to English language learners in public early childhood, primary, and secondary schools throughout the State and the effectiveness of those services; and*
 - *the accessibility of public early childhood, primary, and secondary school teachers, administrators, and staff to English language learners and their families, including whether:*
 - *bilingual front office staff are available to assist parents;*
 - *security personnel at the school are able to assist English language learners, especially in the event of a safety concern;*
 - *guidance counselors at the school are able to work effectively with English language learners; and*
 - *teachers and classroom aides at the school are able to effectively teach and work with English language learners*
- *Review methods of teaching and providing other services to English language learners in public early childhood, primary, or secondary schools, including methods used:*
 - *in the State, other states, and other countries;*
 - *for recruiting and retaining bilingual teachers and staff, including security and administrative staff who speak Spanish; and*
 - *for recruiting teachers from other countries who speak Spanish or other languages and only need to obtain a Maryland teaching certificate to teach in the State; and*
- *Make recommendations on improving the education of English language learners in public early childhood, primary, or secondary schools in the State, including whether additional funding should be provided; and*
- *Measure and make recommendations to address learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic for English language learners.*

- *On or before December 1, 2021, the Workgroup shall submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.*
- *On or before December 1, 2022, the Workgroup shall submit a final report of any additional findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.*

SUMMARY OF WORKGROUP MEETINGS

To address the specified requirements and position Maryland as a national leader to support English learners, the EL Workgroup held a series of 16 meetings from August 2021 to October 2022. Each meeting focused on a guiding question and included a spotlight on national best practices and research on the topic. The virtual format enabled national experts and researchers to present and answer questions from Workgroup members. MSDE staff provided an overview of Maryland's existing policy and practices as well as an examination of pertinent data. Each meeting included an opportunity for community partners and Workgroup members to provide input and discuss the topic.

August 17, 2021

Guiding Question: What is the state of English learners in Maryland?

Guest Speakers:

- MSDE staff shared background information on ELs in Maryland for the Workgroup to consider as they develop recommendations to educate English learners in the State. Key data included demographic information, school experience, and performance of ELs.

August 31, 2021

Guiding Question: How does Maryland identify, engage, and instruct dual language learners in early childhood settings?

Guest Speakers:

- Lorena Mancilla, Director of WIDA Early Years, presented on the national dual language learner landscape and the lack of guidance or policy at the federal, state, and local level on what data is collected on young children who have exposure to a language other than English in their home environment.
- MSDE staff provided information on state and local policies, practices, and programs for young English learners in early childhood settings. The data deep dive focused on statewide results on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

September 14, 2021

Guiding Question: What practices support equitable access by ELs and their families to ELD-trained teachers and multilingual staff?

Guest Speakers:

- Sarah Neville-Morgan, Alesha Moreno-Ramirez, Elena Fajardo, and Marcela Rodriguez of the California Department of Education (CDE) shared laws, policies, and reports that guide the implementation of the California English Learner Roadmap and other core initiatives for educating English learners.
- Dr. Jennifer Love gave information on Prince George's County Public Schools' extensive language access and equity services and resources.

- MSDE staff provided a 50-state comparison of ESOL certification, bilingual certification, and EL training for all teachers as well as Maryland certification regulations. A data deep dive included certification status and demographic information on ESOL teachers in the State.

September 30, 2021

Guiding Question: What are the benefits of dual language programs for all students?

Guest Speakers:

- Dr. Jennifer L. Steele of American University shared recent national research on dual language immersion education and its implications for English learners.
- Presentations on two-way immersion programs in Maryland were given by Carmen Henninger and Jane Tarwacki from Prince George's County Public Schools and Tamara Hewlett and Andy Gomez of Montgomery County Public Schools.
- MSDE staff introduced a preliminary analysis of opportunities to scale two-way immersion programs in Maryland's LEAs.

October 13, 2021

Guiding Question: What are the model policies, laws, and regulations that ensure the success of English learners?

Guest Speakers:

- Kristin Percy Calaff, Ph.D., from Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, shared the state's vision, policies, laws, and funding that support its dual language initiative.
- Elisa Alvarez of the New York State Education Department provided an overview of New York's state programs to support English learners.

October 27, 2021

Guiding Question: What are the model policies, laws, and regulations that ensure the success of English learners?

Guest Speaker:

- Julie Lara, Ph.D., Texas Education Agency, provided information on state laws and policies, funding, and initiatives that support emergent bilinguals in the state.

November 9, 2021

Guiding Question: What are the model policies, laws, and regulations that ensure the success of English learners?

Guiding Question: How can we ensure that schools and local education agencies promote and sustain environments where families can easily access resources and translation services?

Guest Speaker:

- Dr. Olivia Hernandez, San Antonio Independent School District, explained paradigm shifts, Texas law, and best-in-class policies and practices that have expanded dual language offerings and scaled student academic success.

February 11, 2022

Guiding Question: What challenges do multilingual families face navigating the educational system in Maryland?

Guiding Question: How can the EL Workgroup collaborate with community organizations to establish a comprehensive language access policy?

Guest Speaker:

- Gustavo Torres, Executive Director of CASA de Maryland, provided background information on CASA, its educational initiatives, multigenerational approach, and specific programs tailored to the immigrant community.

CASA de Maryland

CASA is the largest grassroots immigrant multi-service and advocacy organization in the Mid-Atlantic region with over 115,000 lifetime members. Its model blends human services, community organizing, and strategic campaigns in order to serve its members. CASA's services include health, legal, employment and vocational services. Its education department focuses on a multigenerational approach, providing adult ESOL instruction, youth college and career readiness and enrichment programming, learning together curriculum engaging parents and students, and policy advocacy.

Aprendiendo Juntos is a bilingual family engagement initiative, a culturally responsive two-generation approach that CASA has implemented in Prince George's County Public Schools and is scalable elsewhere in Maryland. The program provides educational enrichment opportunities for students, supports parents through education, and involves teachers at schools with large immigrant populations so that they understand the context in which the children live and learn. Components include:

- Youth Engagement/After School Programming combines daily homework help, life skills development, career readiness, financial literacy, health education, leadership development, and community service.
- Community Resource Navigators conduct outreach, assess individual needs, and connect to service providers.
- Parents as Teachers Sessions provide training courses on strategies to support their children so that they can become champions for them at school.
- Teacher-Parent Connections Institute focuses on professional development for teachers designed to increase their cultural competency and engagement skills.

CASA emphasized the need to scale the specialized programs as Maryland ranks seventh among states receiving the largest newcomer youth population in FY22; the Department of Homeland Security defines this population as unaccompanied minors.² Several of Maryland's LEAs rank in the top 15 in the nation.³ The top three countries of origin are Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and many speak indigenous languages as their first language. Further, CASA has identified the need for a coordinated statewide policy for enrollment, adaptive career readiness programs, and wrap-around services.⁴

² <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/grant-funding/unaccompanied-children-released-sponsors-state>

³ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data#countryoforigin>

⁴ <https://wearecasa.org/>

March 24, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland improve services for middle and high school English learners and their families?

Guest Speakers:

- MSDE staff presented a data deep dive on secondary-level ELs in the State, including their educational outcomes compared to those of their peers.
- Dr. Eunice Humphrey, Principal of the International High School at Langley Park, Prince George's County Public Schools, presented information on the Internationals Network.
- Flavia Molea Balker, ML/EL Coordinator, Rhode Island Department of Education, presented the state's initiatives to support English learners with inconsistent/interrupted formal education (SIFE).
- Dr. Lindsay Walberg, Program Specialist, Montgomery County Public Schools, introduced the GED Option Program, Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) for older ELs.

April 20, 2022

Guiding Question: What funding policies will support equitable education for English learners and their families in Maryland?

Guest Speakers:

- Frank Patinella, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, and members of Community WELL, participated in a panel discussion about priorities for EL funding.
- MSDE staff introduced Maryland's state formula aid and the impact of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future on funding to support ELs.
- Zahava Stadler, Special Assistant for State Funding and Policy, The Education Trust, presented policy recommendations on structuring state education funding formulas for ELs.

Community Workgroup on English Language Learners (WELL)

Community WELL is a coalition that includes community members, organization representatives, parents, teachers, students, advocates, and policy experts. Their goal is to advocate for the overhaul of policies and practices that impact Maryland's English learners and their families and to ensure a system that promotes full inclusion and opportunities for ELs statewide. Members stress that robust and authentic engagement is very challenging and takes time, flexibility, and relationship building.

Community WELL engaged with the Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools on April 20, 2022, sharing their recommendations. Additionally, Superintendent Choudhury and MSDE staff participated in a listening session with Community WELL on June 1, 2022. Members stressed the need to broaden focus to include older, neurodiverse, newcomer, gifted, and LGBTQIA+ students. College and career readiness (CCR) for ELs is a priority; plans for students who do not reach CCR standards are essential. The shortage of ESOL and multilingual educators is an area of concern. The coalition further recommended that standards need to be in place to assess a district's overall environment, focusing on intercultural communication and anti-racist and equitable practices.

May 26, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland ensure that local education agencies (LEAs) best deploy their funds to support equitable, high-quality education for ELs and their families?

Guest Speakers:

- Kelly Alvarez, EL Education Consultant, Michigan Department of Education, introduced the state's Section 41 Bilingual Education Funding, targeted supports for ELs.
- MSDE staff summarized federal funding sources that can be braided to maximize resources for English learners and their families.

June 23, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland's accountability system promote transparency and improve outcomes for English learners at all stages of language development?

Guest Speakers:

- Dr. Karen Thompson, Oregon State University presented research and recommendations regarding EL accountability and reporting.
- MSDE staff provided an overview of Maryland's existing accountability and reporting system and a data deep dive on how ELs score on accountability system measures relative to their peers.

July 27, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland's accountability system promote transparency and improve outcomes for English learners at all stages of language development?

Guest Speakers:

- Cindy Kazanis, Kimberly Mundhenk, and Justin Lane, California Department of Education provided information on ELs in the state's accountability and reporting system.
- Bob Measel, Pennsylvania Department of Education, introduced multiple measures included in the state policy for reclassification of ELs.

August 24, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland ensure that high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) processes include English learners?

Guest Speakers:

- Jennifer Aguirre and Julie Lara, Texas Education Agency, provided an overview of the Texas Resource Review and supports for ELs.
- Jessica Carman, Louisiana Department of Education, introduced the instructional materials review process and the diverse learner indicator.
- MSDE staff explained Maryland's existing process and practices for the selection of instructional materials for ELs at the state and LEA level.

September 29, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland align the science of reading and structured literacy with best English language development practices to improve reading outcomes for English learners?

Guest Speakers:

- Dr. Elsa Cardenas-Hagan, President of Valley Speech Language and Learning Center; Dr. Antonio Fierro, Independent Reading Consultant; and Dr. Claude Goldenberg, former Professor of Education at Stanford Graduate School of Education, provided national perspectives and key research findings, challenges, and policy recommendations for EL literacy programs.
- MSDE staff presented the Science of Reading strategy area in the Maryland Leads grant initiative.
- Sherry Eichinger-Wilson and Tammy Zino-Seergae, Cecil County Public Schools, shared information on the county's literacy program and essential components for ELs.

October 20, 2022

Guiding Question: How can Maryland leverage external partners to better support multilingual learners and their families?

Guiding Question: How will the recommendations from the EL Workgroup report impact the day-to-day work of educators' roles and responsibilities?

Guest Speakers:

- A panel of students and parents shared their perspectives on the benefits of programming provided by CASA de Maryland.
- Workgroup members reflected on the recommendations that will be included in the final report and the actions that the State and LEAs will need to take to implement them, including professional learning, fiscal decisions, and policy actions.

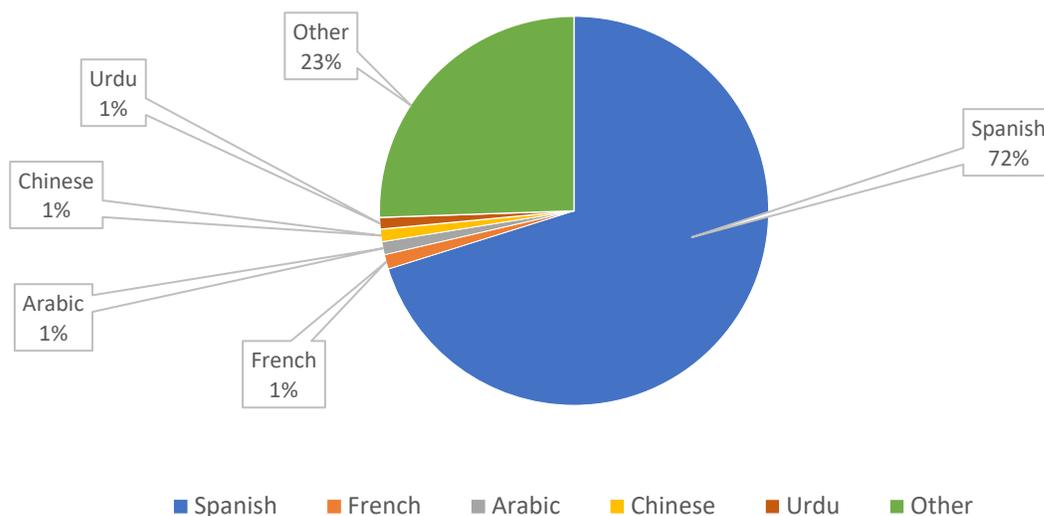
The State of English Learners (ELs) in Maryland Schools

This section presents key data on the state of English learners (ELs) in Maryland. It includes demographic information, school experience, and performance of ELs. The Workgroup used these data as reference points as they considered the changes necessary to achieve equity and excellence for all English learners.

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

In school year 2021-2022, Maryland's K-12 EL population comprised 98,567 students who speak 189 languages. Figure 1 shows that most English learners in Maryland speak Spanish, with much smaller percentages speaking French, Chinese, Arabic, and Urdu.

Figure 1: Languages Spoken by Maryland's English Learners

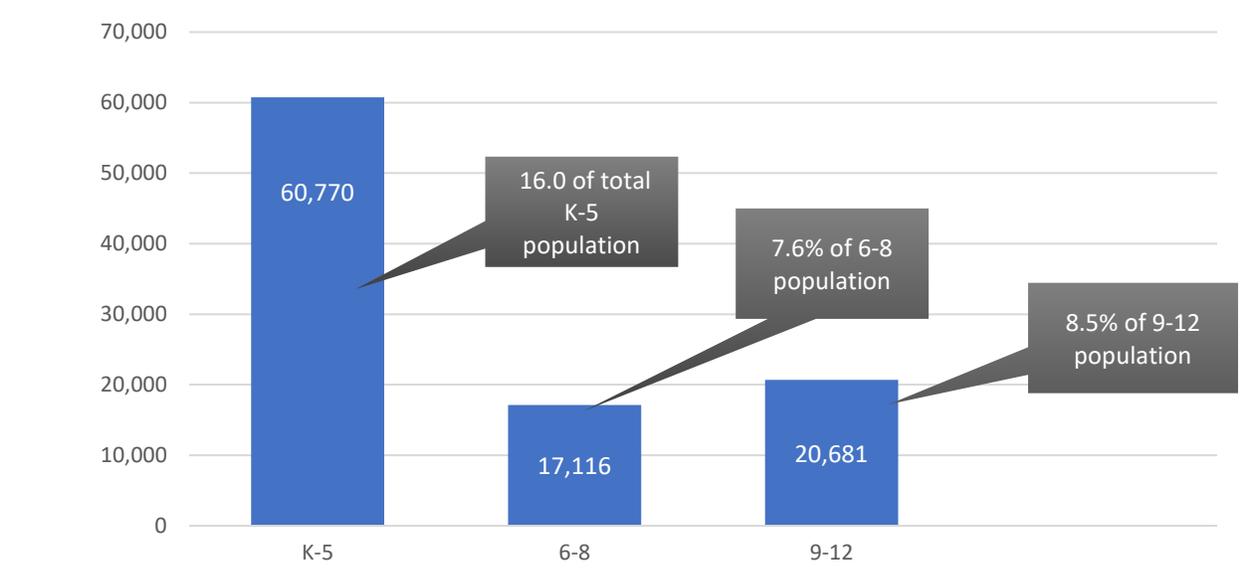


ENGLISH LEARNERS BY THE NUMBERS

According to the National Education Association⁵, English learners are the fastest growing group of students in grades K-12. The 98,567 English learners in Maryland make up 11.5% of the total student population in grades K-12. As illustrated in Figure 2, ELs are more concentrated in elementary schools than middle and high schools. Currently, approximately 16.0% of the K-5 elementary population or 60,770 students are English learners. At the secondary level, 8.0% of the school population are English learners, including 17,116 middle school students and 20,681 high school students.

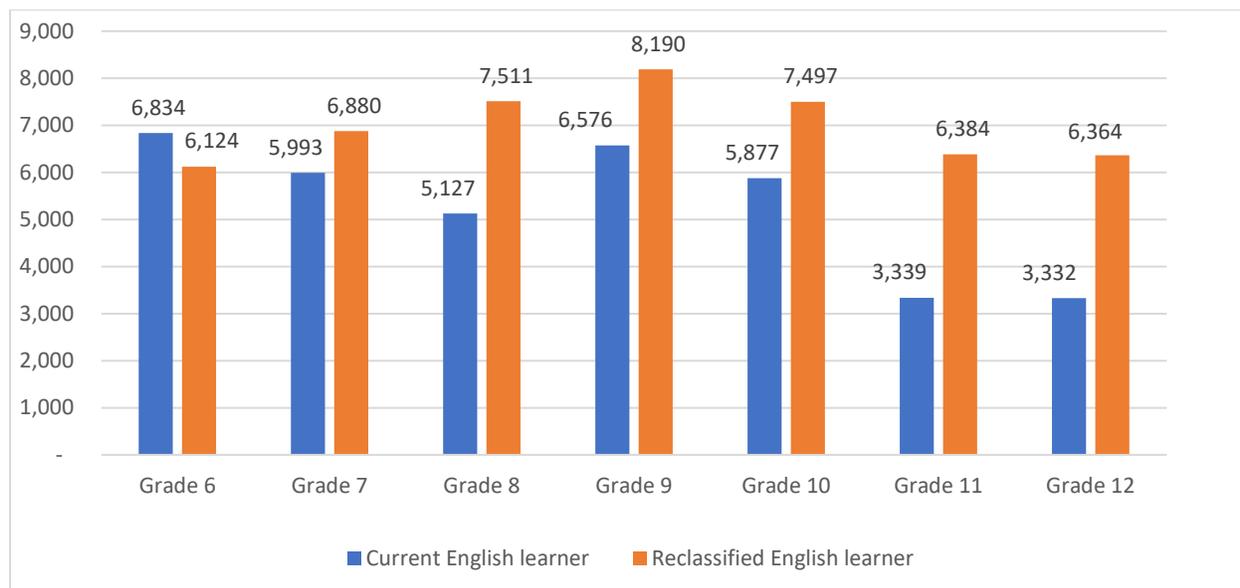
⁵ National Education Association, Toolkit: English Language Learners, (July 2020), <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/english-language-learners>

Figure 2: Distribution of English Learners Across Grade Levels in Maryland



There were 37,078 current English learners in grades 6 through 12 in Maryland in school year 2020-2021, representing 8.4% of the State's total secondary level student population. There were an additional 48,950 reclassified secondary English learners in the same school year. Figure 3 shows the number of current and reclassified secondary level English learners by grade. Current English learners were most prevalent in grades 6 through 10, with about half as many in grades 11 and 12, while the highest numbers of reclassified ELs were in grades 8 to 10.

Figure 3: Current and Reclassified English Learners by Grade, 2020-2021



Note: Reclassified English learners are students who were an English learner at any point in their schooling but who are not classified as an English learner in the 2020-2021 school year.

The number of English learners varies across the State, with the largest number of ELs in Maryland in and around the metropolitan areas of Baltimore City and Washington D.C., Prince George’s County and Montgomery County are home to over 58,000 ELs combined, or more than half of all ELs statewide. An additional 18.7% of Maryland’s ELs, or 18,395 students, are enrolled in schools in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: English Learner Enrollment in Local Education Agencies in 2021-2022

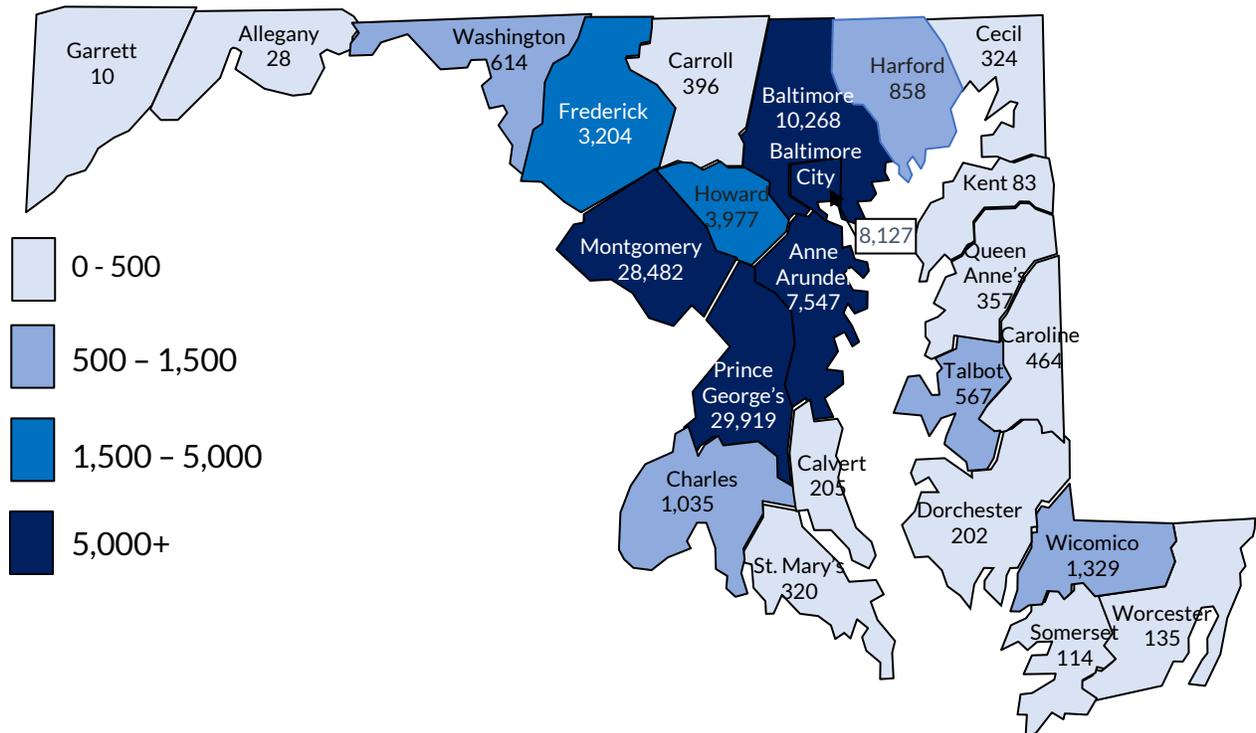


Table 1 shows the share of enrollment in each LEA that were English learners in school year 2021-2022. The three LEAs in which the percentage of English learners was above the state average were Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Talbot County, while in 15 LEAs English learners accounted for less than 5% of their overall K-12 student enrollment.

Table 1: Percentage of English Learner Enrollment by Local Education Agencies, 2021-2022

Local Education Agency	Percentage of English Learners
Prince George's	23.2%
Montgomery	18.0%
Talbot	12.5%
Baltimore City	10.4%
Baltimore County	9.2%
Anne Arundel	9.1%
Wicomico	9.1%
Frederick	7.1%
Howard	6.9%
All other LEAs	<5.0%

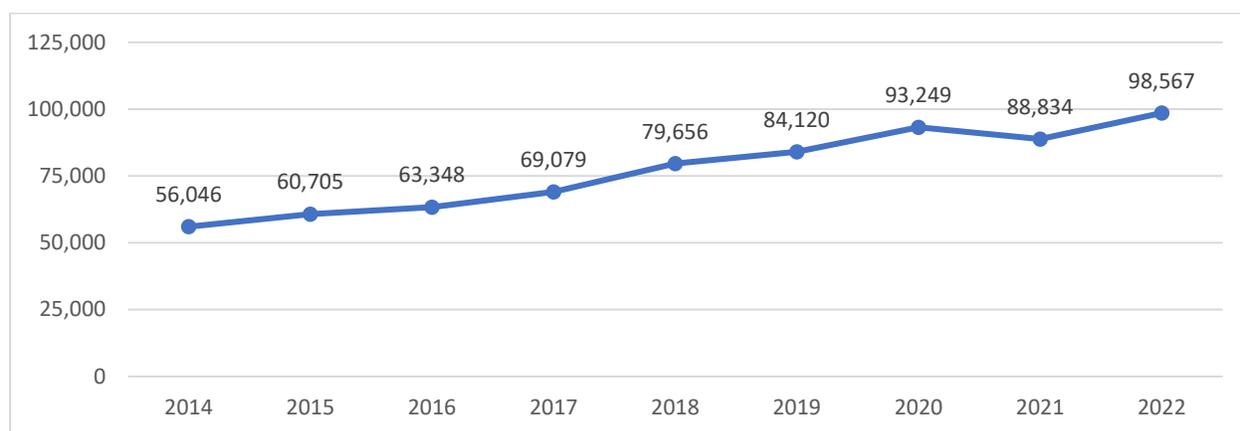
The number of secondary level English learners, and the share of all secondary students who are ELs, varies by school system. As shown in Table 2, Montgomery and Prince George's counties have both the largest number of secondary English learners and the largest percentages of secondary English learners in the State at 15% each while in 14 school systems, less than 5% of secondary students are English learners.

Table 2: Count and Share of Secondary Level English Learners by LEA, 2020-2021

Local Education Agency	Number of ELs, Grades 6-12	Share of Students in Grades 6-12 who are ELs
Montgomery	12,985	15%
Prince George's	10,225	15%
Baltimore City	2,985	8%
Talbot	192	8%
Baltimore County	3,540	6%
Anne Arundel	2,500	6%
Wicomico	470	6%
Caroline	159	5%
Calvert	54	<5%
Howard	1,215	<5%
Frederick	1,096	<5%
Charles	419	<5%
Harford	296	<5%
Washington	261	<5%
Carroll	127	<5%
Cecil	132	<5%
St. Mary's	119	<5%
Dorchester	71	<5%
Queen Anne's	108	<5%
Worcester	52	<5%
Somerset	39	<5%
Kent	17	<5%

Mirroring national trends, the number of English learners in the State has increased over time. A drop in EL enrollment in the 2020-2021 school year was likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic as all students had a similar decrease. (See Figure 5 and Table 3.) The number of ELs in the State continued to increase in 2021-2022, following the prior trend, and surpassed overall enrollment in 2019-2020.

Figure 5: K-12 English Learner Enrollment in Maryland over Time



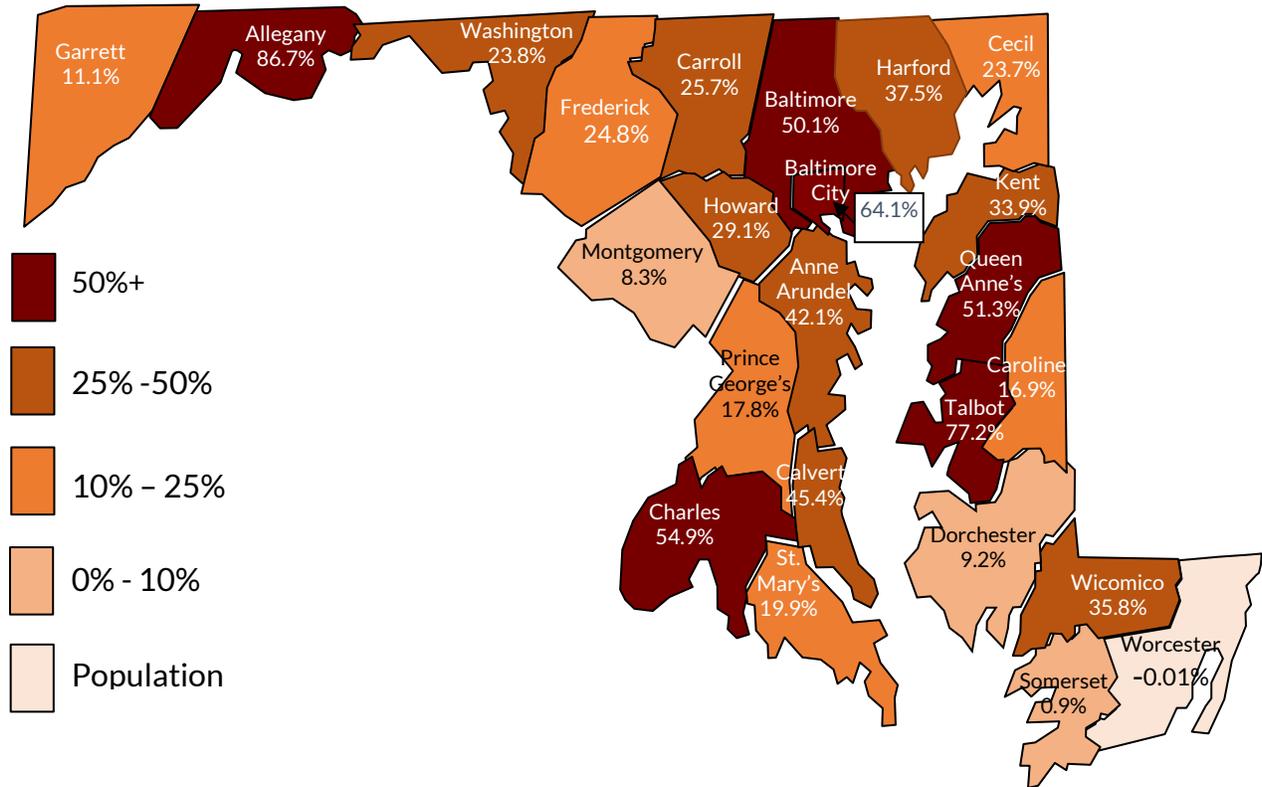
The increase in the number of English learners over time as shown above in Figure 5 is also represented by the year-to-year percent change of population. As seen in Table 3, over the past six years, there has been an average increase of over 7% in English learner enrollment from the previous year. Each year has seen at least a 4% increase in English learner enrollment with the exception of the 2020-2021 school year which was the first full school year after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when overall public school enrollment in Maryland declined by approximately 3%.

Table 3: Year-to-Year Change in Maryland's K-12 English Learner Population

Year	Percentage Change from Previous Year
2015-2016	+ 4.4%
2016-2017	+ 9.0%
2017-2018	+ 15.3%
2018-2019	+ 5.6%
2019-2020	+ 10.9%
2020-2021	- 4.7%
2021-2022	+11.0%
Average Yearly Rate of Change	+ 7.4%

Figure 6 provides a more nuanced picture of where the increase in the English learner population has occurred in the State over the last five years. The largest increases in ELs in Maryland have occurred in multiple regions, from Allegany County in the west to Charles County in the south to Baltimore City and Baltimore County in the north central to Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties on the Eastern shore. Only one county experienced a small decline in English learner enrollment over this time period.

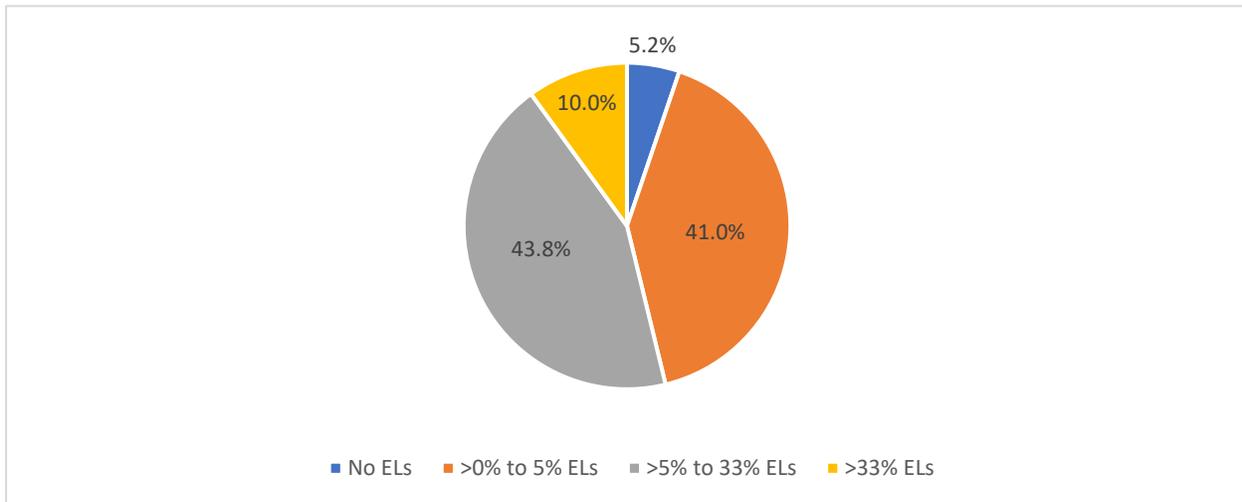
Figure 6: Change in K-12 EL Population over the Last 5 Years by Local Education Agency



The English learner population is continuing to grow very quickly and is expected to expand beyond 100,000 students. This population growth is being realized in all areas of the State. ELs are not only present in the metropolitan core of Maryland, but are also in every school district, including those on the Eastern Shore, in Southern Maryland, in Western Maryland, and everywhere else in between. The need for strong and effective instructional practices for English learners is a top priority for all educators in Maryland.

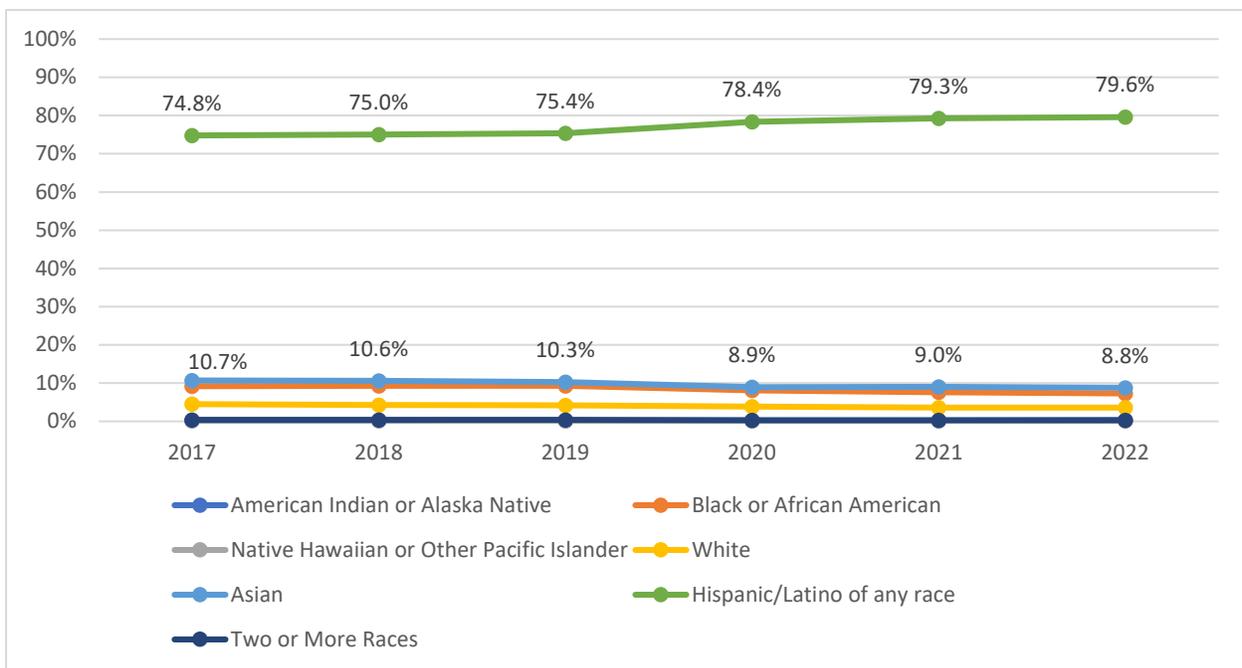
Drilling down further, Figure 7 shows the concentration of English learners within schools. Statewide, roughly half of schools had 5% or less English learners, but more than zero, and half had more than 5% English learners. Notably, only 1 in 20 schools statewide had no ELs and 1 in 10 identified more than a third of their students as English learners.

Figure 7: Share of Maryland Schools by English Learner Population



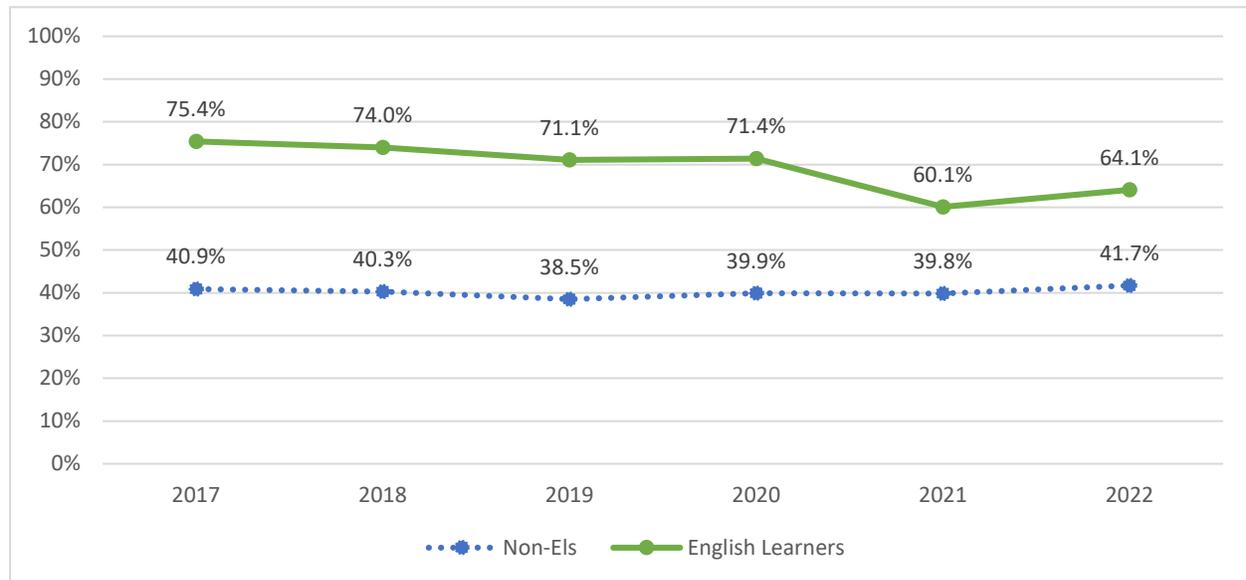
Over the last five years, Hispanic students have been the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in Maryland's public schools. Since 2017, Hispanic student enrollment has increased from 145,800 to 175,768, a 20.6% increase. The large majority of Maryland's English learners identify as Hispanic/Latino. In 2022, 79.6% of the EL population identified as Hispanic, 8.8% identified as Asian, 7.3% as Black or African American, and 3.6% as White. As Figure 8 shows, these numbers have largely held steady over the last five years.

Figure 8: Race/Ethnicity of Maryland's English Learner Population, 2017–2022



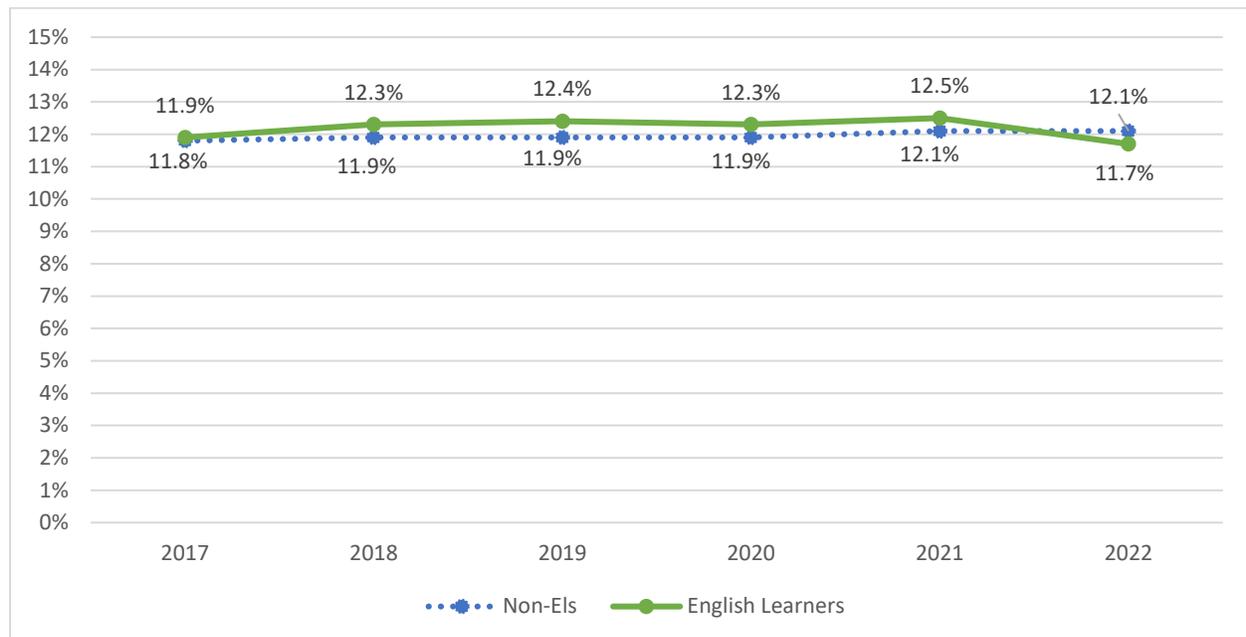
English learners are overrepresented among students living in poverty. While 42% of non-ELs were eligible for free and reduced priced meals (FARMs) in 2022, 64% of ELs were eligible. As Figure 9 shows, this disparity has remained fairly constant over time.

Figure 9: Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Meals, by EL Status, 2017–2022



As shown in Figure 10, from 2017 to 2022, ELs had similar shares of students identified with disabilities compared to non-ELs. In 2022, the percentage of ELs identified with disabilities decreased from prior years so that non-ELs were identified as having disabilities at a slightly higher rate than ELs.

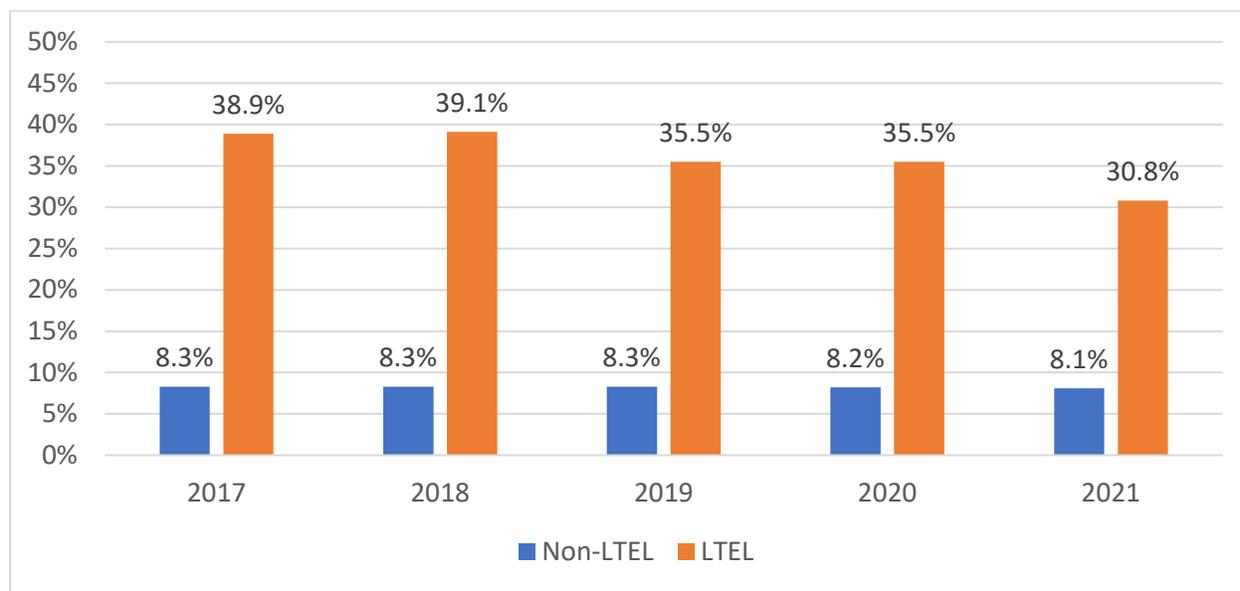
Figure 10: Proportion of Students with Disabilities by English Learner Status, 2017–2022



Long-term English learners (LTELs) are English learners who have been enrolled in a U.S. school for more than six years and have not been reclassified as English proficient.

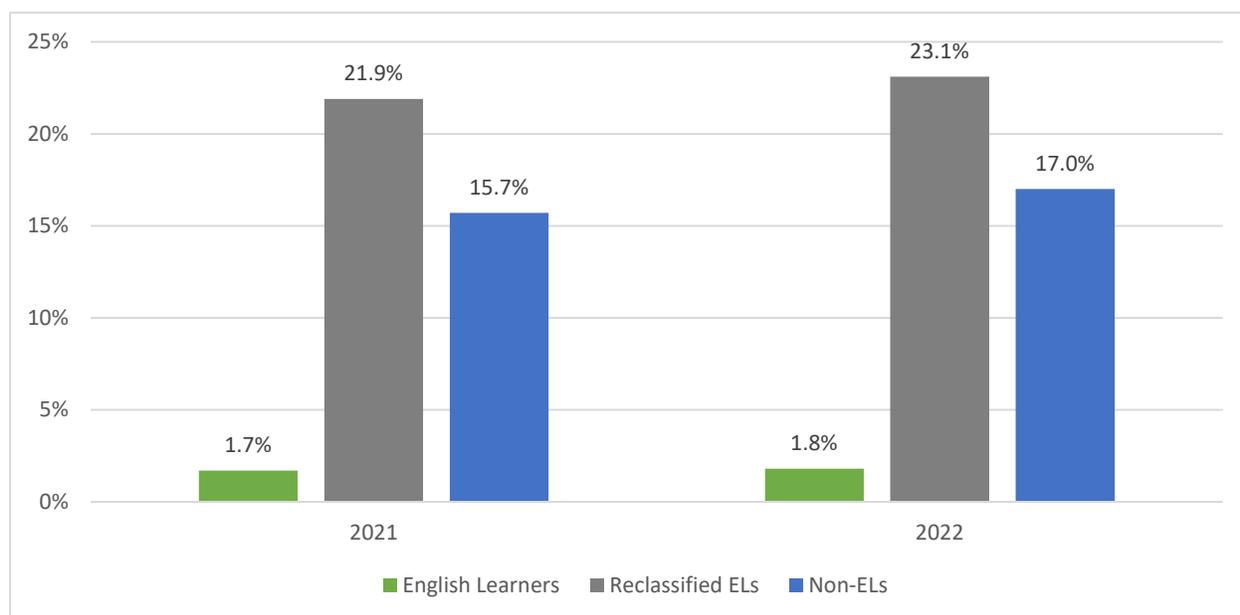
Figure 11 shows that while the disparity in special education identification by LTEL status was slightly reduced in 2021, LTELs were still almost 4 times more likely to be identified for special education services than were English learners who were non-LTELs.

Figure 11: Special Education Identification Rate by Long-Term English Learner Status, 2017–2021



English learners are identified for gifted and talented status at much lower rates than non-ELs in Maryland. As Figure 12 shows, less than 2% of ELs were identified in 2022, compared to 17% of non-ELs. Reclassified ELs, however, have a higher rate of gifted and talented identification compared to non-ELs.

Figure 12: Gifted and Talented Identification Rates by English Learner Status, 2021–2022

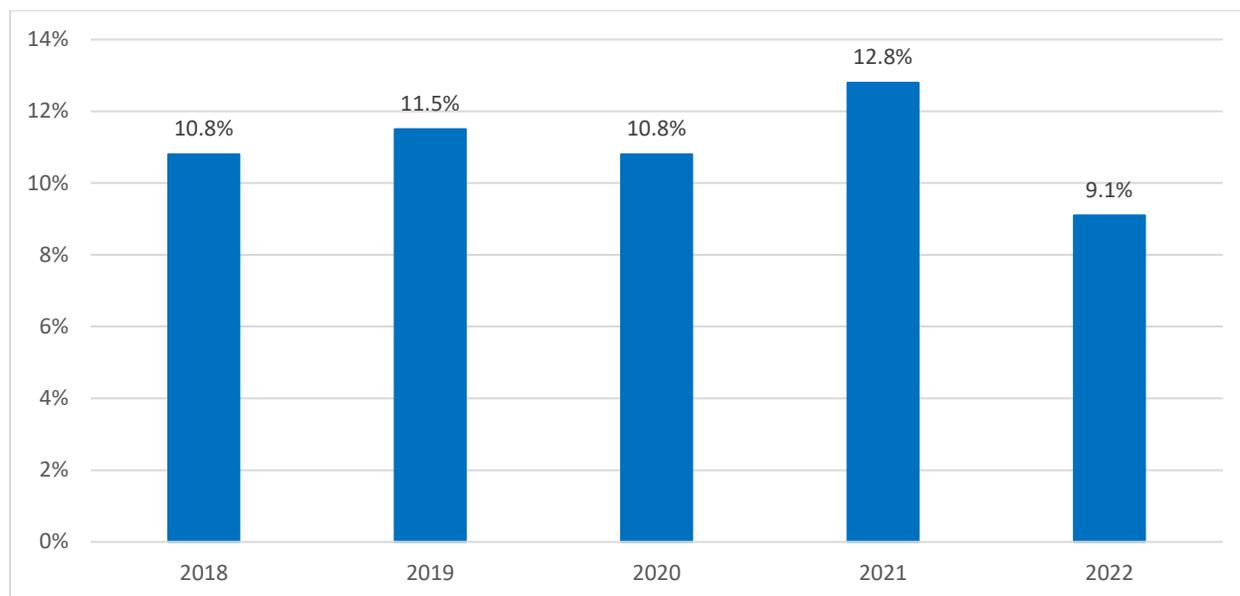


ENGLISH LEARNERS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

In Maryland, scores on the English language proficiency (ELP) assessments, ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, are used to determine which English learners exit from English language development (ELD) programs. On ACCESS for ELLs, ELs must achieve an overall composite proficiency of 4.5 or above to exit the ELD program. On Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, English learners with significant cognitive disabilities must achieve an overall proficiency level of 2 (P2) to exit the ELD program. Students who exit ELD programs are identified as “reclassified English learners” (RELs), and their academic progress is monitored for two years at the local school level. If a teacher or parent/guardian suspects that the REL is demonstrating language development concerns, a student may re-enter the ELD program. Local education agencies (LEAs) convene an EL committee to determine if the student should re-enter the ELD program.

English learners who achieve proficiency on the ACCESS assessment as defined by the State can be reclassified, or exited, from the ELD program. Figure 13 shows the percentage of ELs achieving English language proficiency from 2018 through 2022. Over the first four years of this period, the reclassification rates of ELs in Maryland were fairly stable, from 11 to 13% but dropped to 9% in 2022.

Figure 13: English Learner Reclassification Rate, 2018–2022



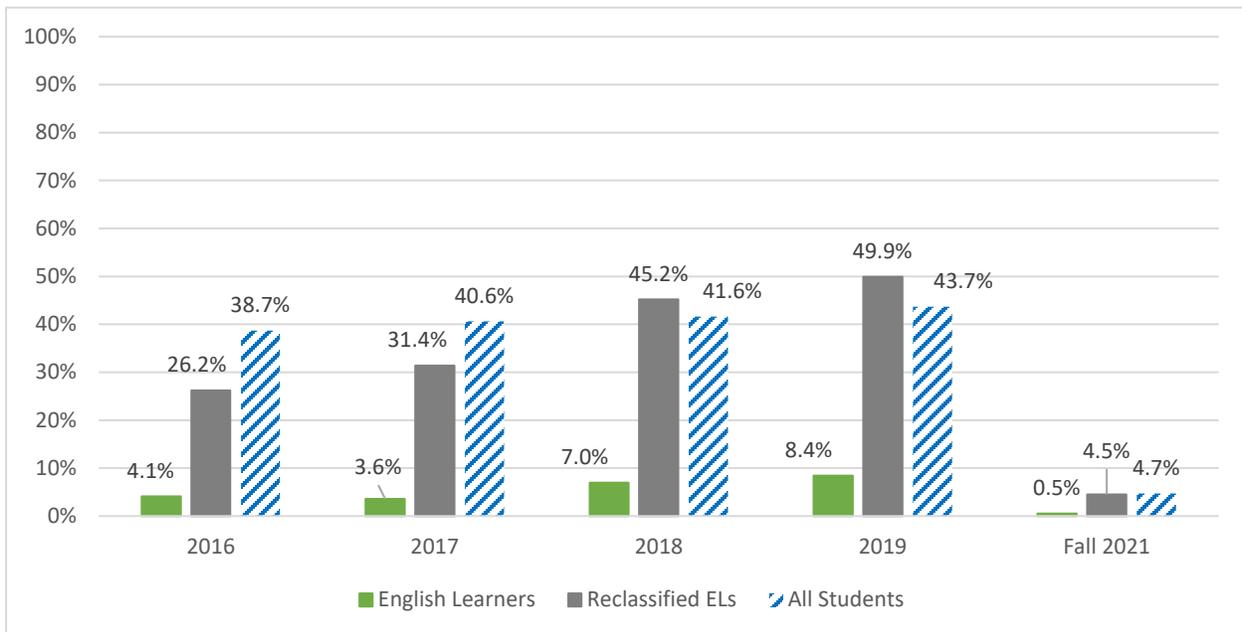
ENGLISH LEARNERS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Consistent with national trends,⁶ English learners in Maryland on average achieved far below their non-EL counterparts in academic performance as measured by the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP). While the share of grade 3-8 English learners at or above proficient on the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics state assessments has doubled between 2016 and 2019, that share was never higher than 10%. As Figure 14 shows, the proficiency rate of non-ELs was 5-9 times higher than that of ELs in ELA and 3-4 times higher in math. Proficiency rates for all students were dramatically lower on the fall 2021 assessment, the first since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the disparity between ELs and non-ELs remained.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Academic Performance and Outcomes for English Learners, (n.d.), <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-outcomes/index.html#datanotes>.

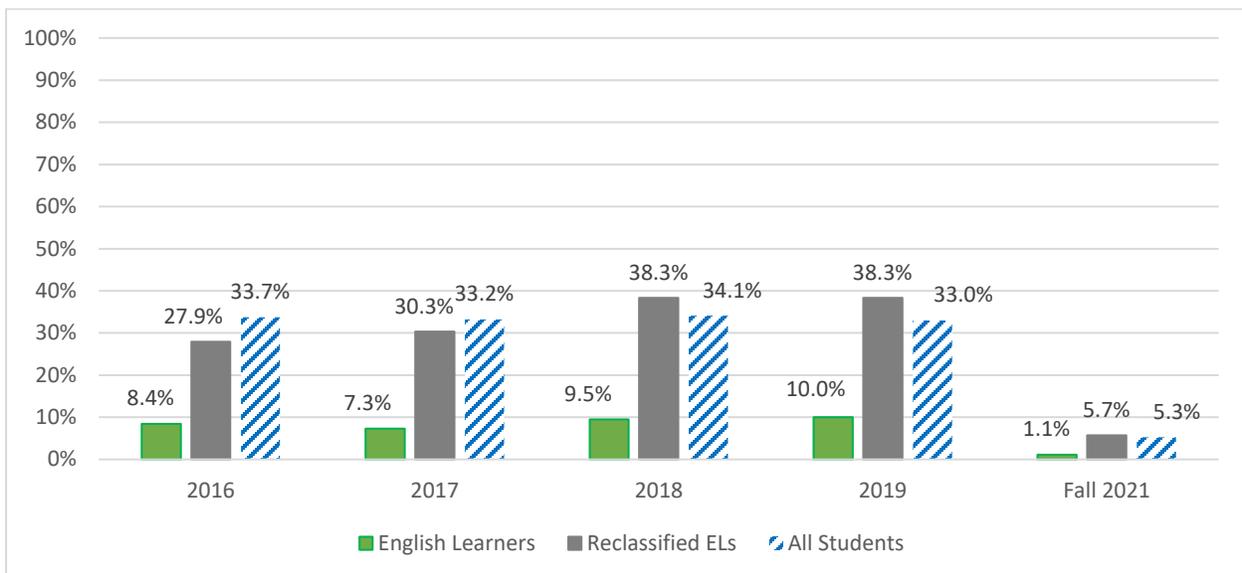
Once ELs have exited the program by demonstrating English language proficiency, they have shown higher proficiency rates on MCAP than their current English learner peers. After Maryland changed the EL exit criteria in 2017-2018, the share of Reclassified ELs scoring proficient has consistently been similar or slightly higher than that of the statewide student population.

Figure 14: MCAP ELA Grades 3-8 Proficiency Rates, by English Learner Status, 2016–2021



Note: The MCAP was not given in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fall 2021 administration replaced the spring 2021 assessment.

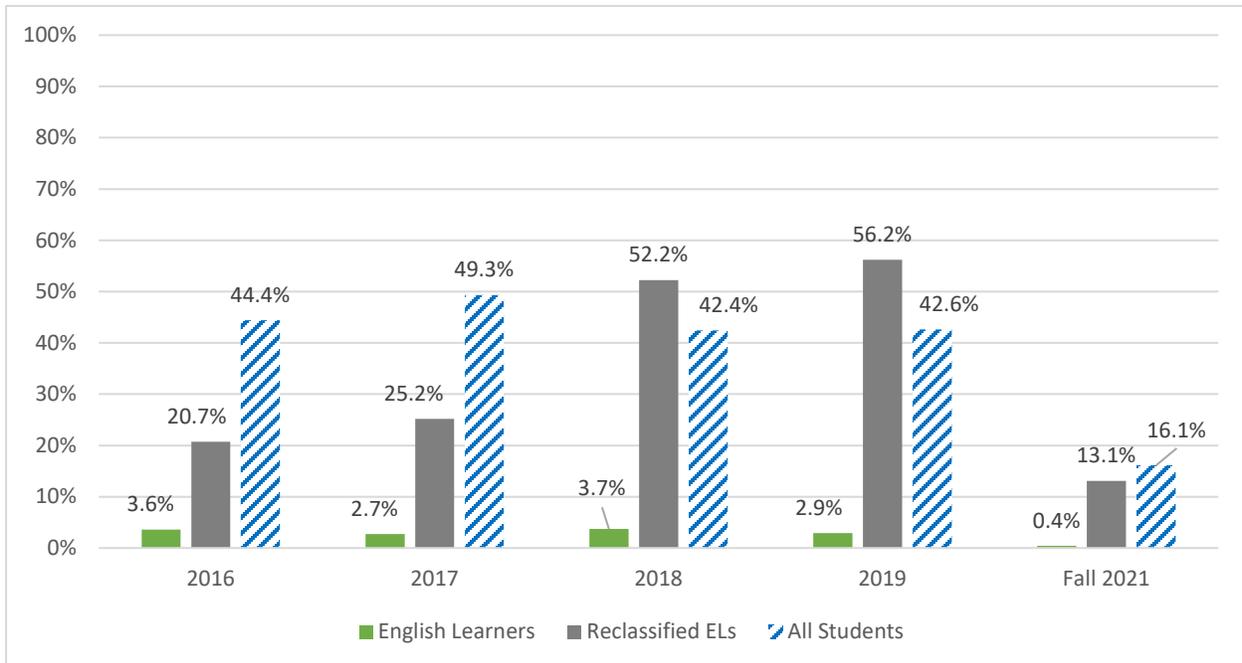
Figure 15: MCAP Math Grades 3-8 Proficiency Rates by English Learner Status, 2016–2021



Note: The MCAP was not given in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fall 2021 administration replaced the spring 2021 assessment.

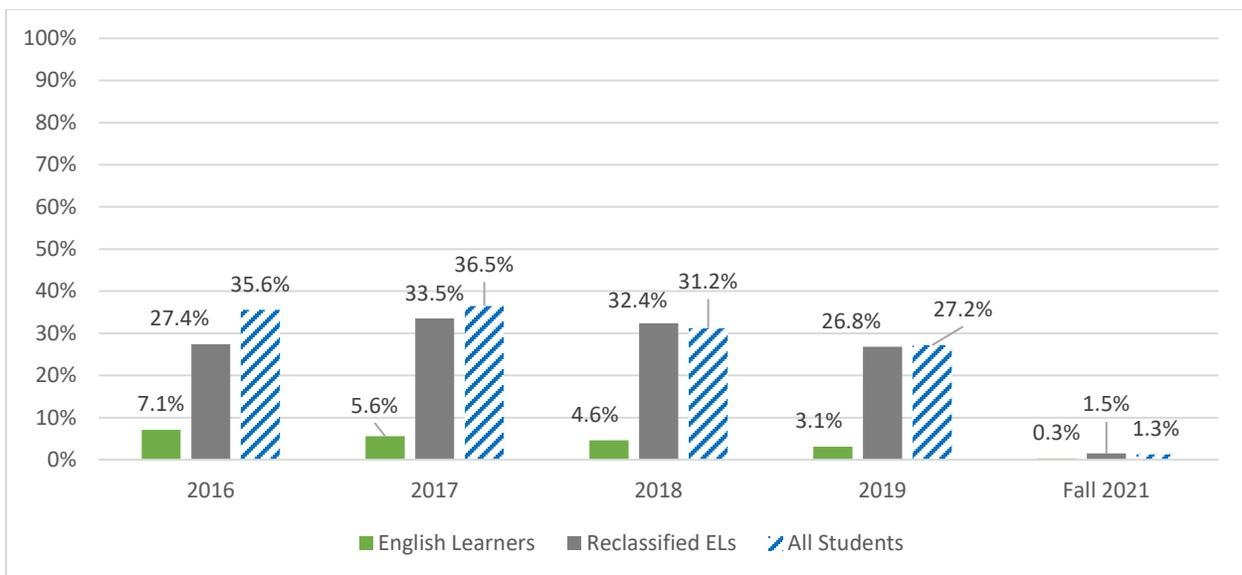
Low proficiency rates persist in high school, as EL performance on the grade 10 English language arts assessment and the Algebra 1 assessment show the share of students at or above proficiency no higher than 7% over the last four years of testing. (See Figures 16 and 17)

Figure 16: MCAP ELA Grade 10 Proficiency Rates by English Learner Status, 2016–2021



Note: The MCAP was not given in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fall 2021 administration replaced the spring 2021 assessment.

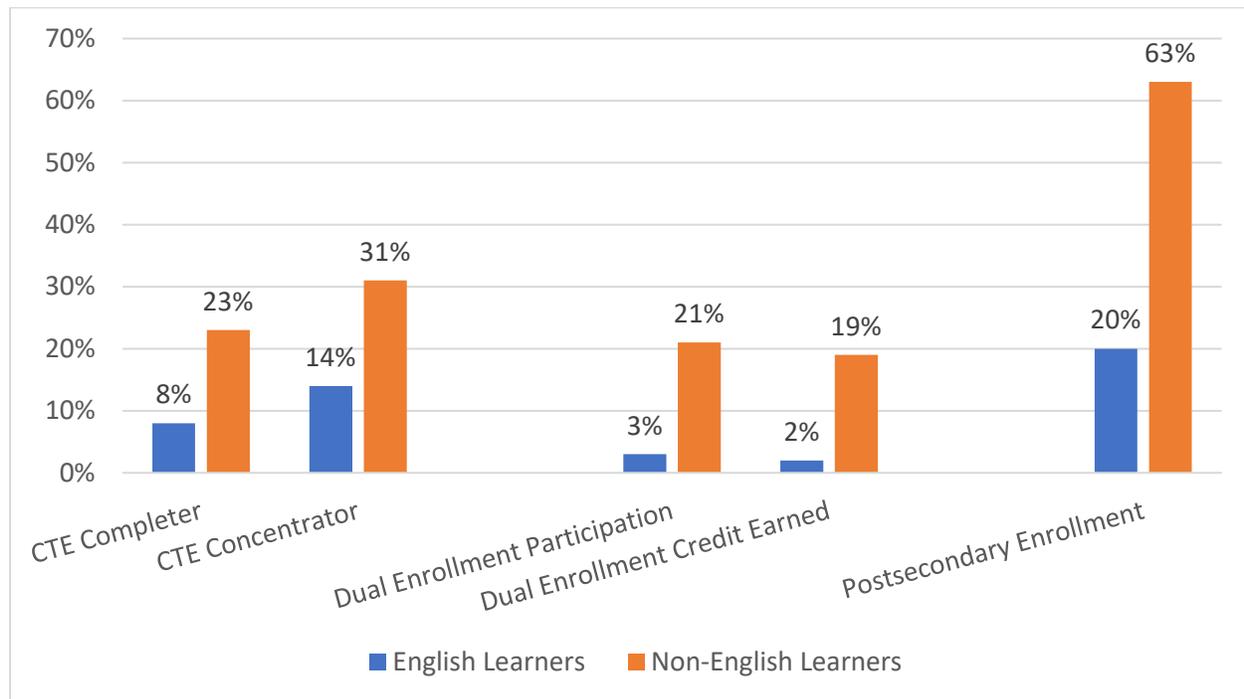
Figure 17: MCAP Algebra 1 Proficiency Rates by English Learner Status, 2016–2021



Note: The MCAP was not given in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fall 2021 administration replaced the spring 2021 assessment.

Figure 18 shows that, in 2021, ELs in Grade 12 were less likely to have completed or to be on track to complete a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program of study than non-ELs. English learners were also less likely to have opportunities to participate in or earn credit from dual enrollment and less likely to have opportunities to enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months of graduation from high school than non-English learners.

Figure 18: CTE Participation, Dual Enrollment Participation, and Postsecondary Enrollment by English Learner Status, 2021

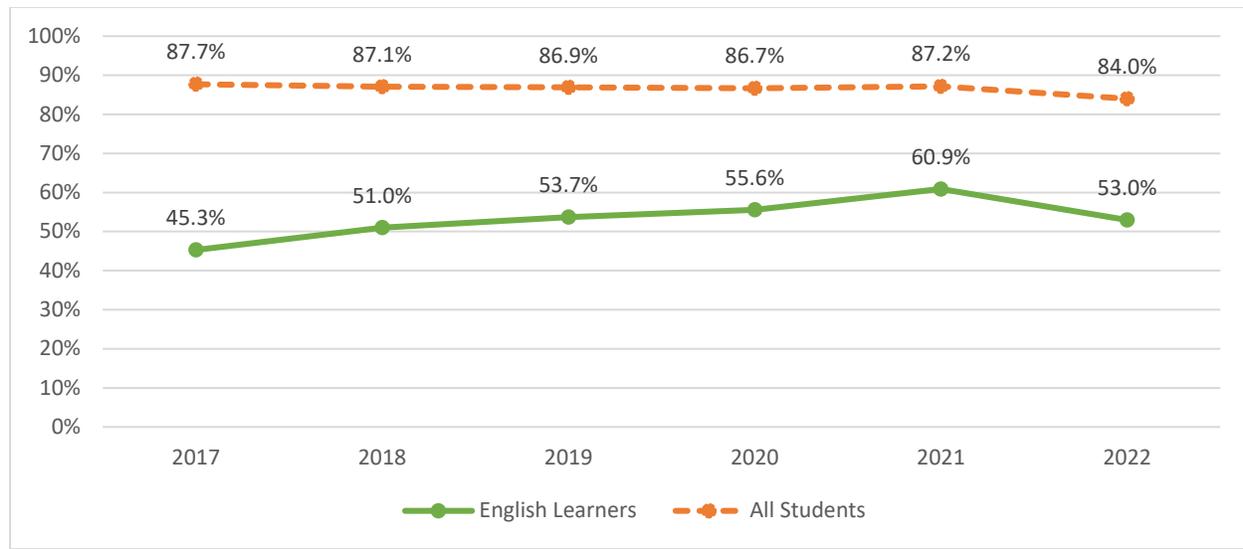


Note: CTE concentrators have completed at least two courses in a CTE program of study and are enrolled in the third course. CTE completers have successfully completed all courses in a CTE program of study.

English Learner Graduation Outcomes

Between 2017 and 2021, the four-year cohort graduation rate for Maryland students held steady around 87%. While the share of English learners graduating has been well below this rate over this same period, Figure 19 shows that the English learner graduation rate has increased each year between 2017 and 2021, reaching a peak of 60.9% in 2021. Graduation rates for both all students and English learners decreased from 2021 to 2022, likely as a result of disruption in schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

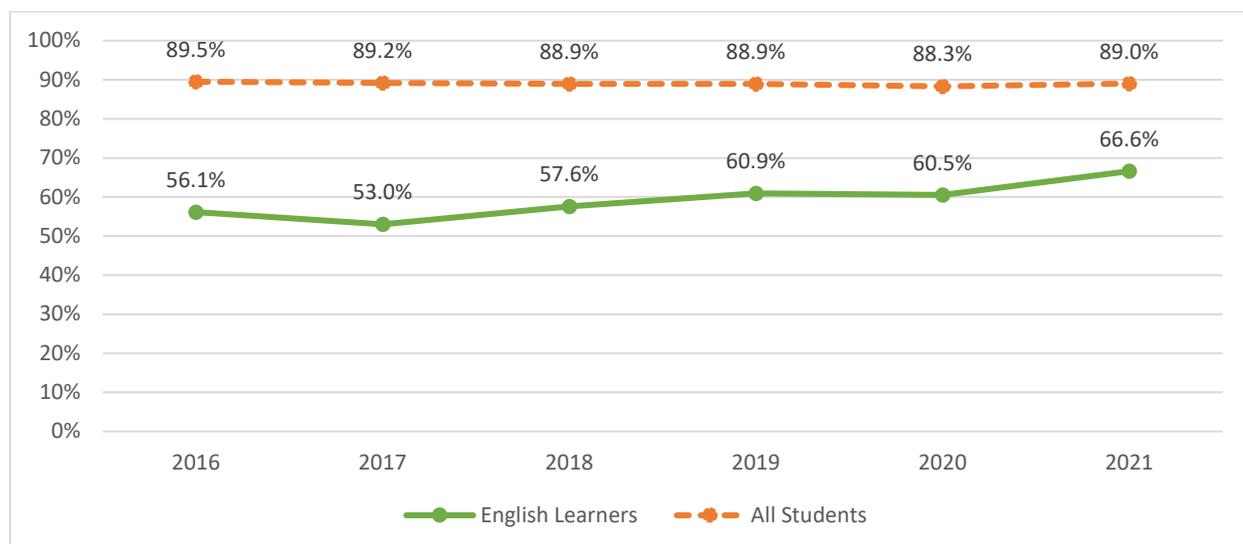
Figure 19: Maryland Four-Year Graduation Rates by EL Status, 2017–2022



Note: The year indicates the expected four-year graduation date for an adjusted cohort identified in grade 9.

The 2021 cohort's five-year graduation rate for English learners was 66.6%, or almost 6 percentage points higher than their four-year graduation rate, compared to a less than 2-percentage point difference for all students. As Figure 20 shows, while the five-year graduation rate for all students has held steady since 2016, the rate for English learners has increased since 2017 from 53% to 67%.

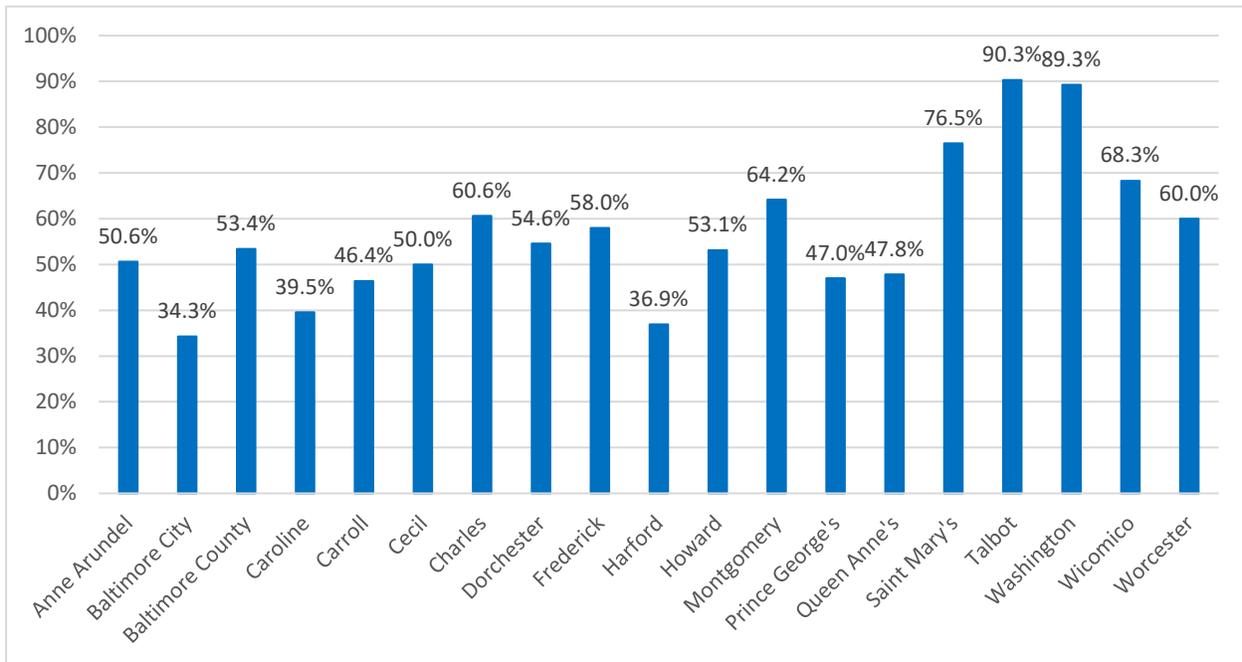
Figure 20: Maryland Five-Year Graduation Rates by EL Status, 2016–2021



Note: The year indicates the expected four-year graduation date for an adjusted cohort identified in grade 9.

The four-year cohort graduation rate for ELs in 2022 varied widely by county, from 34% to 90%, as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21: English Learner Four-Year Graduation Rates by Local School System, 2022

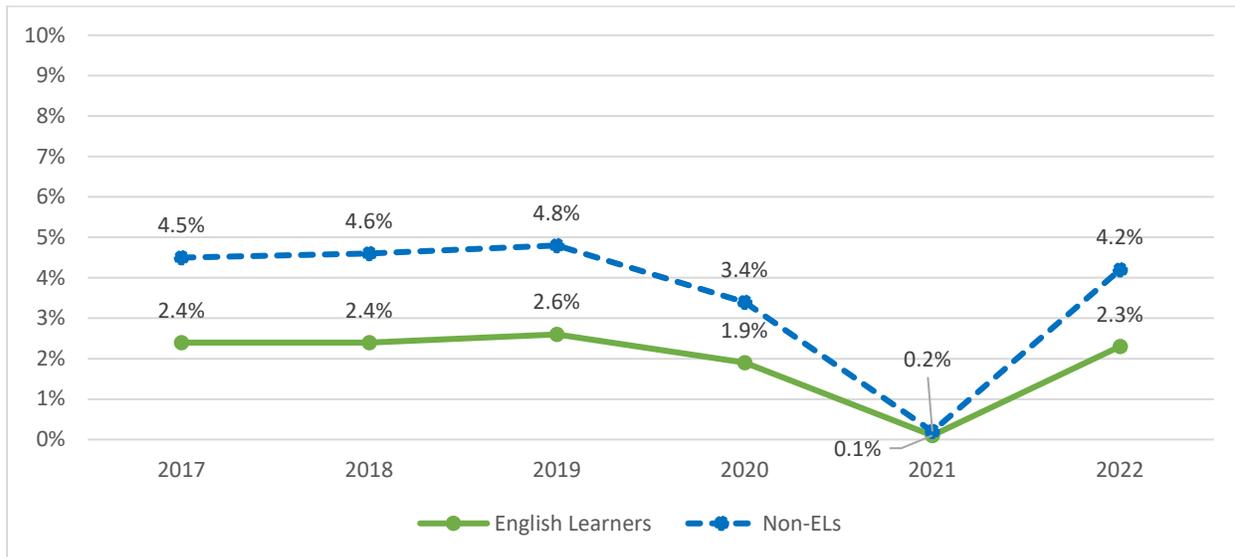


Note: only LEAs with at least 10 English learners in the 2022 cohort are included.

ENGLISH LEARNERS AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

English learners in Maryland are not being disproportionately removed from classrooms through suspensions and expulsions. As Figure 22 shows, ELs have had lower suspension rates than their non-EL counterparts over the last five school years.

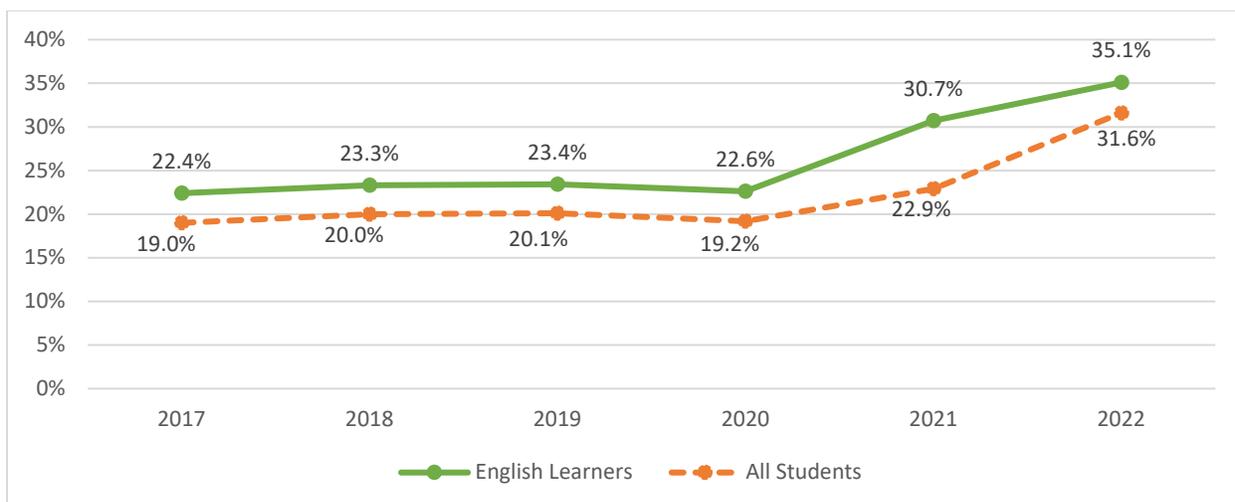
Figure 22: Maryland Out-of-School Suspension Rates by English Learner Status, 2016–2022



Note: Suspensions and expulsions were practically zero in School Year 2020-2021, likely due to limited in-person learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maryland defines chronic absenteeism as missing more than 10 percent of enrolled days in a school year. The share of English learners who were chronically absent has remained at least three percentage points higher than that of their non-EL counterparts (see Figure 23). The chronic absenteeism rates of both ELs and all students have increased at similar rates, 55% and 65% respectively, from 2020 to 2022.

Figure 23: Share of Maryland Students Chronically Absent by English Learner Status, 2017–2022



Overview of Recommendations and Actions

Informed by the in-depth analyses into current data, conversations with national experts, and best practice research, the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools has assembled a series of recommendations to properly support English learners (ELs) in Maryland. Each recommendation is presented in detail in the series of upcoming chapters. Each of the next chapters focuses on one recommendation and details all of the related considerations for implementing the recommendation, organized by the following subsections:

- Introduction and Rationale
- MSDE Actions
- Financial and Professional Learning Resource Implications
- Policy Implications
- National and/or Maryland Exemplars

Below is a brief overview of each recommendation presented by the Workgroup. Each of these is discussed in more detail in the following series of chapters in this report.

RECOMMENDATION 1: SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN MULTILINGUALISM BY PROMOTING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Workgroup discussions have centered on engaging in an asset-based approach, which instead of defining ELs as lacking in English proficiency values English learners' home languages and cultures and reframes the narrative of EL data and achievement in content areas. To shift from this deficit mindset, **Maryland should develop and implement a statewide strategy to promote and formally reinforce asset-based perspectives regarding ELs at every level from the Maryland State Department of Education to individual educators and staff.**

RECOMMENDATION 2: EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION WITH MULTILINGUAL FAMILIES

While federal and state mandates require equal access to public services for individuals in a language they can understand, currently Maryland has no formal regulations or policies in place. Communication that is not linguistically and culturally appropriate is a barrier to family engagement. To ensure equity and access for multilingual parents and guardians, **Maryland should explore legislation and/or regulations to establish a mandated comprehensive language access policy for MSDE and public schools.**

RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT ELS

Recommendation 3a: Scale Two-Way Immersion Programs

Two Maryland local education agencies (LEAs) offer two-way immersion programs where English speakers and native Spanish speakers are integrated for content and literacy instruction in both languages. Data demonstrates opportunities to expand these programs in other schools and LEAs in the State. To maximize the number of students who can benefit from these research-based programs, **Maryland should develop, fund, and implement a statewide approach to expansion of two-way immersion programs.**

Recommendation 3b: Literacy Instruction Aligned to The Science of Reading That Meets the Needs of English Learners

MSDE, through its Maryland Leads Initiative, has identified seven high-leverage strategies that have been proven to be effective and transformative for schools and LEAs including the science of reading. **Maryland should implement a structured literacy policy that incorporates effective English language development practices to improve reading outcomes for English learners.**

Recommendation 3c: Effective English Language Development (ELD) Programs

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for English learner programs states that LEAs must have instructional and curricular materials. Currently, MSDE does not provide guidance to LEAs on selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials for English language development programs. **Maryland should develop resources and formally reinforce that LEAs ensure all College and Career Ready curricula and high-quality instructional materials across all content areas meet the needs of English learners.**

RECOMMENDATION 4: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT ELS

Recommendation 4a: Equitable and Valid Assessments for English Learners

Maryland is taking steps to translate and transadapt several of its state assessments; however, there is a need to continue evaluating best practices for providing equal access to assessments for more ELs. Additionally, the State needs to support English learners' linguistic and academic development in the most effective way possible by measuring, engaging, and fostering their unique linguistic skills as early as possible. To ensure equity and inclusion in the state assessment program, **Maryland should expand the development of assessments in English learners' dominant language(s) that will accurately demonstrate their academic achievement and language proficiency.**

Recommendation 4b: Transparent and Equitable Accountability and Reporting for ELs at All Stages of English Language Development

Maryland's accountability system includes data on English learners and their non-English learner peers. The Maryland accountability system measures a variety of aspects of school performance for all students and reports the results to the public. Currently, the accountability system provides data on academic achievement and academic progress of ELs, reclassified ELs (REs), and non-English learners at elementary and middle schools. For high schools, academic achievement is reported for ELs, REs, and non-English learners. To better understand and accelerate academic outcomes for ELs, **Maryland should hold MSDE, local education agencies, and schools accountable for EL achievement at all stages of English language development by enhancing the reporting of data on English learners.**

Recommendation 4c: New and Expanded Ways to Reclassify ELs

Currently, the state's English language proficiency (ELP) assessment is the only criterion used to determine reclassification of ELs as English proficient, a high-stakes decision. To ensure that ELs are reclassified at the optimal time and to better understand and support the state's English learners, **Maryland should revise its policy to provide multiple measures to reclassify ELs.**

RECOMMENDATION 5: TEACHER PREPARATION POLICIES TO SUPPORT ELS

Recommendation 5a: All Teachers Prepared to Serve English Learners

All teachers in Maryland are likely to educate an English learner at some point in their careers. General education teachers are usually the teachers of record who spend the most time with English learners in PreK-12 settings. Therefore, they must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to support English learners. To ensure all teachers are prepared to serve English learners, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Require that all educator preparation programs provide training in EL-related teacher competencies and provide EL student clinical opportunities for pre-service educators.**
- ii. **Expand dual certification offerings (English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] combined with another certification area).**
- iii. **Invest in training for all current educators focused on the assets of multilingualism and improving academic outcomes for ELs.**

Recommendation 5b: Maryland Bilingual Teacher Certification

Maryland does not offer a bilingual education certification or endorsement, unlike twenty other states that do offer a bilingual education certification or endorsement. If dual language programs are to expand in the State, Maryland will need bilingual teachers with expertise in second language acquisition and pedagogy. To ensure an adequate supply of effective bilingual teachers, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Adopt a bilingual certification.**
- ii. **Ensure that unnecessary barriers do not limit multilingual candidates from becoming certified teachers in Maryland.**

Recommendation 5c: Teacher Pipeline

Maryland's nine approved ESOL teacher preparation programs and two approved alternative teacher preparation programs will not meet the need for ESOL and bilingual teachers in the State. To ensure that all ELs have the benefit of a certified ESOL and bilingual teacher, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Expand grow your own programs and other research-based efforts to recruit and train ESOL and bilingual educators.**
- ii. **Support LEAs in increasing the number of conditionally certified ESOL teachers who earn certification.**

RECOMMENDATION 6: IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LEARNERS

Maryland has no policy or procedure in place for identifying and serving English learners enrolled in public PreK programs. To ensure early childhood education and child care programs are responsive to the experiences and needs of English learners, **Maryland should adopt:**

- i. **A standardized, comprehensive method for identifying, collecting and sharing information about young English learners that is required across all LEAs and child care providers.**
- ii. **A statewide plan for supporting young English learners in PreK and early childhood settings that provides guidance, service models, and strategies for meeting their instructional needs and family engagement.**

RECOMMENDATION 7: SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED OR INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SLIFE)

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) face unique challenges and are likely to need additional instruction and social-emotional support as they strive to meet success in classrooms with increasingly complex academic language while simultaneously building their English proficiency. **Maryland should implement specialized programs and customized supports for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) that ensure that all students have equal access and opportunities for success.**

RECOMMENDATION 8: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS (CCR) CURRICULUM AND PATHWAYS

To implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's goal of ensuring that all Maryland public school students benefit from rigorous curricula aligned to the College and Career Readiness standards, are College and Career Ready, and will succeed in Post-CCR Pathways, **Maryland should implement specialized programs and customized supports for ELs that ensure that English learners are accurately identified for gifted and talented services, have access to advanced coursework, and have equal access and opportunity to achieve success in a Post-CCR Pathway.**

RECOMMENDATION 9: FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND SPENDING DECISIONS THAT SUPPORT SUCCESS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

This report groups funding allocation policy options into three levels. Each level reflects the inclusion of additional policy options that, together, could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced English Learner funding formula allocation. Formula amendments to the Blueprint formula English learner weight would ensure the Blueprint for Maryland's future can provide the resources necessary to ensure proper opportunities for English learners regardless of the local prevalence of their native language, diseconomies of scale associated with low EL enrollments not generating the per-pupil revenue necessary to serve ELs, and the relative English proficiency level of a local education agency's EL population. These additional resources would position Maryland's LEAs to implement the best-in-class instructional opportunities the Blueprint envisions. **Maryland should adopt policy level three, which recommends amending the formula to provide additional funding weights.**

Recommendation 1:

Support and Sustain Multilingualism by Promoting an Asset-Based Approach

Multilingualism is an asset, a superpower in the making, and a highly sought-after skill in the educational and professional realm. Yet, “historically, multilingual students are discussed in the larger literature base and policy-driven conversations with deficit-based language highlighting the linguistic attributes that are not aligned to the traditional classroom settings and descriptions focused on ecological and community-based factors defining them as underserved and under-resourced.”⁷ Researchers have found that “rigorous investigations into the educational experiences and multidimensional lives of multilingual students have provided a counternarrative of bringing dynamic variance, diversity, and unconventional strengths and resources to school settings rather than the traditional view of seeing this population as needy and inadequately prepared for the classroom.”⁸ Furthermore, research “suggest(s) that instructional routines that draw on students’ home language, knowledge, and cultural assets support literacy development in English.”⁹

The discussion about the appropriate terminology to use for ELs is also addressed by WIDA, the assessment and research organization focused on multilingual learners. “As part of its asset-based belief system, WIDA uses the term “multilingual learners” to describe all students who come in contact with and/or interact in languages in addition to English on a regular basis.”¹⁰

Workgroup discussions have centered on engaging in an asset-based approach, which instead of defining ELs as lacking in English proficiency, values English learners’ home languages and cultures and reframes the narrative of EL data and achievement in content areas. To shift from this deficit mindset, **Maryland should develop and implement a statewide strategy to promote and formally reinforce asset-based perspectives regarding ELs at every level from the Maryland State Department of Education to individual educators and staff.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should develop strategies to confront the English learner deficit mindset in the State.
- MSDE should formally shift from the English learner label to additive terminology such as multilingual or emerging bilingual, focusing on students’ strengths, and affirming their home languages.
- MSDE should practice and promote an asset-based perspective in the State regarding English learners in its forthcoming Strategic Plan; workstreams related to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future; through flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies; and publications and messaging.
- MSDE should establish a culture that celebrates and formally reinforces the assets of multilingual learners and provide formal training opportunities for local education agency staff and state educational leaders.

⁷ Laura Ascenzi-Moreno, “From Deficit to Diversity: How Teachers of Recently Arrived Emergent Bilinguals Negotiate Ideological and Pedagogical Change,” *Schools: Studies in Education*, (2017): 14(2).

⁸ Ibid

⁹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2017), 297.

¹⁰ WIDA, *WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition: Kindergarten-Grade 12* (Madison: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 2020), <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld>.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but rather that MSDE can implement the recommended policy options with currently available fiscal and human capital resources.

MSDE will utilize existing staff resources and tap into state educational leaders to establish and implement training programs that support the creation, growth, and strengthening of LEA cultures that celebrate the assets of multilingual learners. MSDE will leverage existing organizational and staffing structures to embed the workstreams related to this recommendation.

Additionally, to fully implement this recommendation, MSDE will ensure that local education agency staff and state educational leaders receive the necessary training to establish a culture that celebrates and formally reinforces the assets of multilingual learners.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Successfully implementing this recommendation does not necessitate a change in the Annotated Code of Maryland or to the Code of Maryland Regulations. Instead, implementation of this recommendation requires a shift in practices and protocols of MSDE, the local education agencies, school leaders, and teachers.

For long-term sustained implementation and to further codify the recommendation, new or revised regulations or statute related to English learners may need to be adopted.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

California

In November 2016, California voters approved Proposition 58, the California Education for a Global Economy (CA Ed.G.E.) Initiative. The five components of the CA Ed.G.E. Initiative are parent and community engagement, program design, parental notice, parent choice for programs, and parent requests for new programs. The purpose of the CA Ed.G.E. Initiative is to ensure that all children in California public schools receive the highest quality education, master the English language, and access high-quality, innovative, and research-based language programs to prepare them to fully participate in a global economy. The CA Ed.G.E. Initiative authorizes school districts and county offices of education to establish language acquisition programs for both native and non-native English speakers and requires school districts and county offices of education to solicit parent and community input in developing language acquisition programs.¹¹

¹¹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/caedge.asp>

The 2017 California English Learner Roadmap Policy: Educational Programs and Services for English learners helps California's local school districts and charter schools welcome, understand, and educate the diverse population of students who are learning English. The EL Policy contains four principles to create conditions that will allow English learners to thrive:

- Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools
- Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access
- System Conditions that Support Effectiveness
- Alignment and Articulation Within and Across Systems

California's approach to educating English learners is focused on supporting all English learners including English learners with disabilities. To that end, the California Department of Education (CDE) published a resource entitled, *California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities in 2019*.¹² Another publication, *Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students (2020)* provides a resource to assist local school districts in building capacity to sustain and improve outcomes for multilingual and English learners.¹³

New York

The New York State Department of Education's Blueprint for English Language Learner (ELL)/Multilingual Learner (MLL) Success has asset-based language embedded throughout the document as an underlying pillar of the State's beliefs surrounding English learners. Principle Number 4 specifically calls out the asset of bilingualism and biliteracy by stating, "Districts and schools recognize that bilingualism and biliteracy are assets and provide opportunities for all students to earn a Seal of Biliteracy upon obtaining a high school diploma by providing all students with:

- Opportunities to participate in language learning or language support programs that lead to proficiency in English and other languages.
- Opportunities to use and develop academic language and content knowledge both in English and Languages Other Than English, including the student's home language.
- Rigorous Bilingual Education programs for ELLs/MLLs aimed at maintaining and developing the home language and attaining English proficiency as well as biliteracy."¹⁴

Texas

Texas has a rich history as a pioneering state in bilingual education. In 1973, the Bilingual Education and Training Act became law. It states, "The legislature finds that there are a large number of children in the state who come from environments where the primary language is other than English. Experience has shown that public school classes in which instruction is given only in English are often inadequate for the education of children whose native tongue is another language. The legislature believes that a compensatory program of bilingual education can meet the needs of these children and facilitate their integration into the regular school curriculum."¹⁵ This legislation requires that if a school district has 20 students in the district with the same first language, the local school district board must establish a bilingual

¹² <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/documents/ab2785guide.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducation.pdf>

¹⁴ The State Education Department and The University of the State of New York, *Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success* (n.d.), <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/nys-blueprint-for-ell-success.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducation.pdf>

education program. Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 89 outlines additional requirements to ensure equal educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students.

In 2019 Texas passed House Bill 3 which resulted in key changes to the funding formula used to calculate the bilingual education allotment (BEA) which provides funding to local education agencies for students participating in approved program models. Additionally, it states that 55% of these funds must be used in providing bilingual education or ESL programs. Finally, as a result of HB 3, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) expanded the tools and resources available for dual language immersion.

During the 87th Texas Legislative session (January to May 2021), two important bills were passed regarding emergent bilingual students. The first, Senate Bill 2066, eliminates references to the term, "Limited English Proficient" in favor of the term, "Emergent Bilingual." The second bill, Senate Bill 560, requires the Texas Education Agency to develop a strategic plan for Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) in coordination with Texas' Higher Education and Workforce Commissions to increase the number of bilingual certified teachers and increase the effective implementation of dual language one-way and two-way programs. An additional charge for the TEA is to increase awareness of the benefits of dual language programs for families and school districts.

Washington

In Washington, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has set four strategic goals to lead their revisioning of education in the state. The commitment to an asset-based approach is evident in several places in their goals.¹⁶ Universal access to dual language learning, inclusivity and cultural responsiveness are predominant themes throughout their goals. The OSPI vision of dual language education as an equity strategy is that "all students will have access to dual language education and the opportunity to become proficient in two or more languages by 2030."

¹⁶ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, *OSPI Strategic Goals* (n.d.), <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/OSPI%20Strategic%20Goals.pdf>

Recommendation 2: Equitable Engagement and Communication with Multilingual Families

The ability to meaningfully access education is paramount for all families. Federal regulation requires all school systems to make a substantial attempt to share important information “to the extent practicable,” in a language that parents can understand.¹⁷ The ways that this is operationalized varies by local education agency (LEA) across the State, but commonly utilized methods of parent communication and involvement are:

- Telephonic and in-person interpretation
- Translation
- Bilingual facilitators
- English learner parent leadership academies
- Electronic communication applications
- English learner parent outreach engagement activities

Among the findings from a series of 2019 Town Hall meetings reported in MSDE’s report “Voices from the Field: Stakeholder Perspectives on Maryland’s Early Childhood Care and Education System” was that language is a barrier for families’ access to early childhood services and resources must be provided in additional languages.¹⁸

In 2019, mothers were interviewed in early childhood education sites in Montgomery County and Prince George’s County for WIDA Early Year’s report, *Young Multilingual Children in Maryland: Exploring Parent Perceptions of Children’s Language Development, Family Engagement Practices, and Decision-Making about Early Care and Education*. Findings indicate that access to early childhood education staff who speak families’ native languages greatly enhances family engagement and communication between parents and staff.¹⁹

Although it is hard to isolate language access as a single variable for research design, language access facilitates better communication and engagement between the school and the family, which makes it easier for ELs’ families to support their children’s learning. “Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child’s education—as supporters of learning, encouragers of grit and determination, models of lifelong learning, and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child—with indicators of student achievement including student grades, achievement test scores, lower drop-out rates, students’

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, *Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices*, (2015), https://ncela.ed.gov/files/rcd/TO20_DualLanguageRpt_508.pdf.

¹⁸ Jeffrey Cappizzano, Soumya Bhat, Brian Kim, and Felisa Concepcion, “Voices from the Field: Stakeholder Perspectives on Maryland’s Early Childhood Care and Education System,” *Policy Equity Group*, (2019), https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/24/voices_from_the_field_full_report_final.pdf.

¹⁹ Lorena Mancilla, Amanda Spalter, Delis Cuéllar, and Anupama Shekar, “Young Multilingual Children in Maryland,” *MSDE* (2019), https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/20/wida_report_young_multilingual_children_in_maryland.pdf.

sense of personal competence and efficacy for learning, and students' beliefs about the importance of education."²⁰

While federal and state mandates require equal access to public services for individuals in a language they can understand, currently Maryland has no formal regulations or policies in place. Communication that is not linguistically and culturally appropriate is a barrier to family engagement. To ensure equity and access for multilingual parents and guardians, **Maryland should explore legislation and/or regulations to establish a mandated comprehensive language access policy for MSDE and public schools.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should use national exemplars and models to outline a Maryland State policy and/or regulation for language access at MSDE and in public schools.
- MSDE should explore regional language access resource centers to support and build capacity for all local education agencies.
- MSDE should provide asset-based training for Department and LEA staff that will emphasize the rights of multilingual stakeholders, especially parents/guardians.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but rather that MSDE can implement the recommended policy options with currently available fiscal and human capital resources.

MSDE will utilize existing staff resources and tap into state educational leaders to build a language access policy for families and other stakeholders. MSDE will leverage existing organizational and staffing structures, including investing in the Office of Communications and Community Engagement and the Office of Teaching and Learning, to embed the workstreams related to this recommendation.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Maryland should explore legislation and/or regulations to establish a mandated comprehensive language access policy for MSDE and public schools.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

New York

The New York State Education Department created the Blueprint for English Language Learners' Success. Part of the Blueprint included a Parents Bill of Rights to acknowledge the role of parents in the education of their children and to begin opening the lines of communication among schools, communities, and districts. As a result, they have expanded their parent and family communications by requiring all districts ensure that parents/guardians of EL have equitable access to information; provide communications in parents'/guardians' preferred language and mode of communication; and provide interpretation and translation of critical communications through a qualified interpreter or translator.

²⁰ Karen Mapp and Paul Kuttner, "Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships," *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* (2013): 5, <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>.

Texas

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is developing family engagement modules and toolkits that are linguistically and culturally appropriate for engaging the families of emergent bilinguals. The agency chose to focus on the educational regions with the mid-size population of emergent bilinguals. To lead this work in the chosen regions, TEA has hired public engagement specialists. The specialists have a deep understanding of the regions, and the goal is that the toolkits will be customizable to meet the unique needs of the families.

Washington

State law in Washington (WAC 392-160-010) requires school districts to provide vital communications in a language that a parent or guardian can understand. The Language Access Workgroup advises the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State School Directors Association, and the legislature on specific strategies meant to improve meaningful, equitable access for public school students and their family members who have language access barriers.²¹

San Antonio Independent School District (ISD)

San Antonio ISD believes that community and family engagement is rooted in the pedagogy of Community Learning Exchange (CLE), a social learning process where diverse groups come together to share knowledge and create meaningful solutions through conversation, reflection, and exploration. These practices are guided by R.A.S.P.P.A. (relationships, assets, stories, place, politic, and action) with the goal of creating action and change in which the people who are closest to the issues and problems can be the facilitators of change.²²

Maryland Local Education Agency Spotlight

Prince George's County Public Schools

Prince George's County Public Schools established the Office of Interpreting and Translation in 1993. To meet the needs of multilingual families, the office employs temporary on-call interpreters (representative of 21 languages), full-time translators, temporary on-call translators, an interpreting coordinator, and a translation coordinator. The office boasts many language access resources, including pre-arranged meetings and events with in-person and virtual remote interpreters, on-the-spot telephonic interpreting, on-demand translation, and a document translation library. Prince George's County Public Schools established a Professional Language Access Community that developed a framework which guides hiring and assessment practices, builds context for language access, builds investment in language access, and nurtures growth in knowledge about language equity.

²¹ Heather Rees, *Language Access Workgroup, Report to the Legislature*, (Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2020), <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/cisl/pubdocs/Language%20Access%20Workgroup%20Final%20Report%20%28ADA%29.pdf>

²² Miguel Guajardo, Francisco Guajardo, Christopher Janson, and Matthew Militello, *Reframing Community Partnerships in Education* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

Recommendation 3: Implementation of Instructional Programs to Support ELs

English learners in Maryland public schools have access to a variety of English language development (ELD) programs, as determined by the local education agencies. There are four primary programs that are utilized in Maryland's schools: pull-out, push-in, sheltered instruction, and two-way immersion.

In the pull-out program, English learners leave their mainstream classroom to work with a certified English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher for a period of time to receive specialized instruction in English development.

In a push-in program, a certified ESOL teacher goes into the mainstream classroom to provide specialized English instruction during content instruction. The ESOL teacher may co-teach with the mainstream teacher or may work with a small group of English learners to pre- or post-teach a skill.

In sheltered instruction, language and content instruction is integrated. For example, a teacher who is dually certified in social studies and ESOL might teach a sheltered world history class for ELs or a social studies teacher and an ESOL teacher could use a team-teaching approach. This is an instructional approach that is effective for ELs with higher-than-beginning proficiency and that engages learners in comprehensible language-rich grade-level content area knowledge, academic skills, and increased English proficiency.²³

In a two-way immersion program, students learn content in two languages. Both languages are native to one group of students. Native speakers of the partner language and native speakers of English spend part of their instructional time learning content in the partner language and half learning content in English. Both groups of students benefit and develop language proficiency in an additional language.²⁴

This report details three areas of program enhancements that should be implemented. They are discussed in detail in Recommendations 3a, 3b, and 3c.

²³William Saunders, Claude Goldenberg, and David Marcelletti, "English Language Development: Guidelines for Instruction," *American Educator* 37, no. 2 (2013): 13-25.

²⁴Viorica Marian, Anthony Shook, and Scott Schroeder, "Bilingual Two-Way Immersion Programs Benefit Academic Achievement," *Bilingual Research Journal* 36, no 2 (2013): 167-186.

Recommendation 3a: Scale Two-Way Immersion Programs

Dr. Jennifer L. Steele from American University presented to the Workgroup about her research on Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Education, Recent Research, and Implications for English Learners. In the past decade, there has been a blossoming of causal research on dual language immersion education. The three studies below highlight the effectiveness of dual language immersion.

A summary of research conducted by Umansky and Reardon in 2014 on the reclassification patterns among Latino English learner students in bilingual, dual immersion, and English immersion classrooms reveals that cumulative EL reclassification rates were highest for monolingual English programs until grade 7, at which point DLI programs surpassed them, reaching a 13-point advantage by the end of high school. Umansky and Reardon conclude that policymakers and practitioners should look beyond rapid reclassification and instead ensure quality instruction and full access to content that may mean longer periods spent in the EL classification but could result in higher linguistic and academic outcomes by the end of high school.²⁵

In another study focused on the effectiveness of instructional programs designed to serve English learners, Valentino and Reardon found that 14,000 ELs (with many home languages) placed in any type of bilingual program (i.e., DLI, transitional bilingual, or developmental bilingual) grew faster in English language arts (ELA) performance than their peers placed in monolingual English programs. They began outperforming peers in monolingual English programs by grade 6 and reached a 0.15 standard deviation advantage in ELA by grade 7.²⁶

In a third study, Andrew Bibler (2017) estimates that “attending a dual language school led to increases of 0.06 and 0.08 standard deviations per year on math and reading exam scores, respectively, among students who were ever eligible for ESL services or considered LEP.” Bibler’s study included 510 grade K lottery applicants in a pair of two-way DLI programs in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools, in North Carolina.²⁷

Building on the shoulders of this foundational research, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) funded two causal studies (led by Dr. Steele) of dual language immersion effects. Portland offers one-way immersion programs where native English speakers are instructed in a target language, and two-way programs where English learners who are native speakers of a partner language and English speakers are instructed in both languages. The first study conducted in Portland Public Schools from 2012-2016 strongly suggests that students randomly assigned to dual language outperform peers in English language arts by .09 of a standard deviation, with no detriment to math or science skills. In this same study when examining English learner classification, students randomly assigned to immersion were less likely to be classified as English learners by grade 6 than those English learners not in an immersion program. Finally, the research strongly suggests that reading, math, and science performance was statistically similar for program type (two-way vs. one-way), first language, English learners vs. native speakers of other languages, and students whose native

²⁵ Ilana M. Umansky and Sean F. Reardon, “Reclassification Patterns Among Latino English Learner Students in Bilingual, Dual Immersion, and English Immersion Classrooms,” *American Educational Research Journal* 51, no. 5 (2014): 879-912.

²⁶ Rachel A. Valentino and Sean F. Reardon, “Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English learners: Variation by ethnicity and initial English proficiency,” *Stanford University Graduate School of Education* (2014), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED566267.pdf>.

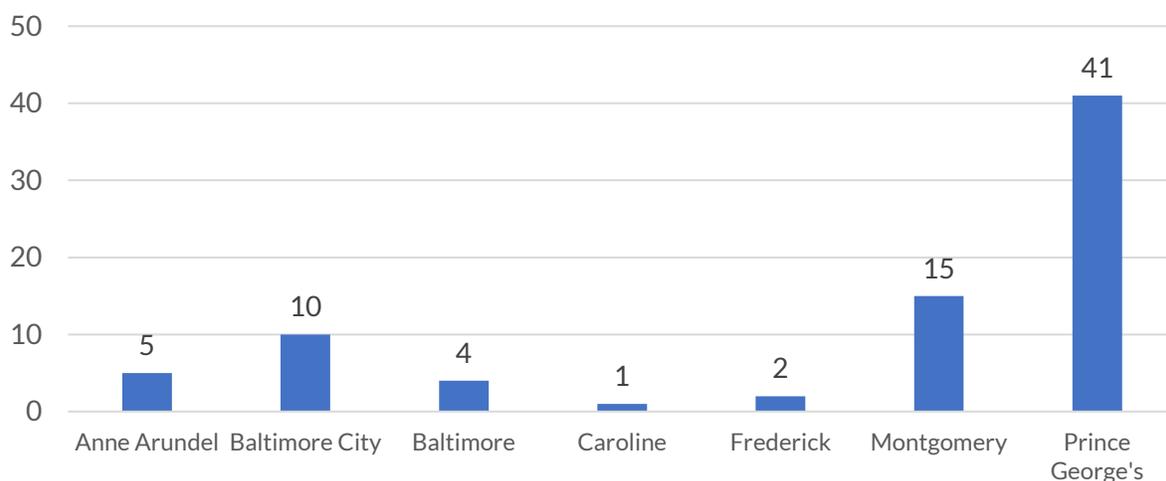
²⁷ Andrew Bibler, “Dual Language Education and Student Achievement. Institute of Social and Economic Research,” *University of Alaska Anchorage* (2017), <http://hdl.handle.net/11122/7813>.

language matches the partner language vs. students whose native language doesn't match the partner language.²⁸

Dr. Steele conducted the second study in Utah public schools from 2017–2020 and examined the effects of one-way immersion vs. two-way immersion. The overarching findings for English learners indicate that one-way immersion did not negatively or positively impact academic performance in English language arts (ELA), math, or science. Two-way immersion programs were shown to have a positive impact on ELA, math, and science achievement for language matched English learners whose native language is the partner language of instruction. Differences in estimated effects between one-way and two-way programs are not explained by differences in the curriculum or professional development opportunities. The differences do not seem to be driven by different middle-school feeder patterns, changes over time in who attend DLI schools, or differential attrition rates from public schools. Dual language effects strongly increase as the fraction of native-language-matched students in the school increases. This is suggestive evidence for the role of cultural adjacency in support of student achievement.²⁹

Maryland's rapidly increasing linguistic diversity in public schools is providing more opportunities for two-way immersion (TWI) programs. Including the two LEAs that currently provide immersion options, seven LEAs have populations that could provide the environment for two-way immersion initiatives at the elementary school level. Figure 24 shows potential TWI opportunity schools where immersion programs could be implemented because there is a significant number (ranging from 30 to 70 percent) of ELs that speak one language. Specifically, these TWI opportunities are for native Spanish-speaking students and their native English-speaking classmates. However, there are signs of growing linguistic diversity in the state that other two-way immersion programs could be created in schools with amenable population ratios. Additionally, the growth of two-way immersion programs in elementary schools is especially beneficial as elementary school students are at the optimal stage of development to experience the greatest benefit to their academic and linguistic growth.

Figure 24: Number of Elementary Schools with Two-Way Immersion Opportunities, 2021



²⁸ Jennifer L. Steele, Robert O. Slater, Gema Zamarro, Trey Miller, Jennifer Li, Susan Burkhauser, and Michael Bacon, "Effects of Dual Language Immersion Programs on Student Achievement: Evidence from Lottery Data," *American Educational Research Journal* 54, no. 1 (2017): 282S-306S.

²⁹ Jennifer L. Steele, Johanna Watzinger-Tharp, Robert O. Slater, Gregg Roberts, and Karl Bowman, "Achievement Effects of Dual Language Immersion in One-way and Two-way Programs: Evidence from a State Scale-up in Utah," (2021), https://jensteele1.github.io/files/Utah_2021April26.pdf.

Two Maryland local education agencies (LEAs), Montgomery County Public Schools and Prince George's County Public Schools, offer two-way immersion programs where English speakers and native Spanish speakers are integrated for content and literacy instruction in both languages. Data demonstrates opportunities to expand these programs in other schools and LEAs in the State. To maximize the number of students who can benefit from these research-based programs, **Maryland should develop, fund, and implement a statewide approach to expansion of two-way immersion programs.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should develop a phased plan for expanding best-in-class two-way immersion programs across the State, including an assessment of available funding sources, research-based program requirements, a community engagement plan, training, and technical assistance.
- Maryland should amend or supplement existing statutory funding formulas to include mandates that would provide the funding necessary to expand and implement two-way immersion programs. MSDE should advocate that formula amendments provide:
 - The EL State aid formula weight to LEAs in cases where students participate in a two-way immersion program, regardless of EL status
 - A dedicated startup fund to cover initial immersion program startup costs.
- MSDE should engage stakeholders in regions across Maryland where the student demographics support the launch of two-way dual language immersion programs.

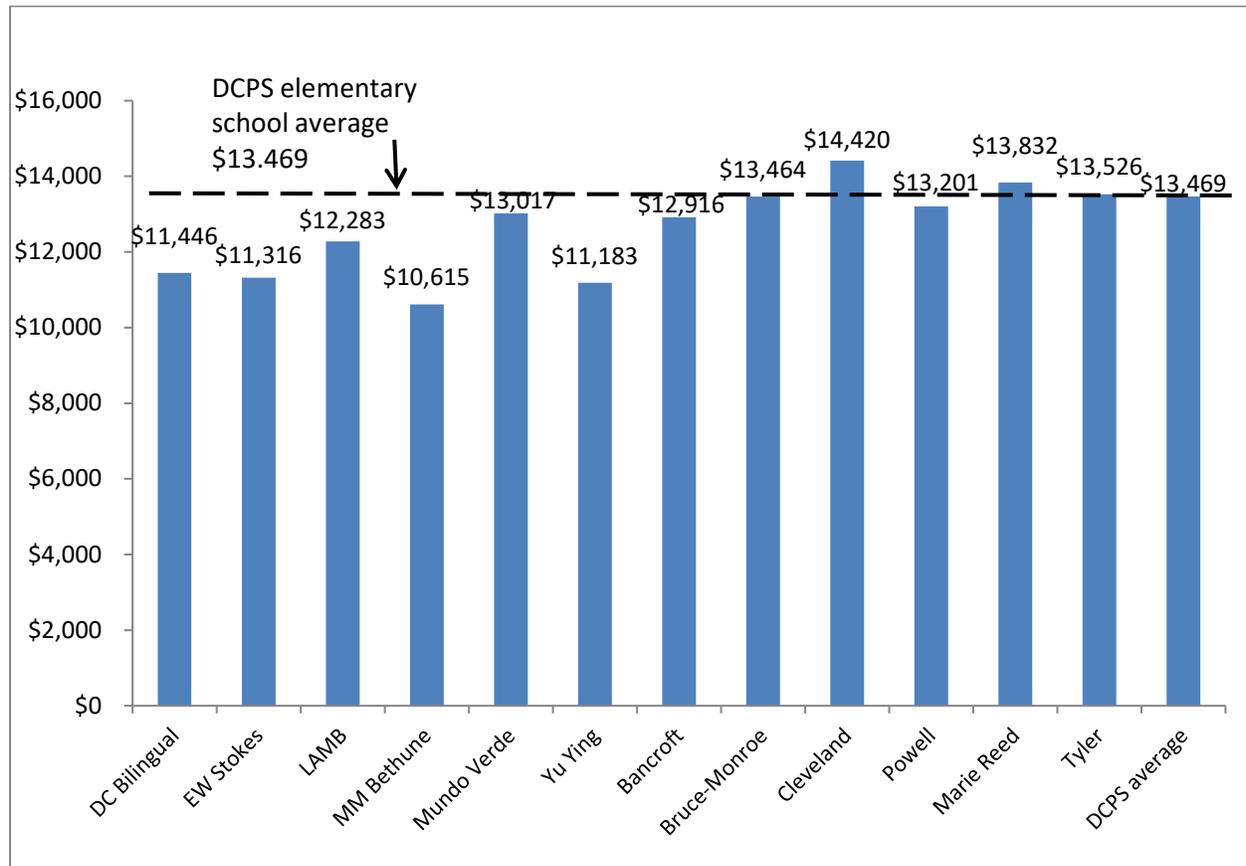
FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The costs of two-way immersion programs, like those included in this recommendation, have been widely studied. The analyses suggest that the cost of implementing two-way immersion can be cost neutral in the long-run at the school-level, but that successful adoption and implementation requires startup support for curriculum and materials; and ongoing annual costs are necessary to support staff development and bolster central office recruitment and retention of requisite bilingual certified personnel.

Cost Efficiencies

Two-way immersion programs can generate cost efficiencies in the aggregate. For example, Figure 25 below, shows that in the District of Columbia Public Schools, only three elementary school language immersion schools receive above the district's elementary school average.

Figure 25: Per Pupil Budgets for General Education (DCPS) Language Immersion Elementary Schools



Two-way immersion programs do not require the same additional staffing investments that non-two-way immersion programs must make because two-way immersion programs provide ESOL services largely as part of regular classroom instruction rather than through pull-out or push-in supplemental programs. Studies in other states likewise show that on average, more than 80% of two-way immersion programming costs are personnel related.^{30, 31} Consequently, year-to-year ongoing operating costs of two-way immersion programming may trend toward cost neutral.

³⁰ Dr. Rafael Lara-Alecio, Dr. Martha Galloway, Ben Mason, Dr. Beverly J. Irby, Dr. Genevieve Brown, "Texas Dual Language Program Cost Analysis," (Texas Education Agency, The Texas Senate Education Committee 2004), pp. 41-44, <https://crdlla.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2019/12/careport.pdf>.

³¹ Jennifer L. Steele, Robert O. Slater, Jennifer LI, Gema Zamorro, Trey Miller, and Michael Bacon, "Dual-Language Immersion Education at Scale: An Analysis of Program Costs, Mechanisms, and Moderators," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 40(3), 420-445. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373718779457>.

Funding for Startup Costs and Central Support Costs

Operating costs are only one component of the costs required to implement a two-way immersion program. These costs also do not reflect the costs required to incentivize local education agency adoption of two-way immersion programs, the upfront costs can dissuade adoption of these programs. For example, a Texas A&M study of Bilingual Education Programs in Texas (2004) found that: “[Dual Language Immersion] programs incurred start-up Spanish curriculum costs for the native English speakers on average of \$3,480 for small programs, \$6,352 for medium programs and \$12,297 for large programs”.³² This cost analysis reflects 2004 dollars, which means these costs are even higher now. \$3,480 dollars in 2004 is equivalent to \$5,467 in 2022 dollars. A randomized control study of Portland Public Schools highlighted the additional central office costs required to support staff training and the recruitment of the bilingual credentialed teachers required.^{33, 34}

Cost Implications

Dr. Jennifer Steele found that even a \$100 per-pupil increase generated positive academic increases for two-way immersion students.³⁵ Investments in two-way immersion programs can yield important returns but the Blueprint for Maryland's Future funding formula does not alone provide sufficient resources for local education agencies to fully implement two-way immersion programs at scale. The Maryland Adequacy Study Final Report recommended adopting the professional judgement panel approach formula weight for English learners—a recommendation later adopted by the Kirwan Commission.³⁶ This weight was designed to fund an EL to teacher ratio of 15:1. This weight was not designed to support the costs of implementing and sustaining two-way immersion programs.

Also, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future funding formula provides for State aid resources to local educational agencies to serve English learners based on English learner enrollment only, even though two-way immersion programs enroll both ELs and non-ELs. Federal funds do not help in this case as Federal Title III funds are not sufficient for covering additional costs associated with two-way immersion since Title III funds cannot be spent on not non-ELs. Two approaches to providing funding for this recommendation are:

1. Maryland could include non-ELs as eligible for funding when the students participate in a two-way immersion program. Doing so would generate the revenue necessary for and encourage local education agencies adoption of two-way immersion programming.
2. Maryland could also adopt formula startup amounts to LEAs based on the number of two-way immersion programs it operates and incorporate a program-specific per-pupil allocation to sustain the programs. This cost would be akin to current structure of the Blueprint Concentration of Poverty Personnel State aid program, which provides overhead costs for administrative hiring and recruitment as a school transitions to and becomes eligible for community school funding through the Concentration of Poverty Per-Pupil State aid program.

³² Dr. Rafael Lara-Alecio, Dr. Martha Galloway, Ben Mason, Dr. Beverly J. Irby, Dr. Genevieve Brown, “Texas Dual Language Program Cost Analysis, (Texas Education Agency, The Texas Senate Education Committee 2004), p. 39. <https://crdlla.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2019/12/careport.pdf>.

³³ Ingrid T. Colón, “New Study Examines Costs of Dual Language Immersion Programs”, *New America* (blog), September 28, 2018, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/new-study-examines-costs-dual-language-immersion-programs/>

³⁴ Jennifer L. Steele, Robert O. Slater, Jennifer LI, Gema Zamarro, Trey Miller, and Michael Bacon, “Dual-Language Immersion Education at Scale: An Analysis of Program Costs, Mechanisms, and Moderators,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 40(3), 420-445. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373718779457>

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Agenblick, Palaich & Associates, “Final Report of the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in Maryland,” (Denver, CO, 2016). <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Documents/adequacystudy/AdequacyStudyReportFinal112016.pdf>

In addition to State aid costs for local education agencies, adoption of these recommendations would require additional MSDE headquarters costs. First, MSDE will need to expand its ability to design and implement Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs like those described in this recommendation. For this, MSDE estimates \$400,000 in costs over the first three years of implementation. These costs are associated with LEA support of dual language program implementation and are not permanent costs to MSDE. Instead, these costs would be front-loaded for the first three years of implementation as MSDE would develop and provide the guidance and materials LEAs would need to initiate planning for and adoption of DLI programs. Later program investments could be sustained through existing permanent positions in the Office of Teaching and Learning.

Second, MSDE will need to reorganize its Office of Teaching and Learning to better support local education agency implementation of DLI programs and to provide sustained technical assistance to LEAs. MSDE estimates \$500,000 in contractual services to support reorganization efforts, provide staff development, and give direct LEA technical assistance while MSDE staff prepare to sustain the assistance long-term.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Successfully implementing this recommendation does not necessitate a change in the Annotated Code of Maryland or to the Code of Maryland Regulations. Instead, implementation of this recommendation requires a shift in practices and protocols of MSDE, the local education agencies, school leaders, and teachers.

For long-term sustained implementation and to further codify the recommendation, new or revised statute or regulations related to English Learners may need to be adopted.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

California

In California, English learners have access to English language development and multilingual programs. Both integrated and designated English language development are provided to California's English learners. Integrated ELD is provided to ELs throughout the school day and across all subjects by all teachers of ELs. Designated ELD is provided by skilled teachers during a protected time during the regular school day.

Multilingual programs prepare students for linguistic and academic proficiency in English and additional languages. Multilingual programs in California are based on research that demonstrates the program model's effectiveness at leading students toward linguistic fluency and academic achievement in more than one language. Multilingual programs may include, but are not limited to the following in California:

- Dual-Language Immersion (Two-Way Immersion)
- Transitional Bilingual
- Developmental Bilingual
- One-Way Immersion
- Heritage Language or Indigenous Language
- FLEX: Foreign Language Elementary Experience
- FLES: Foreign Language in Elementary Schools
- Native Speakers Courses³⁷

³⁷ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/edgehandbook.pdf>

San Antonio Independent School District (ISD)

San Antonio ISD employs 3 out of the 6 state-approved program models for ELs. They offer ESL pull-out, ESL content-based, and two-way dual language immersion. Texas Education Code has been recently updated to include program model descriptions for ESL pull-out and ESL content-based that clarify the components, goals, teacher certification requirements, and instructional design of the models. To maximize ESL program effectiveness, TEA mandates that secondary English teachers be certified in ESL. SAISD has a coordinated approach to implementing dual language immersion programs and expanding their participation for students at all grade levels across the district. Guided by a strategic plan of ensuring that dual language programs are available in every neighborhood and PreK-12 SAISD students participating in dual language programs have robust opportunities to benefit from multilingualism while earning academic credits, including courses delivered in Spanish that offer dual credits at institutions of higher education. Other practices that SAISD implements are providing master scheduling criteria at the middle and high school level, conducting progress monitoring and training language arts teachers in content-based language instruction.

Texas

In 2019, Texas passed House Bill 3 (HB 3), resulting in changes to the weighted funding formula used to calculate bilingual education allotment (BEA). Under HB 3, schools receive additional BEA funds for students participating in a dual language immersion (DLI) program (one-way or two-way). The State has allocated an additional weight of 0.05 (for a total 0.15 weight) to the basic allotment for EL/Limited English Proficient students participating in a DLI program. This increase in funding was recommended by the Texas Commission on Public School Finance after a review of data indicated that DLI programs are more effective than other special language programs.³⁸

Utah

Utah established DLI in 2008 with its passage of Senate Bill 41, which provided funding for public schools to open or expand DLI programs across the State. In 2019-20, approximately 224 public schools in Utah (23%) had a DLI program, serving about 58,000 students in 1-way and 2-way programs.

Senate Bill 41 appropriated \$750,000 from Utah's Uniform School Fund for Fiscal Year 2008-09. Of that, \$480,000 was dedicated to the State's Critical Languages Program and \$270,000 was dedicated to Utah's Dual Language Immersion Program.

Washington

The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) vision of dual language education as an equity strategy is that "all students will have access to dual language education and the opportunity to become proficient in two or more languages by 2030." To support the vision, Washington provides state grants and funding, awards Tribal, Heritage, and Dual Language grants, developed a Dual Language Steering Committee and Bilingual Education Advisory Committee, and created a bilingual teaching fellows program.

³⁸Texas Education Agency to the Administrator Addressed, September 26, 2019, House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Update on the Changes to the Bilingual Education Allotment, <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/House%20Bill%203%20Implementation%20Update%20on%20Changes%20to%20the%20Bilingual%20Education%20Allotment.pdf>.

The Washington Legislature annually provides \$1,425,000 in funding to support program startup costs, including curricula purchasing in the partner language and professional learning opportunities for staff. The State also used Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds to provide dual language program grants in the amount of \$700,000, per year, per district.

Maryland Local Education Agencies Spotlight: Two-Way Immersion Programs

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

Two Maryland local education agencies offer two-way immersion programs where English speakers and native Spanish speakers are integrated for content and literacy instruction in both languages. Students in PGCPS can enter a lottery to be enrolled in Cesar Chavez Dual Spanish Immersion School. The program started with kindergarten students in 2015 and has added a grade level each year since. In the school year 2021-2022, students in the immersion program are in grades K-7 with a transition at grade 6 to a centralized middle school immersion program. Cesar Chavez uses a 50/50 model where approximately 50% of the content is taught in English and 50% of the content is in Spanish. All subjects and both languages are taught each day. PGCPS reports that students in the program score higher on local literacy assessments than their peers, English learners exit ELD programs in faster rates, and students meet language proficiency requirements for the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy as early as middle school. The Maryland Seal of Biliteracy, established by the General Assembly in 2016, is an award given to graduating seniors that recognizes students' high level of proficiency in English and one or more other languages. Challenges include the recruitment of qualified teachers and staff as well as addressing the variety of dialects in the Spanish-speaking community.

MCPS has five two-way dual language programs at Oakland Terrace, Rolling Terrace, Washington Grove, Brown Station, and Kemp Mill Elementary Schools. The program began in the school year 2017-18; schools are in various stages of grade rollout. Four of the five schools are Title I; the remaining school is a focus school. MCPS's program is a whole-school 50/50 model with a morning/afternoon switch between English and Spanish. The schedule includes literacy instruction in both languages daily. Additional staffing is included at each school for a dual language coach. As MCPS continues to roll up each program to a new grade level, they report that they are getting better at "bridging" between the languages and that the whole-school model is fostering collaboration and community-building at each school. Montgomery County also reports staffing as a challenge for these programs; other challenges include funding and identifying research-based strategies for measuring reading levels in both languages.

Recommendation 3b:

Literacy Instruction Aligned to the Science of Reading That Meets the Needs of English Learners

During the September 2022 Workgroup meeting, Dr. Elsa Cardenas-Hagan, Dr. Antonio Fierro, and Dr. Claude Goldenberg shared research on effective practices for structured literacy and language development for ELs. The research found that ELs benefit from reading instruction that includes foundational skills like phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These foundational skills are important and necessary for ELs and English-only speakers as they begin to learn to read. However, reading involves more than foundational skills.³⁹ As ELs develop English language proficiency and literacy skills simultaneously, language proficiency, vocabulary, and background knowledge are also essential and play a key role in literacy development.⁴⁰ ELs need English language development support to understand the words they are learning to read as they use foundational skills to read them and confirm with meaning. Particularly at the secondary level, it is crucial to emphasize developing English language proficiency.⁴¹ Dr. Goldenberg has inferred from research that if there is a gap in English language proficiency, ELs will have a gap in English literacy achievement. To overcome the gap, school systems must provide quality English language development services to accelerate English language proficiency while ensuring alignment with the science of reading.

ELs demonstrated success when academic vocabulary was taught intensively using a variety of instructional activities in content classes and when oral and written language instruction is integrated into content classes.⁴² Additionally, when teachers provide visual and verbal support to make core content more comprehensible; capitalize on ELs' home language, background knowledge, and cultural assets; encourage peer-assisted learning opportunities; and offer small-group academic support in literacy and English language development; ELs display strong evidence in developing literacy and language skills.⁴³

The goal of the literacy support is to broaden a student's expressive and receptive language skills. Reading instruction or interventions that focus heavily on phonics and decoding without attention to the meanings of words and text do not work for ELs. The three-cueing system that uses a combination of letters, syntax, pictures, and context clues to recognize words are also not effective for ELs. While ELs need to learn to read words using the foundational skills, they must also have ample opportunities to confirm accuracy using meaning and context.⁴⁴ Moreover, oral language and vocabulary skills should be incorporated into each lesson. These skills are vital to designing effective reading intervention programs for ELs at all levels. Interventions that included five components of reading with additional features for oral language proficiency and scaffolds for English language skills showed meaningful results in ELs' literacy skill

³⁹ Claude Goldenberg, Reading Wars, Reading Science, and English Learners, *International Literacy Association: Reading Research Quarterly* 55 (S1), (2020): ppS131-144, <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.340>

⁴⁰ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/19>

⁴¹ William Saunders and Claude Goldenberg, "Research to guide English Language Development Instruction", in *Improving Education for English Learners: Research-Based Approaches*, eds. D. Dolson & L. Burnham-Masse (Sacramento, CA, CDE Press, 2010), 21-81.

⁴² <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/19>

⁴³ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2017).

⁴⁴ Linnea C. Ehri, Lois G. Dreyer, Bert Flugman, and Alan Gross, "Reading Rescue: An Effective Tutoring Intervention Model for Language-Minority Students Who Are Struggling Readers in First Grade," *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 2 (2002): 414-448., <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30069443>.

development.⁴⁵ Furthermore, notable results for literacy development were observed when the intervention model included opportunities for ELs to learn vocabulary and apply meaning to words as they read.⁴⁶

To establish policy on aligning the science of reading and structured literacy with effective English language development practices to improve reading outcomes of ELs, a multi-dimensional approach must be used involving state, LEA, and school-based stakeholders. The policy should outline how instruction for ELs coincides with, or diverges from, the science of reading that is based on how English-only speakers learn to read.⁴⁷ It should also include the following components: sharing instructional models that work well with ELs, offering professional development to all educators on science of reading and structured literacy, making home-school connections, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

MSDE is distributing over \$165 million in ESSER State Set-Aside funds to LEAs through Maryland Leads, a highly selective grant process designed to support LEAs in overcoming the learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerate student learning to narrow opportunity and achievement gaps, and provide more targeted support for historically underserved students and their communities. The grant initiative is centered around high-leverage strategies that have been proven to be effective and transformative for schools and local education agencies:

- Grow Your Own Staff
- Staff Support and Retention
- The Science of Reading
- High-Quality School Day Tutoring
- Reimagining the Use of Time
- Innovative School Models
- Transforming Neighborhoods Through Excellent Community Schools

The Science of Reading is the strategy that received the most funding, with a total investment of \$53,252,654, including local matching support. All K-3 teachers, special educators, literacy specialists, and principals in 22 of 24 LEAs will be trained in the Science of Reading instruction, and the LEAs also commit to adopt and scale high-quality, content rich, culturally relevant instructional materials aligned with the Science of Reading.

Given the importance of instruction aligned to the Science of Reading for English language development, **Maryland should implement a structured literacy policy that incorporates effective English language development practices to improve reading outcomes for English learners.**

⁴⁵ Sharon Vaughn, et al. "Effectiveness of an English Intervention for First-Grade English Language Learners at Risk for Reading Problems," *The Elementary School Journal* 107, no. 2 (2006): 153-180, <https://doi.org/10.1086/510653>.

⁴⁶ Linnea C. Ehri, Lois G. Dreyer, Bert Flugman, and Alan Gross, "Reading Rescue: An Effective Tutoring Intervention Model for Language-Minority Students Who Are Struggling Readers in First Grade," *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 2 (2002): 414-448, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30069443>.

⁴⁷ Claude Goldenberg, Reading Wars, Reading Science, and English Learners, *International Literacy Association: Reading Research Quarterly* 55 (S1), (2020): ppS131-144, <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.340>.

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should develop a structured literacy policy for English learners aligned to the Science of Reading and best practices for English language development and reinforce this policy across literacy instruction.
- MSDE should require training of pre-service teachers and all Maryland educators on differentiating reading instruction to account for English learners' variability.
- MSDE should develop guidance for all educators on strategies and supports that leverage ELs' home language in literacy programs.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

To fully implement this recommendation, MSDE will collaborate with LEAs to ensure that professional learning resources are available to train all educators on differentiating reading instruction for ELs and incorporating English language development strategies into instruction of foundational reading skills.

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and therefore does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but that MSDE can implement recommended policy options with available fiscal and human capital resources.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Successfully implementing this recommendation does not necessitate a change in the Annotated Code of Maryland or to the Code of Maryland Regulations. Instead, implementation of this recommendation requires a shift in practices and protocols of MSDE, the local education agencies, school leaders, and teachers.

For long-term sustained implementation and to further codify the recommendation, new or revised regulations or statute related to English learners may need to be adopted.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

Mississippi

Passed in Mississippi's 2013 legislative session and amended in 2016, the Literacy Based Promotion Act requires an individual reading plan for each student who exhibits reading deficiency and prohibits promotion of students in grade 3 who score at the lowest achievement in reading.⁴⁸ The Mississippi Department of Education provides mandated research-based training and support for K-3rd grade teachers, curriculum specialists, and other educators. Literacy coaches have been deployed to support schools across the State. The Mississippi Momentum Partnership provides intensive supports related to the teaching of early literacy to faculty from the fifteen public and private educator preparation programs to be used in the literacy course work for pre-service educators.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ <https://www.mdek12.org/OEER/LBPA>

⁴⁹ <https://msreads.org/what-we-do/mississippi-momentum-project/>

Maryland Local Education Agency Spotlight

Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS)

Cecil County Public Schools is implementing a literacy program, Bookworms, aligned to the science of reading in all 17 elementary schools. The program includes three 45-minute blocks of literacy instruction, Differentiation, Shared Reading, and English Language Arts (ELA). In the ELA block, the structure is an interactive read aloud; students are listening to complex texts that are at the end of the grade level Lexile or above. Grammar instruction is explicit, and writing is modeled related to texts in all three genres. Shared reading focuses on peer-assisted reading as students engage in repeated reading for fluency. Word-study, vocabulary instruction, and writing to demonstrate comprehension are also emphasized in this block. Finally, students are assigned to groups where customized differentiation is provided based upon results of the universal screener or other diagnostic tools.

The literacy program integrates content standards with research-based literacy instruction. There is standardization of evidence-based instruction and pedagogy in each grade level with a focus on foundational skills, fluency, comprehension, and knowledge building.

CCPS identified the following essential components of literacy instruction for English learners and the extent to which they are incorporated into the Bookworms program and how intentional teachers are with instruction that include those elements:

- Intentional vocabulary instruction in context
- Listening comprehension
- Oral language development
- Syntax
- Academic language

Specific routines and practices have been identified for each component; although some are already part of the Bookworm program, there are opportunities to expand them with strategies specifically designed for ELs. Among the challenges is the need to balance the rigor of pacing and the volume of texts with the need to fully engage teachers in the practices and supports that are necessary to develop language and literacy for ELs. To that end, CCPS will continue to provide professional development to support teachers in leveraging these routines and practices within the program. Supports will be adjusted for ELs at every proficiency level, focusing on their linguistic assets. Building on their work in social studies and science, CCPS will design valid and reliable ELA assessments for English learners. Collaboration and examination of Bookworm instruction through the lens of literacy and English language development are key to ELs' success.

Recommendation 3c: Effective English Language Development (ELD) Programs

With the goal of helping English learners achieve English proficiency while they are also learning core academic content, Maryland joined the WIDA Consortium in the 2011-2012 school year and adopted the WIDA English language development (ELD) standards and the English language proficiency assessments, WIDA ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. These educational standards provide a foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the State. Each local education agency (LEA) is required to align its ELD program and curriculum to the ELD standards:

- Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes
 - English learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 2: Language for Language Arts
 - English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.
- Standard 3: Language for Mathematics
 - English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.
- Standard 4: Language for Science
 - English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.
- Standard 5: Language for Social Studies
 - English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

Existing instructional materials and curriculum requirements for the State are outlined in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). For social studies, science, mathematics, and English language arts/literacy COMAR states “each LEA shall provide curriculum documents for the elementary and secondary schools under its jurisdiction that (1) include the content standards set forth in this regulation; and (2) are aligned with the Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards, as developed by the Maryland State Department of Education in collaboration with LEA.”⁵⁰

An additional step of certification for English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics materials states that: “A. By September 1, 2020, and thereafter, upon adoption of new State standards, LEA curricula, or curriculum support materials, each local superintendent of schools or chief executive officer shall certify to the State Superintendent of Schools that the instructional programming for courses aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards meets, at a minimum, the requirements set forth in

⁵⁰ http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/subtitle_chapters/13A_Chapters.aspx

Regulation .01 of this chapter. B. The superintendent or chief executive officer shall provide evidence of meeting the requirements. Acceptable forms of evidence include:

(1) A Maryland State Department of Education Curriculum Vetting Report demonstrating that the reviewed curriculum has earned an acceptable rating as determined by the agency on all sections for the identified grade level(s) or course(s).

(2) A curriculum vetting report produced by a nationally recognized external party that demonstrates alignment to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for the identified grade level(s) or course(s); or

(3) Documentation of national ratings to demonstrate an alignment to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and strong (level 1) or moderate (level 2) evidence, as defined under §8101(21)(A)(i)(I) and §8101(21)(A)(i)(II) of the Every Student Succeeds Act, for all third-party curricula and curriculum support materials in use.”

The COMAR regulations for ELD programs are broader and state that the ELD programs shall contain curriculum and instruction, and materials of instructions components.⁵¹ Further monitoring of these components is done during the MSDE EL/Title III monitoring visit. Local education agencies (LEAs) participate in an EL/Title III services monitoring visit every three years. As part of the visit, LEAs share a description and evidence of curriculum, and a description and evidence of how the LEA integrated Maryland's ELD standards into ESOL and/or content classes. Additionally, LEAs are required to show evidence that the ELD programs and related materials of instruction provided to ELs are comparable to those provided to non-EL students and evidence of a reasonable and meaningful effort to ensure that ELD program instructional materials are aligned with Maryland's ELD standards.

To provide local context to the selection of instructional materials in Maryland, local ESOL coordinators were surveyed in August 2022 on the following topics within their school district:

- Instructional materials review process for core content areas
- Supports for ELs in core content materials
- ELD program instructional materials selection process
- Impact of instructional materials and teaching practices on ELs

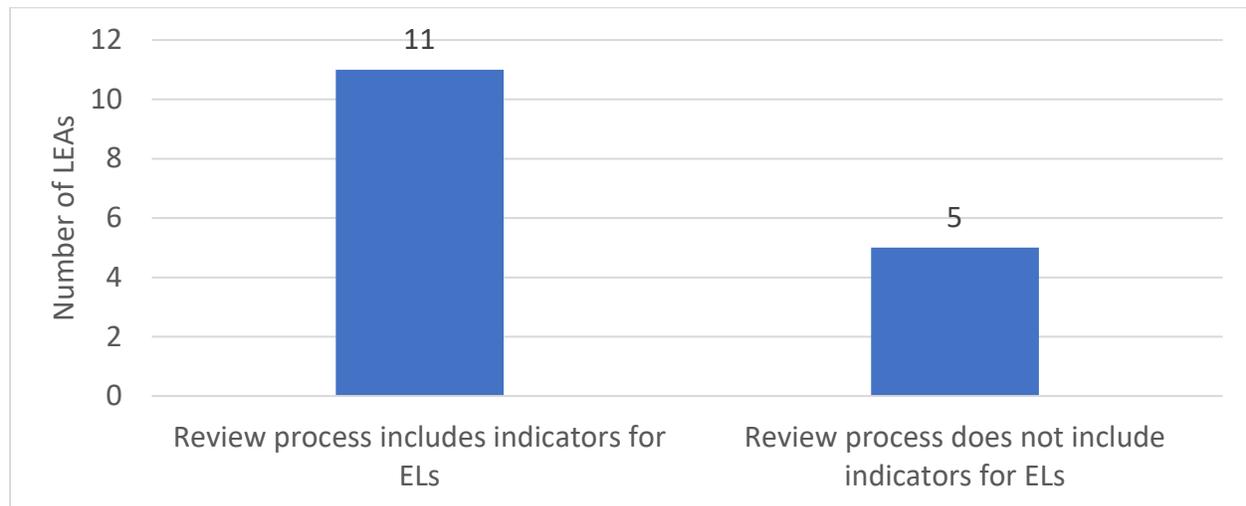
⁵¹ http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=13A.05.07.*

Sixteen of the 24 LEAs (67%) responded to the survey. Survey results are summarized below by the five questions given to local ESOL coordinators:

1. Do LEAs' review processes include indicators for ELs?

Approximately one-third of LEAs' review processes do not include indicators for ELs, as shown in Figure 26.

Figure 26: LEAs' Instructional Materials Review Process Indicators



2. What supports for English learners are included in LEAs' core content instructional materials (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies)?
 - Modified materials
 - Audio files
 - Leveled readers
 - Scaffolding supports
 - Differentiated support by English language proficiency level
 - Spanish options
3. What is the process for selecting instructional materials for ELD programs?
 - A third of LEAs use the same process as that for selecting core materials.
 - Most LEAs use a selection committee which includes ESOL teachers, staff, and/or families in the review process.
 - Evaluation rubrics look for:
 - Features which support language development (e.g. readability, graphics, etc.).
 - Equity, diversity, and inclusion.
 - Right amount of rigor and meets grade level standards.
 - Some LEAs report piloting materials before selection.
4. How do LEAs ensure that their instructional materials and teaching practices are impactful for English learners?
 - Monitor grades and ACCESS for ELLs scores to track student progress at the class, school, and district level.
 - Collaborate with curriculum coordinators to align WIDA ELD Framework and content instruction.

- Embed multilingual strategies in content instruction to make the content more comprehensible without sacrificing rigor.
 - Talk to students about their interests and engagement.
 - Solicit teacher input on usefulness of instructional materials.
 - Keep up to date on evidence-based research on instructional materials.
 - Collaborate across districts to share best practices both statewide and nationwide.
5. How can LEAs' selection processes for instructional materials be improved?
- Provide a list of recommended materials.
 - Include ESOL staff and families in the selection process.
 - Provide professional development on how to select high quality materials and how to use evidence-based research.
 - Use a districtwide rubric to ensure consistent measures.
 - Continue to revise rubrics based on feedback.
 - Include elements for EL supports on all rubrics, including those for selection of core content materials.

The results of the survey from LEA ESOL Coordinators reinforce that the State does not provide guidance to LEAs on selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials for English language development programs. In fact, the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for ELD programs simply states that LEAs must have instructional and curricular materials for their programs. A growing body of research points to the positive impact that high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) have on student learning. **Maryland should develop resources and formally reinforce that LEAs ensure all College and Career Ready curricula and high-quality instructional materials across all content areas meet the needs of English learners.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- As part of the Blueprint College and Career Readiness curricula, MSDE should ensure that all curricula meet the needs of English learners.
- MSDE should include indicators for ELs in Maryland's new HQIM review process.
- MSDE should develop a process to review HQIM for ELD programs.
- MSDE should establish expectations and tools for high-quality English language development programs.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and therefore does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but that MSDE can implement recommended policy options with available fiscal and human capital resources.

Specifically, to fully implement this recommendation, MSDE will provide training to LEAs on the review of HQIM for ELD programs with existing personnel. MSDE will use existing staff time for the development and evaluation of HQIMs and related tools.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Given the requirements of building out curriculum, updates to existing COMAR are necessary to align the regulations with this recommendation.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

Louisiana

In Louisiana, all districts are able to purchase instructional materials that are best for their communities. To support school districts in making their own local, high-quality decisions, The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) leads online reviews of instructional materials. The materials are evaluated by Louisiana educators using the appropriate evaluation rubric. The tiered reviews describe the degree of alignment to state content standards. After the review, publishers' response to the review and public comments are included with the review. All of the resources mentioned are available on their website.⁵²

The instructional materials review (IMR) process has three phases. During Phase 1 the submissions are prescreened by the IMR team to determine eligibility and placed into the review queue. In Phase 2, the submission is reviewed by a team and once the review is complete, it is sent to the publisher and the publisher is offered a chance to respond. Finally, the review and publisher response are published on the website. The reviews are tiered (1-3) based on their quality and alignment to the academic content standards. School districts aren't required to purchase and use the Tier 1 materials, but to incentivize the use of Tier 1 materials and accompanying vendor professional development, state pass through funds are awarded to school systems that do select the Tier 1 materials. The rubrics that are used to evaluate tiers include a required indicator for meeting the needs of diverse learners. Since the indicator is a required indicator, materials cannot receive the Tier 1 rating without including supports for diverse learners in their materials.

The current diverse learner indicator reads, "Support for English learners and diverse learners is provided. Appropriate suggestions and materials are provided for supporting varying student needs at the unit and lesson level. The language in which questions and problems are posed is not an obstacle to understanding the content, and if it is, additional supports are included (e.g., alternative teacher approaches, pacing and instructional delivery options, strategies, or suggestions for supporting access to text and/or content, suggestions for modifications, suggestions for vocabulary acquisition, etc.)" The rubrics and indicators are revised annually. LDOE anticipates releasing a revised diverse learner indicator in October 2022.

Texas

A critical collaboration between the Instructional Materials and Special Populations teams at the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has led to the approach that Texas takes when supporting English learners with high-quality instructional materials. On their path to providing equity and access to all students, TEA focused on the positive impact that HQIMs have on student learning. A growing body of research has shown that HQIM allows students to engage deeper and more meaningfully with standards, leads to additional learning for students, and creates larger more cost-effective impacts on academic outcomes than many interventions. The Texas Education Agency shared two critical resources that helped them develop high quality materials and practices for English learners.

The first resource, the Texas Resource Review (TRR) is a website that provides Texas educators a way to understand the quality of instructional materials.⁵³ The TRR reviews published instructional materials and gives them a quality rating. The TRR review process includes the use of content and grade level specific rubrics to evaluate the quality of instructional materials. There are many common components among the rubrics including an indicator entitled, Supports for All Learners, that is inclusive of English learners. Each

⁵² <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/>

⁵³ <https://texasresourcereview.org/>

material reviewed is given a score on how well the materials include supports for ELs to meet grade-level learning expectations and an accompanying report offers a detailed explanation of the score. Another component of this resource is training local school districts to utilize TRR when embarking on their curricular material adoption processes.

The second resource is a set of TEA developed open education resources (OER), called Lone Star OER, which are state developed digital materials that are freely available to Texas school districts and educators. For this resource, TEA built their own unit and lesson level review rubrics that are aligned to the TRR rubrics. These rubrics also include the indicator, Supports for All Learners and to hone in on what supports for ELs look like, the Instructional Materials and Special Populations teams worked very closely together. In about 70% of the primary grade English Language Arts (ELA) lessons there are teacher supports that include scaffolding tips for beginning, intermediate, and advanced ELs, with a goal of 100% in the future. TEA is in the process of including similar supports for the primary math lessons. In addition to those supports, they are developing supports for secondary math and ELA lessons and units.

Recommendation 4:

Assessment and Accountability Systems to Support ELs

Legal requirements to guide English language development (ELD) services began in 1964 with the Title VI, Civil Rights Act. The Civil Rights Act states, “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” This law mandated states to meet the needs of English learners. In *Lau v. Nichols*, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the Department of Education's memorandum that directed school districts to help EL students overcome language barriers so that they could meaningfully participate in educational programs.⁵⁴ Later memoranda and Supreme Court cases, as well as the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reaffirmed the legal responsibility of states to meet the needs of English learners.⁵⁵ As stated by the U.S. Department of Education, “Under federal law, programs to educate children with limited proficiency in English must be: (1) based on a sound educational theory; (2) adequately supported so that the program has a realistic chance of success; and (3) periodically evaluated and revised, if necessary.”⁵⁶ These mandates have guided educational policy and practice in Maryland for over 50 years and also guided the Maryland EL Workgroup's policy recommendations.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 requires that each state administer English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessments annually to all students in grades 3-8 and once in high school, as well as in science once in each grade span (3-5, 6-8 and high school). ESSA also requires that annual English language proficiency assessments be given to all English learners in grades K-12. In addition to these federally mandated assessments, Maryland State law (Md. Ed. Art §7-203) requires a social studies assessment in grade 8 and American Government assessment in high school.

ESSA also requires each state to develop and submit a plan to U.S. Department of Education about how the requirements in the ESSA will be implemented and how it will hold schools accountable for performance of all students. The State Board of Education, MSDE staff, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, community leaders, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders in Maryland collaborated to create an accountability system that measured relevant, actionable aspects of student and school performance. The Maryland accountability system has multiple ways to describe student and school performance. The major components of the accountability system are called indicators. These indicators are: Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency, Readiness for Postsecondary Success, and School Quality and Student Success at the High School Level.

⁵⁴ Rosemary Salomone, “Caught in a Time Warp: The Educational Rights of English Language Learners,” *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development* 25, no. 1 (2010): 141-151.

⁵⁵ Department of Education, United States of America, *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)*, (2016, September 16), <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf>.

⁵⁶ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/legal.html>

English Learners and Maryland Accountability System

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provided an opportunity for Maryland to reimagine the State accountability system. Specifically, for English learners, ESSA requires each state to include English learners in their school-level accountability systems instead of as part of previous separate district-level accountability systems. Each state continues to be required to set annual and long-term targets for English learners on the English language arts and mathematics state assessments. New to ESSA is the requirement to set goals for English learners related to progress in attaining English language proficiency based on English language proficiency assessment.

Maryland submitted an ESSA state plan which was approved in September 2017 and included a reimaged accountability system. Maryland's accountability system is based on 100 total possible points. The English Language Proficiency indicator has a weight of 10% for elementary, middle, and high schools. Every school with at least 10 English learners assessed would include the English Language Proficiency (ELP) indicator as part of the final results for the school.

Table 4. Accountability System Weights by Indicator

Indicator	School Grade Span	Weight	Total Possible Points
Academic Achievement	Elementary	20%	20
	Middle	20%	20
	High	30%	30
Graduation	High	15%	15
Academic Progress	Elementary	35%	35
	Middle	35%	35
English Language Proficiency (ELP)	Elementary	10%	10
	Middle	10%	10
	High	10%	10
Readiness for Post-Secondary Success	High	10%	10
School Quality and Student Success	Elementary	35%	35
	Middle	35%	35
	High	35%	35
Elementary			100
Middle			100
High			100

Every school receives a star rating from one to five stars with five stars being the highest. The star rating is determined by the results of the school across all indicators. Each school earns points which is then divided by the total possible points for the total earned points percent. Table 5 below identifies the star rating for a school based on the results.

Table 5. Accountability System Star Ratings

Stars	Definition
★★★★★	A school has at least 75% of total earned points
★★★★	A school has at least 60% but less than 75% of total earned points
★★★	A school has at least 45% but less than 60% of total earned points
★★	A school has at least 30% but less than 45% of total earned points
★	A school has less than 30% of total earned points

Maryland implemented and reported new school report cards beginning with data from the school year 2017-2018 incorporating the new requirements of ESSA.

Additionally, new reporting requirements will improve transparency on the performance outcomes of English learners. Maryland is required to report on English learners with disabilities, the academic achievement of former English learners, and the number of English learners receiving services for five or more years. Required reporting can be found on the Maryland Report Card website.⁵⁷

This report recommends three ways to support ELs through assessment and accountability systems. These are detailed in Recommendations 4a, 4b, and 4c.

⁵⁷ <https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/>

Recommendation 4a: Equitable and Valid Assessments for ELs

English learners should be a primary consideration for all assessment and accountability systems, and not just included as an afterthought. Margo Gottlieb summarized this best by saying, “If assessment is reliable, valid, and fair (for ELs) from start to finish, then it can serve as the bridge to educational equity.”⁵⁸ Many states have made advances towards offering assessment programs that are equitable and fair for English learner students. “As of Spring 2020, 31 states plus the District of Columbia offer native language assessments, most commonly in math or science but sometimes in reading/language arts and social studies as well. These are typically available in Spanish, which is the most prevalent home language among ELs in most states. However, Hawaii offers tests in Hawaiian, and three states (Michigan, New York, and Washington) offer tests in multiple non-English languages. Native language assessments vary in such characteristics as whether they are direct translations of English-language standardized tests or are adapted more freely, and whether students can see only the native language version or both that and the English version when taking the test.”⁵⁹

Research has shown that students perform better on standardized tests that are administered in their dominant language and when they are instructed in the same language, if their proficiency in English is low.⁶⁰ Additionally, the use of English language dictionaries or glossaries, simplified English, and providing extra time on assessments had small positive effects on the test performance of English Learners.⁶¹

MSDE is currently working on the development of the KRA in Spanish that is scheduled to be piloted in the 2023-24 administration and then will be available for use beginning with the 2024-25 administration. Maryland is taking steps to translate and transadapt several other state assessments; however, there is a need to continue evaluating best practices for providing equal access to assessments for more ELs. Additionally, the State needs to support English learners’ linguistic and academic development in the most effective way possible by measuring, engaging, and fostering their unique linguistic skills as early as possible. To ensure equity and inclusion in the state assessment program, **Maryland should expand the development of assessments in English learners’ dominant language(s) that will accurately demonstrate their academic achievement and language proficiency.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should implement best practices for assessment development and accommodations, including linguistic simplification and native language.
- MSDE should develop assessments that measure ELs’ proficiencies in their home languages and that can also be used to comprehensively measure the language skills of English-dominant students enrolled in two-way immersion programs.

⁵⁸ Margo Gottlieb, *Assessing English Language Learners: Bridges to Educational Equity: Connecting Academic Language Proficiency to Student Achievement* (Thousand Oaks: Corwin, 2016).

⁵⁹ Julie Sugarman and Leslie Villegas, “Native Language Assessments for K-12 English Learners: Policy Considerations and State Practices,” *Migration Policy Institute*, June 2020, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/MPI-native-lang-assessments_FINAL.pdf.

⁶⁰ Michael J. Kieffer, Mabel Rivera, and David Francis, *Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-based Recommendations for the Use of Accommodations in Large-scale Assessments* (Portsmouth: Center on Instruction, 2012), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537635.pdf>.

⁶¹ Maria Pennock-Roman and Charlene Rivera, “Mean Effects of Test Accommodations for ELLs and Non-ELLs: A Meta-Analysis of Experimental Studies,” *Educational Measurement Issues and Practice* 30, no. 3: 10-28.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and therefore does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but that MSDE can implement recommended policy options with available fiscal and human capital resources.

Additionally, to fully implement this recommendation, MSDE will ensure that training is available to LEAs on best practices on utilizing native language assessments and selecting appropriate assessments and accommodations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Workgroup on English Learners anticipates the potential need for COMAR or statutory amendments to implement this recommendation. MSDE is currently working on the development of the KRA in Spanish that is scheduled to be piloted in the 2023-24 administration and then will be available for use beginning with the 2024-25 administration. MSDE should explore expanding this to other assessments as well. Offering assessments in Spanish may require an update to the Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

Texas

The Texas Education Agency publication, *The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) Decisions Educator Guide*, is used to make assessment decisions about participation, the appropriate assessment, and designated supports on an individual student basis for emergent bilingual students.⁶² For example, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Spanish assessment is appropriate for students in bilingual programs who are receiving most of their academic instruction in Spanish and may sometimes be appropriate for an emergent bilingual student in an English as a second language program. The STAAR Spanish assessment is available in grades 3-5 in mathematics, reading language arts, and science. STAAR Spanish is administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress. STAAR Spanish tests are grade-level assessments and test the same grades and subjects as the general STAAR.⁶³

Washington

Washington state's *Guidelines on Tools, Supports and Accommodations for State Assessments 2021-2022* manual includes guidance on using embedded designated supports for multilingual learners, such as translated (dual language) tests in Spanish for math and science. This support provides the full Spanish translation of each test item above the original item in English. Students taking the Spanish math and science tests may respond to items in English, Spanish, or a combination of both. For students whose primary language is Spanish and who use dual language supports in the classroom, use of the dual language translation may be appropriate. This support will increase reading load and cognitive load.⁶⁴

⁶² Texas Education Agency, *The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) Decisions Educator Guide* (2021-2022), <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2021-2022-lpac-decisions-educator-guide-final.pdf>

⁶³ <https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/staar/staar-spanish-resources>

⁶⁴ Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Guidelines on Tools, Supports, and Accommodations for State Assessments* (2021-2022), https://wa.portal.cambiumast.com/-/media/project/client-portals/washington/pdf/2021-22-gtsa_final.pdf.

Recommendation 4b:

Transparent and Equitable Accountability and Reporting for ELs at All Stages of English Language Development

As the EL population in Maryland continues to grow and becomes more diverse, the accountability and data reporting procedures should evolve to reflect these changes. Building an accountability and reporting system that ensures equity, accuracy, and transparency is critical to better understand the diversity of ELs' skills, academic outcomes, and needs, and to target interventions and resources.

The Workgroup invited researchers Dr. Karen Thompson from Oregon State University and Dr. Ilana Umansky from University of Oregon, along with Dr. Josh Rew of the Oregon Department of Education to provide high-quality research on English learners in accountability systems. They advocate for a more granular reporting framework for academic accountability. Reporting outcomes only for current ELs does not provide sufficient information for education systems to effectively understand and respond to students' needs. To better understand students' needs and system performance, it is important to report outcomes for current, former, ever, and never ELs.⁶⁵

The identification process for English learner students starts at the same time that they start attending Maryland schools. Upon enrollment in a Maryland public school, every family completes a standardized home language survey (HLS). This survey asks parents or guardians to answer three questions:

1. What language(s) did the student first learn to speak?
2. What language does the student use most often to communicate?
3. What language(s) are spoken in your home?

If a language other than English is indicated on two or more of the questions, the student is screened for English language development services. Potential ELs are screened using the WIDA Screener for K assessment or the WIDA screener for students in grades 1-12.⁶⁶ After those assessments are scored and students with qualifying scores are identified, parents or guardians are notified and have the option to accept or refuse ELD services. The WIDA screener scores are used to determine educational course placement including core content classes and English development courses.

These home language surveys and WIDA language screeners identify which students will be recognized as current English learners. Once identified as an EL, the student is able to access the necessary services. Additionally, the EL identification allows for student achievement data to be disaggregated based on this identification and then able to focus more specifically on those students to understand their strengths and opportunities for growth.

As part of the Workgroup's June 2022 meeting, accountability data for English learners was analyzed. The discussion focused on data from school year 2018-2019, as this was the most recent year for which accountability data was calculated. Analyses compared the school level average percent of possible points

⁶⁵ "Understanding Outcomes of English Learners: The Importance of the 'Ever EL' Category," *Inside IES Research (blog)*, June 16, 2017, <https://ies.ed.gov/blogs/research/post/understanding-outcomes-for-english-learners-the-importance-of-the-ever-learner-category>.

⁶⁶ <https://wida.wisc.edu/>

earned by English learners across ELA and math with that of non-English learners for each state accountability indicator and measure. Some of this data is presented here. Additional data is available in the presentation slides from the June 2022 Workgroup meeting, which shows similar trends for other metrics.⁶⁷

As seen in Figure 27, English learners earned fewer points on the Academic Achievement indicator than non-English learners at all school levels, and the gaps were larger at higher school levels.

Figure 27: Overall Percentage of Points Earned from Academic Achievement by English Learner Status, 2019

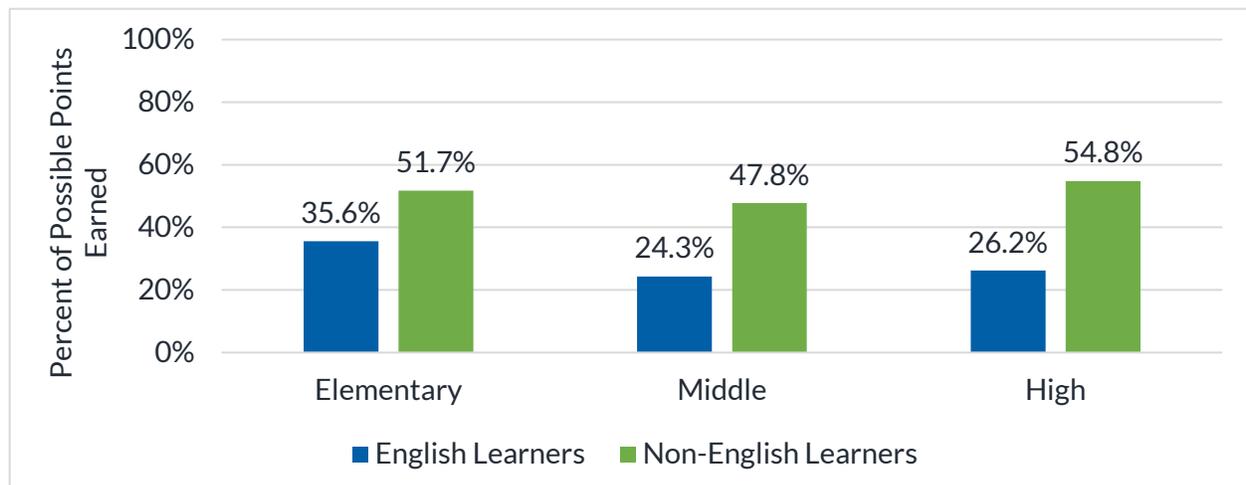
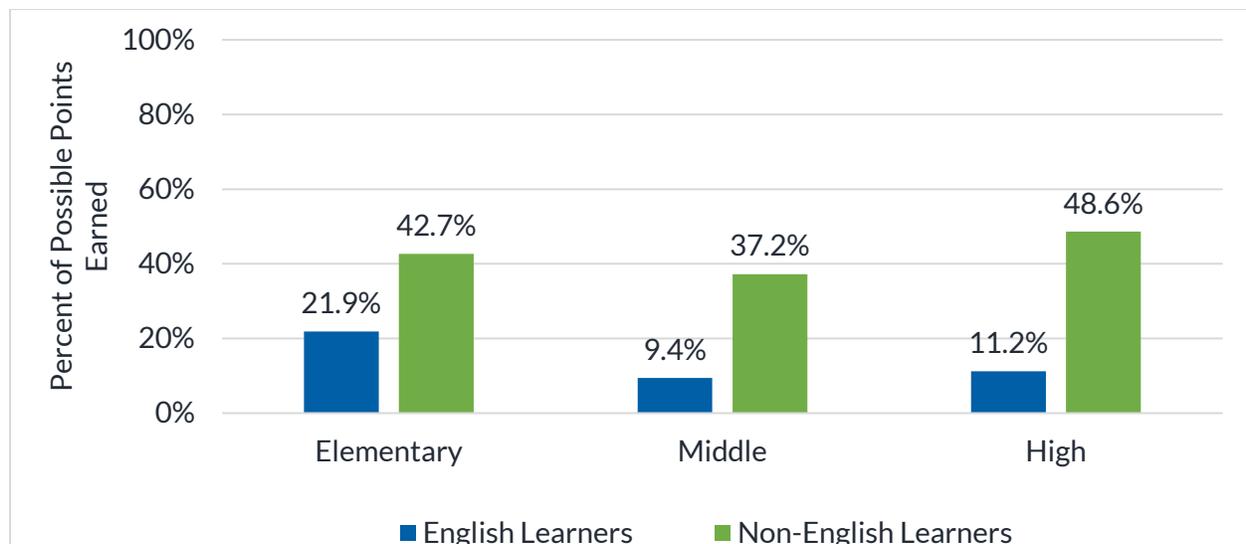


Figure 28 shows that fewer English learners were proficient on the state’s standardized Math and ELA tests than were non-English learners and therefore received less points for that measure on Maryland Report Card accountability system.

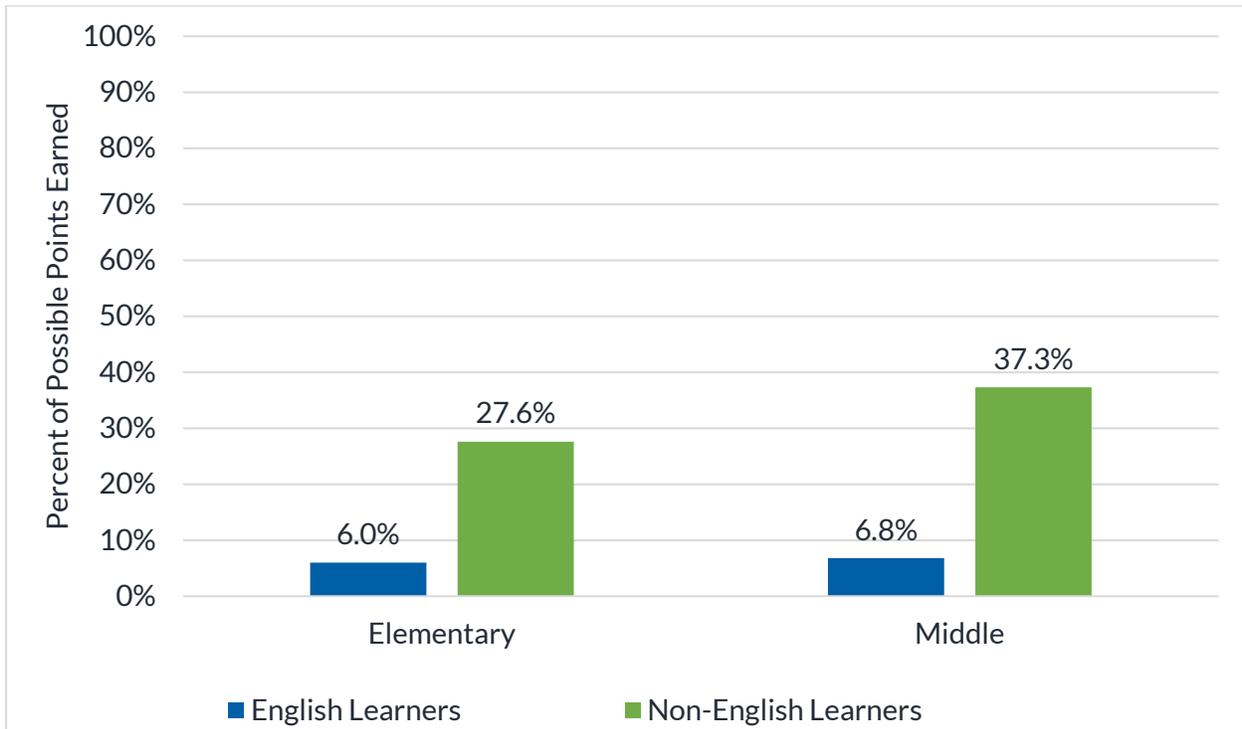
Figure 28: Percentage of Points Earned from Percent of Students Proficient on MCAP by English Learner Status, 2019



⁶⁷ <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/ELBlueprintWorkgroup/WorkgroupMeeting06232022.aspx>

English learners were less likely than non-English learners to be proficient in science, as seen in Figure 29.

Figure 29: Percentage of Points Earned from Proficiency in Science by English Learner Status, 2019



As Figure 30 shows, English learners graduate at lower rates than non-English learners.

Figure 30: Percentage of Points Earned from Graduation Rates by English Learner Status, 2019

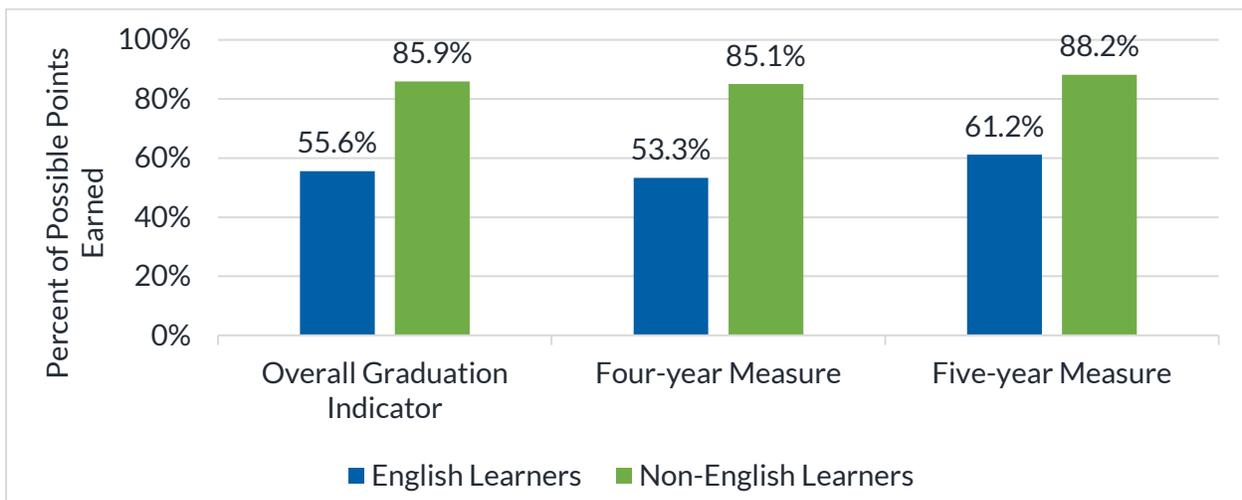


Figure 31 shows that English learners are less likely than non-English learners to be on-track to graduate in Grade 9 and less likely to achieve other benchmarks in high school.

Figure 31: Percentage of Points Earned from Students' Readiness for Post-Secondary Success by English Learner Status, 2019

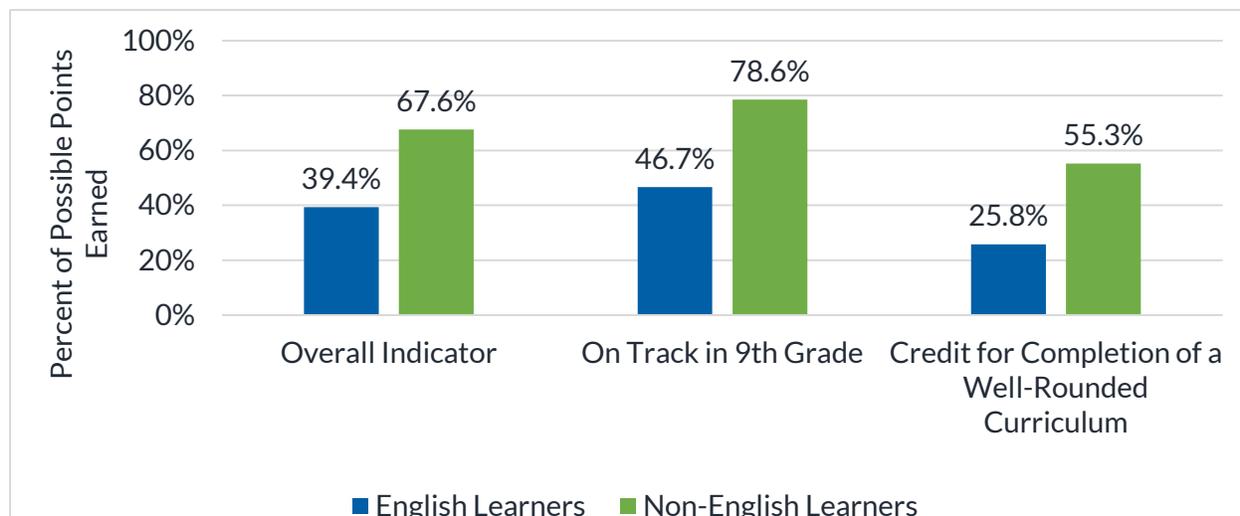


Table 6 provides a summary of the accountability results, showing that English learners score at levels similar to their non-English learner peers on the Academic Progress and School Quality and Student Success indicators but lower than their peers on the Academic Achievement, Graduation, and Readiness for Postsecondary Success indicators.

Table 6. Comparison of Accountability Scores by English Learner Status, 2019

Indicator	English Learners Score Higher than Peers	English Learners Score Similarly	English Learners Score Lower than Peers
Academic Achievement			✓
Academic Progress		✓	
School Quality and Student Success		ES, MS	HS
Graduation			✓
Readiness for Post-secondary Success			✓

English learners are a diverse group, and the current accountability system does not provide data on students at all stages of English language development. In particular, it is important to study the outcomes for ELs who have not demonstrated English proficiency after many years of ELD instruction.

LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS

The July 2022 English Learner Workgroup meeting focused on Long-term English learners (LTELs), who are students who have received EL services for six years or more. Specifically, the data provided to the Workgroup explored the guiding question: What are the trends and outcomes for Long-term English learners (LTELs) in Maryland?

The data provided to the Workgroup focused on English learners in grades 3-12 and analyses were based on the following definitions:

- Long-term English learners (LTELs) are active English learners who have received EL services for six years or more.
- Non-long-term English learners are active English learners who have received EL services for fewer than six years.
- All active ELs are either LTELs or Non-LTELs.

Data was provided to the Workgroup on the enrollment trends of LTELs in Maryland, the concentration of LTELs in Maryland by grade level, the identification rate of LTELs for special education services, LTEL achievement, and LTEL graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates.

Figure 32 shows that the number of LTELs in Maryland has more than doubled from 2017 to 2021, while the proportion of LTELs of all ELs increased from 16% to 27% over the same period.

Figure 32: Trend in LTEL Enrollment in Maryland Over the Past Five Years

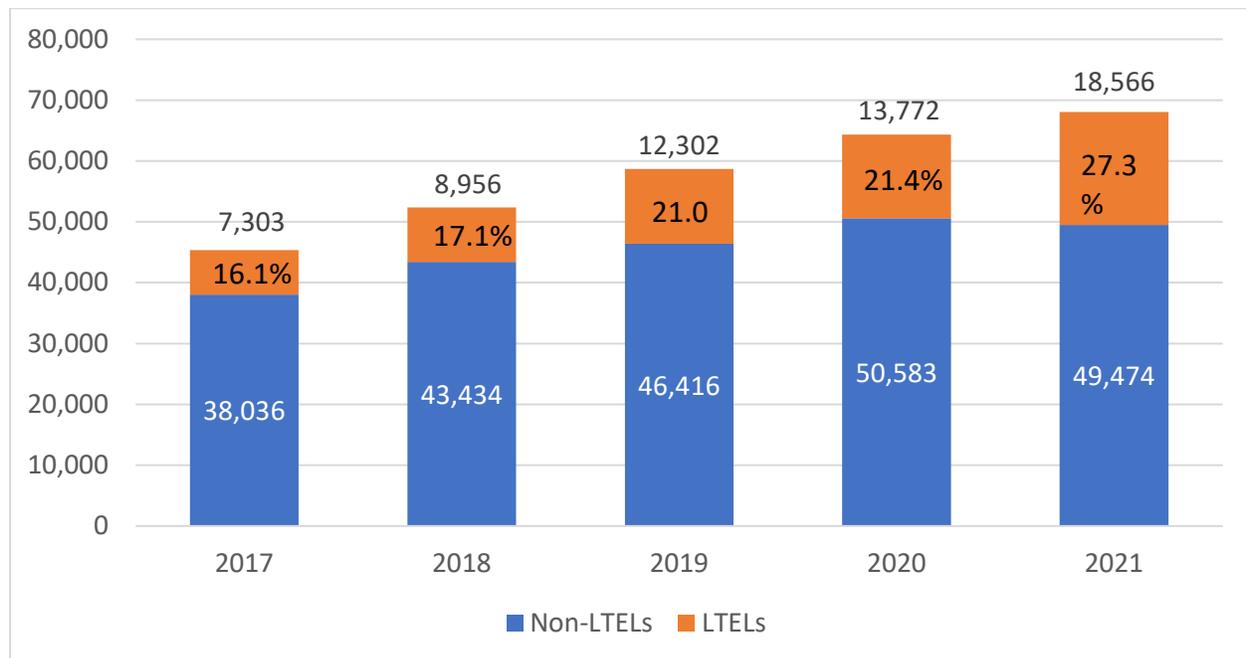
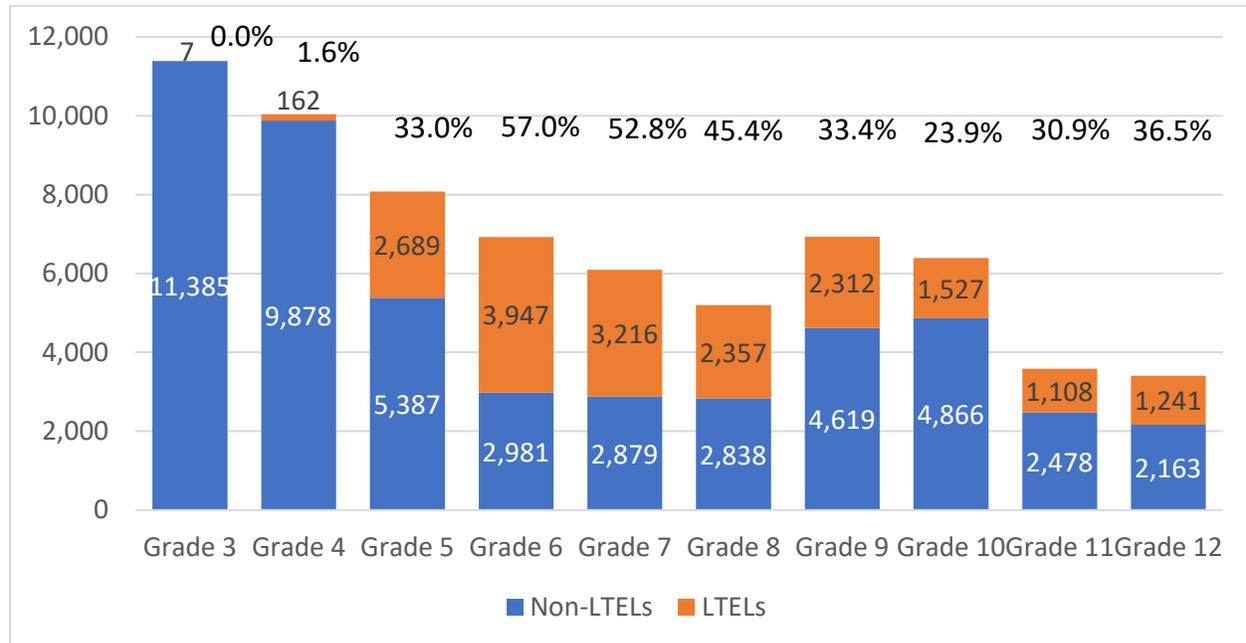


Figure 33 shows that LTELs were disproportionately enrolled in middle school grades in 2021, representing about half of all ELs while in most other grades they only accounted for roughly a third of all ELs.

Figure 33: Concentration of Long-Term English Learners by Grade Level, 2021



As Table 7 shows, on average, secondary-level English Learners have been ELs for between 4.6 and 6.1 years, depending on the grade level, with the average number of years being highest for ELs in grade 12.

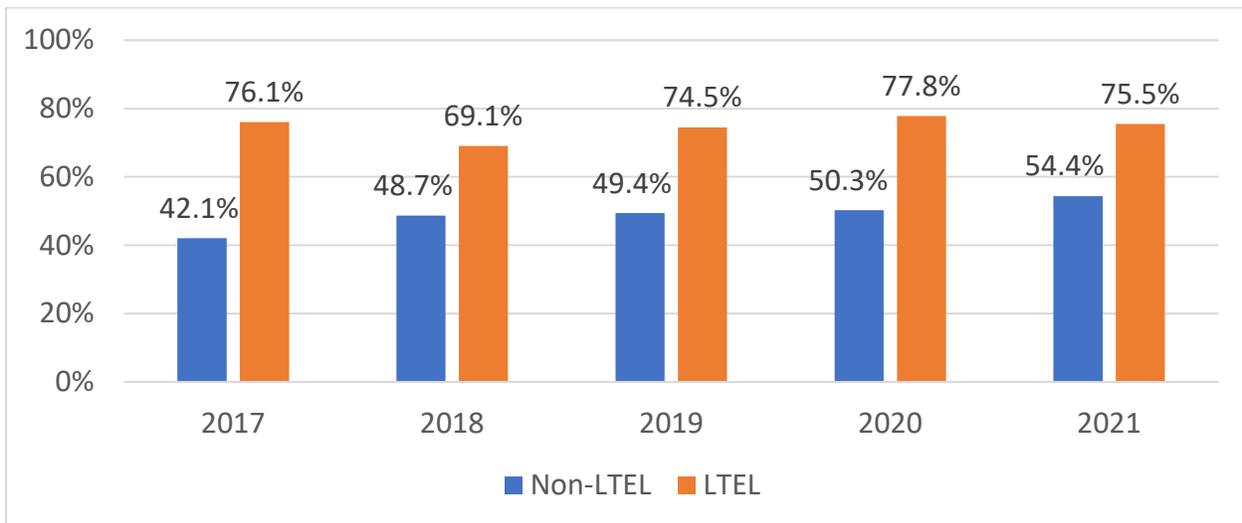
Table 7: Average Number of Years as English Learner, 2020–2021

Grade Level	Average Number of Years as EL
Grade 6	5.5
Grade 7	5.8
Grade 8	5.8
Grade 9	5.2
Grade 10	4.6
Grade 11	5.6
Grade 12	6.1

Figure 35 indicates that LTELs in grade 12 are more likely to graduate high school in four years than non-LTELs in grade 12. This is likely due to two factors:

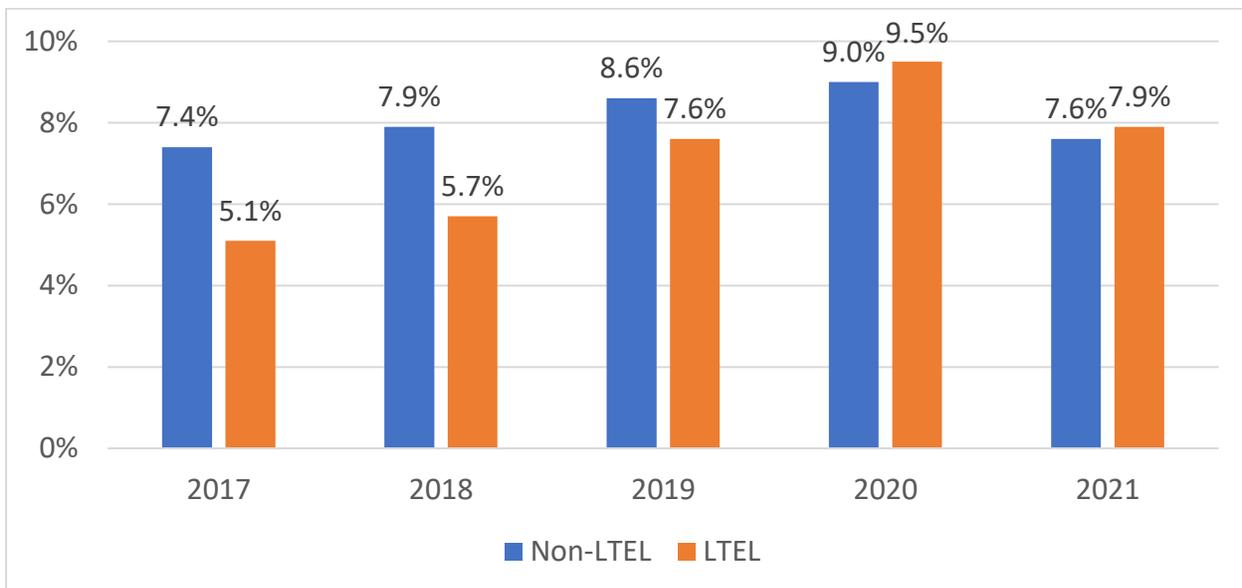
1. Students who newly arrive to the U.S. in high school are not likely to have been in the U.S. long enough to be classified as LTEL in grade 12.
2. Students that graduate early or exit prior to graduation cannot be classified as either LTEL or non-LTEL and are thus excluded from the analysis.

Figure 35: Graduation Rates by Long-Term English Learners Status, 2017–2021



In the last two years, LTELs and non-LTELs had similar rates of enrollment in postsecondary institutions within 6 months of graduation, as illustrated by Figure 36. Overall, 63.4% of all students in the 2019 graduating class in Maryland enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 6 months of graduation.

Figure 36: Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by Long-Term English Learners Status, 2017–2021



In summary, the data shared at the July Workgroup meeting revealed seven main takeaways:

1. The number and proportion of LTELs has risen substantially over the past five years.
2. LTELs were disproportionately in middle school grades, compared to other grades, in 2021.
3. LTELs are 4-5 times more likely to be identified for special education services than non-LTELs.
4. LTELs are most likely to score at proficiency level 3 on the English language proficiency assessment.
5. LTELs' achievement is lower than non-LTELs in ELA and math in most grades.
6. Figure 30 indicates that LTELs in grade 12 are more likely to graduate high school in four years than non-LTELs in grade 12. This is likely due to two factors:
 - a. LTELs in Grade 12 are not likely to be new arrivals to the U.S.
 - b. Students that graduate early or exit prior to graduation cannot be classified as either LTEL or non-LTEL.
7. LTELs and non-LTELs have similar rates of enrollment in postsecondary within 6 months of graduation.

Maryland's accountability system includes data on English learners and their non-English learner peers. The Maryland accountability system measures a variety of aspects of school performance for all students and reports the results to the public. Currently, the accountability system provides data on academic achievement and academic progress of ELs, reclassified ELs (REs), and non-English learners at elementary and middle schools. For high schools, academic achievement is reported for ELs, REs, and non-English learners. To better understand and accelerate academic outcomes for ELs, **Maryland should hold MSDE, local education agencies, and schools accountable for EL achievement at all stages of English language development by enhancing the reporting of data on English learners.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should expand public reporting to include progress and performance of ELs and reclassified ELs (REs) and comparisons to non-English learners.
- MSDE should provide transparent and robust reporting on Long-term English learners (LTELs).
- MSDE should ensure that the Maryland accountability system provides transparent and comprehensive data on EL achievement at all stages of English development compared to their peers.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Adoption of this recommendation would require one-time appropriation to MSDE to cover the costs associated with modifying current reporting and accountability systems to allow MSDE to report on ELs at all stages of English development. MSDE estimates these costs as \$1,000,000, which include contractual technical and business analyst support. MSDE should leverage existing federal funding to make the necessary accountability system modifications.

To fully implement this recommendation, MSDE will provide professional learning on the use of expanded public data reporting to better understand the instructional needs of ELs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Workgroup on English Learners anticipates the potential need for COMAR or statutory amendments to implement this recommendation. Additionally, an update to the Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan may be required.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

California

English learners are among thirteen student groups whose performance is measured on all state indicators: academic performance, high school graduation rate, suspension rate, chronic absenteeism, college/career readiness, and English learner progress. Current ELs and students reclassified in the last four years are included in the academic performance measure. Ever ELs are included in the chronic absenteeism and suspension rate indicators; current ELs and those who were ELs at any time during the last four or five years in high school are counted in the college/career readiness and graduation rate dashboard indicators. The English learner progress indicator measures EL status and change for one student group only, ELs.

The dashboard compares current ELs, reclassified ELs, and English only students for the mathematics and English language arts academic performance indicator but the comparison does not receive a performance designation in the accountability system.

Long-term English learners (LTEL) and those who are at risk for being long-term English learners (AR-LTEL) are defined and reported by state law. The California Department of Education determines the LTEL and AR-LTEL students and provides student-level files to LEAs.

Numerous data reports are publicly available, such as enrollment by EL status, AR-LTEL and LTEL by grade, ever-ELs by years as EL and reclassified status and grade, ELs by language and grade, and annual reclassification counts and rates. Most data reports such as graduation rate and absenteeism reports can be disaggregated by EL and non-EL.

Oregon

Researchers Dr. Karen Thompson, Oregon State University, and Dr. Ilana Umansky, University of Oregon, have collaborated with Dr. Josh Rew, the Oregon Department of Education, to propose the expansion of reporting and accountability for English learners. ELs belong to a unique “revolving door” category making it challenging to report outcomes. To address this issue, they recommend that states and districts report the following language classifications:

- Current ELs
- Former ELs
- Ever ELs (Current ELs + Former ELs)
- Never ELs

Oregon has begun reporting outcomes for all four categories; however, altering accountability to include these categories would require a reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). For accountability purposes, allowable student groups vary. States can include current ELs and recently reclassified students for academic achievement. Accountability for graduation may include current ELs and those who were ELs any time in high school. Other academic indicators, school quality, or student success indicators may only include ELs. In research, accountability, and reporting different frameworks are used to

understand opportunities and outcomes for ELs. The most typical framework is comparing current ELs to non-EL students where former ELs are part of the non-EL category, resulting in confusing or misleading inferences. Sometimes current ELs and monitored ELs are compared to other students; variances in how many years ELs are monitored leads to inconsistency of interpretations. Further, comparison of ever ELs and never ELs may mask performance of current ELs, especially in higher grades.

The reporting of each of the four groups: Current ELs, Former ELs, Ever ELs and Never ELs, could lead to more consistency and insights. Oregon's partial implementation of this expanded reporting increases understanding of how outcomes change across grade levels, of system performance, of where intervention is needed, and of reasons for patterns that emerge. The results can be used in accountability systems to identify and potentially include more schools.

Maryland Local Education Agencies Spotlights

Long-term English learners (LTELs) are English learners who have been enrolled in a U.S. school for more than six years and have not been reclassified as English proficient. As part of the Workgroup's meeting on accountability, local EL coordinators were invited to share about how their LEAs track and use data on LTELs and what challenges and successes they face in educating this population of students.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS)

In Anne Arundel County Public Schools, LTELs are identified using data in their student management system. The student management system has a specific EL data application that records students' entry date into U.S. schools. One challenge encountered is unreliable data especially when students come from another state. Data may also be inaccurate due to user entry error. Once the data is collected, it is shared with teachers, principals, and other leaders to provide a more comprehensive picture of the school's population. Sharing this data at the school level elevates the importance of tailoring instruction and professional development to meet the needs of LTELs. A closer examination of the data allows schools to assess who may be at risk of becoming an LTEL.

By examining this data at the county level, AACPS realized a need for a different approach for this population. It was apparent that something beyond the standard English language development (ELD) services was needed to push these students to proficiency in English and further academic success. The ELD office partnered with the AVID office to implement the AVID Excel program. AVID Excel is a branch of the AVID system that focuses on LTELs to help accelerate academic language acquisition and prepare them for advanced coursework. AACPS has trained 12 employees to implement this program and will offer it at three middle schools.

Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools)

Baltimore City Public Schools also identifies LTELs via data in their student management system. They face similar challenges as AACPS with data accuracy and availability. The ESOL Office in Baltimore City creates custom reports for schools to utilize and examine their LTEL data. One thread of their efforts to improve outcomes for LTELs includes encouraging schools to look at who is at risk of becoming an LTEL. This information can be used to inform professional development, but also allows schools to examine data at the granular level to make decisions about instructional grouping to better meet the needs of LTELs. By bringing this group of students to the forefront of data analysis, City Schools is better able to determine the right supports for these students and continue to work together with schools to accelerate language acquisition and academic success.

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS)

Frederick County Public Schools leverages the power of a software platform that integrates with their countywide student management system to access and graph LTEL data. The EL team uses this data to focus on LTELs who are close to reclassification (scoring between 3.0-3.8 overall composite proficiency level on the annual English language proficiency assessment). Teachers who work with this group of ELs are targeted and participate in professional learning opportunities to increase data literacy and build academic vocabulary and writing skills. Finally, the data revealed that academic discourse is an area needing improvement. To target this need, FCPS transitioned to more co-teaching for secondary ELs. This model for LTELs means they continue to be held to the same high academic standards and are provided the needed linguistic support.

Wicomico County Public Schools (WCPS)

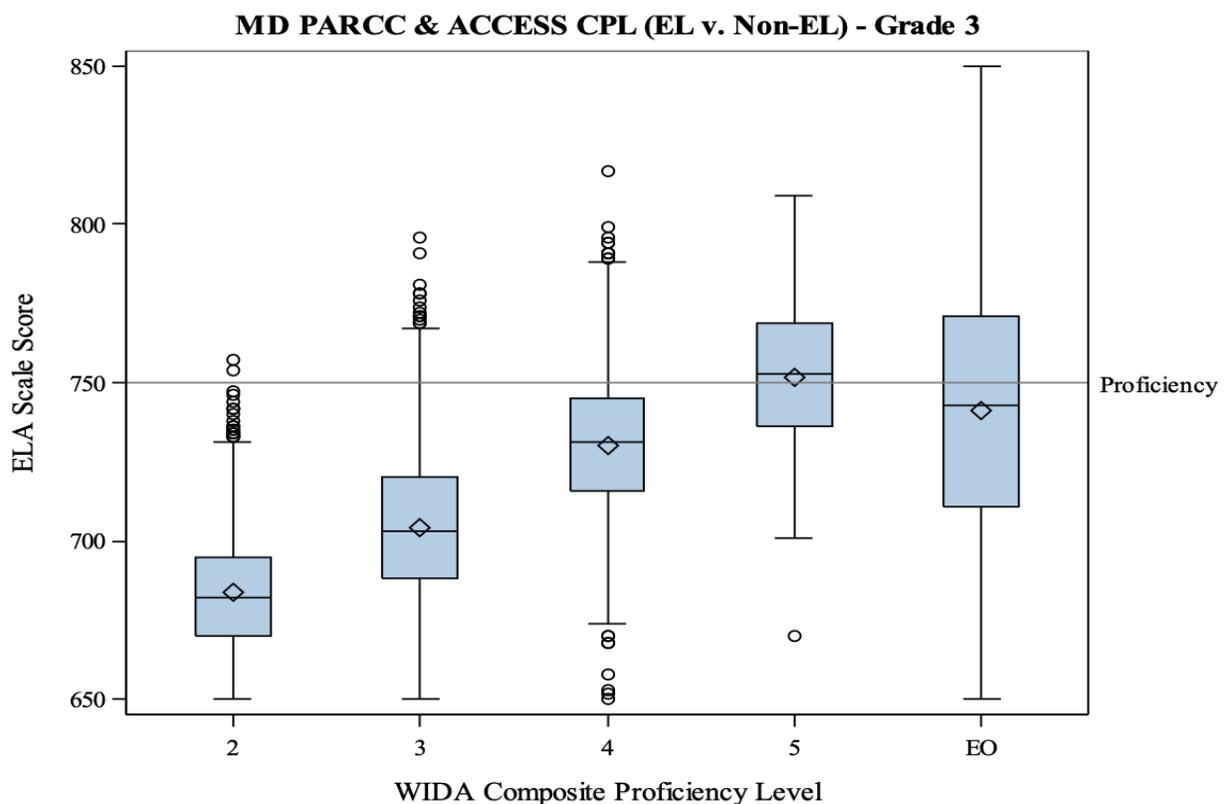
The ESOL office in Wicomico County Public schools utilizes a similar software program as FCPS to identify and track LTEL data. One success for sharing LTEL data they have had in using this program is the ease of accessing data. WCPS prioritizes the importance of schools having easy access and support to build on the strengths of students. Most LTELs are in secondary school, when the focus of instruction shifts from learning language to using language to learn content. Also, other EL subpopulations, whose language acquisition needs are more obvious, often overshadow the needs of LTELs. WCPS found that the key time to provide additional ELD support is during the upper elementary grades and aim to reclassify ELs prior to secondary school. WCPS is using LTEL data is to inform EL staffing and support positions to achieve these goals.

Recommendation 4c: New and Expanded Ways to Reclassify ELs

In Maryland, scores on the English language proficiency (ELP) assessments ACCESS for ELLs and the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are used to determine which English learners exit from English language development (ELD) programs. On ACCESS for ELLs, ELs must achieve an overall composite proficiency of 4.5 or above to exit the ELD program. On Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, English learners with significant cognitive disabilities must achieve an overall proficiency level of “P2” or higher to exit the ELD program. Students who exit ELD programs are identified as “reclassified English learners” (RELs), and their academic progress is monitored for two years at the school level. If a teacher or guardian suspects that the REL is demonstrating language development concerns, a student may re-enter the ELD program. Local education agencies (LEAs) convene an EL committee to determine if the student should re-enter the ELD program

The WIDA assessment team and Maryland’s English for Speakers of Other Languages coordinators and specialists reviewed a data comparison report to establish exit criteria. The report examined the English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs, along with grades 3-8 English language arts and mathematics assessments, and one grade level of the high school English and mathematics state assessments. As indicated in the example in Figure 37, the grade 3 ACCESS for ELLs scores were aligned to the English language arts assessment scores. In this example, students who scored 750 or higher on the English language arts assessment were in the range of 4 to 5 on ACCESS for ELLs and could exit ELD programs. The exit criteria of 4.5 was established based on the WIDA report’s analysis of multiple grade levels and assessments.

Figure 37: Proficiency Scores on WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Compared to PARCC ELA Scores



Currently, Maryland's English language proficiency (ELP) assessment is the only criterion used to determine reclassification of ELs as English proficient, a high-stakes decision. It does not allow for additional measures to be used to reclassify, which limits access to other coursework for ELs. The Workgroup heard from LEAs about how some ELs have the abilities to succeed in higher level coursework, but can't be reclassified due to the current policies. To ensure that ELs are reclassified at the optimal time and to better understand and support the state's English learners, **Maryland should revise its policy to provide multiple measures to reclassify ELs.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should design and implement multiple pathways for EL reclassification, based on stakeholder engagement with practitioners from Maryland LEAs.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and therefore does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but that MSDE can implement recommended policy options with available fiscal and human capital resources. Professional learning will be required for all LEAs on the new reclassification criterion.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Once a new reclassification framework has been developed, the Workgroup on English Learners anticipates the potential need for COMAR or statutory amendments to implement and formerly codify this recommendation. Additionally, an update to the Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan may be required.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

California

California has four criteria that LEAs must use in establishing their reclassification process:

- assessment of English language proficiency
- teacher evaluations
- parent consultation
- basic skills performance relative to English proficient students

California provides broad guidance; however, LEAs can individualize according to the needs of their community. To date, the State has standardized criterion 1: Students must achieve an overall score of 4 on the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California to be considered for reclassification. The Observation Protocol for Teachers of English Learners, which is currently under development, will inform Criteria 2 and 3.⁶⁸

Pennsylvania

With the goal of using multiple measures and involving teachers in decision-making about English learners, Pennsylvania established uniform procedures for reclassifying ELs as former ELs when they attain proficiency. The process uses the overall composite ACCESS for ELLs score; students are not eligible to be considered until they reach a level of 4.5. Teachers are trained to complete the state's standardized

⁶⁸ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rd/>

language use inventories for each eligible student prior to the release of ACCESS for ELLs scores. Rubric 1 evaluates interaction (listening, speaking, and reading), and Rubric 2 is focused on writing skills. Language use inventories must be completed by an ESL teacher and by a content teacher or a team of content teachers. The ACCESS for ELLs score and the language use inventory produce a single score. When the reclassification score is equal to or greater than 10.5, the state's threshold for reclassification, an EL is reclassified as a former EL. "The academic progress of former ELs must be actively monitored by district personnel for a period of two years after reclassification. Former ELs must be reported to the State as such for a period of four years after reclassification." Pennsylvania has established separate processes for students with disabilities who take the ACCESS for ELLs and for those who take the Alternative ACCESS for ELLs. To be considered for reclassification, students must meet state criteria, including having an IEP, ACCESS for ELLs scores that have not changed significantly for at least two years, documented evidence of ELD instruction, and recommendations by a school-based team.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Reclassification, Monitoring, and Redesignation of ELs. Pennsylvania Department of Education. <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/Curriculum/English%20As%20A%20Second%20Language/Pages/Reclassification-and-Exit-Criteria.aspx>

Recommendation 5: Teacher Preparation Policies to Support ELs

Teacher quality is the most important school-based factor impacting student learning. Enabling English learners to succeed requires their teachers to be properly prepared. As nearly all teachers in Maryland are likely to educate an English learner at some point in their careers, all teachers should be properly prepared to support EL students. This includes having the proper culturally responsive competencies and literacy competencies as well as having specific training that focuses on valuing the assets of multilingualism. For teachers that will focus more time on developing language skills for English Learners and for facilitating dual language programs, a bilingual certification should be available to enable teachers to develop their expertise in the area. Finally, as Maryland imports more than half of its teachers from other states, Maryland should make sure that it is expanding the opportunities for more teachers to join the profession and that are focused on ESOL and bilingual education.

Research has found that “it is beneficial for English learners if all general classroom teachers have some form of EL-specific training, regardless of whether they work directly with English learners or not. General classroom teachers help students gain proficiency in the essential areas of language proficiency: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.”⁷⁰ Additionally, “more attention must be given to helping in-service teachers develop a deep understanding of the language-specific aspects of their practice. They need to understand second language learning, have a basic knowledge of linguistic features common to their disciplines, have skills for determining the language demands of classroom activities, and know how to apply linguistic scaffolding.”⁷¹

Among researchers studying ELs in U.S. schools, it is a common adage that “great teaching for ELs is great teaching for all kids,” but the inverse is not always true. Some teaching strategies that work reasonably well with English-dominant students are inadequate for meeting ELs’ needs. The many skills and competencies instilled during general teacher training are not explicitly aligned with the specific needs of dual language learners. Many training programs require coursework on general language acquisition and literacy development; teachers can emerge from these programs with some knowledge of oral language development. Unfortunately, this information can be removed from practical experiences and never applied during practicums or internships.⁷²

This report details three ways to ensure that teachers are prepared to support ELs, discussed in Recommendations 5a, 5b, and 5c.

⁷⁰ Alyssa Rafa, Ben Erwin, Emily Brixey, Meghan McCann, and Zeke Perez Jr., “50 State Comparison: English Learner Policies,” last modified May 27, 2020, <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-english-learner-policies/>.

⁷¹ Tamara Lucas, Kathryn Strom, Meghan Bratkovich, and Jennifer Wnuk, “Inservice Preparation for Mainstream Teachers of English Language Learners: A Review of the Empirical Literature,” *The Educational Forum* 82, no. 2 (2018): 156-173.

⁷² Jennifer F. Samson and Brian A. Collins, “Preparing All Teachers to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners: Applying Research to Policy and Practice for Teacher Effectiveness,” *Center for American Progress* (2012), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535608.pdf>.

Recommendation 5a: All Teachers Prepared to Serve English Learners

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires teacher candidates enrolled in a Maryland educator preparation program to complete a year-long internship emphasizing placements working with diverse student populations. The regulations governing educator preparation are currently being amended to require preparation programs to align with national standards and newly developed Maryland candidate competencies. If these programs are implemented with fidelity, all teacher candidates will begin their careers with the knowledge and strategies to impact the experience of English learners. The following are examples of cultural responsiveness competencies and literacy competencies that would be required of all teacher candidates if the regulations are adopted.

Culturally Responsive Competencies

The teacher candidate shall:

- Build relationships with families and communities.
- Seek purposeful immersion experiences within groups different from their own.
- Communicate high expectations for students of all identities including gender, race and ethnicity, language, socioeconomics, and disability.
- Incorporate a variety of culturally responsive materials that represent and support learning for diverse populations of children and families.
- Differentiate instruction with consideration for cultural, linguistic, and academic diversity.

Literacy Competencies

The teacher candidate shall:

- Identify the component process involved in reading and writing.
- Apply that knowledge to understand the reading and writing processes of native English speakers and English learners.
- Identify the role of classroom literacy instruction in a multi-tiered system of supports and work with colleagues to provide effective interventions for students who struggle as readers and writers.
- Provide literacy instruction that reflects and is responsive to the diversity of the classroom community and promotes all students' cultural competence through inclusive and equitable literacy learning opportunities.

In addition to ensuring those who are being prepared have the skills necessary to serve English learners, the regulations that govern educator licensure are being amended to require professional learning for existing teachers in the area of English learners, Sheltered English, or bilingual education as a requirement to renew their Maryland certificate.

As described in the State of ELs in Maryland Schools section of this report, all teachers in Maryland are likely to educate an English learner at some point in their careers. General education teachers are usually the teachers of record who spend the most time with English learners in PreK-12 settings. Therefore, they must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to support English learners. To ensure all teachers are prepared to serve English learners, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Require that all educator preparation programs provide training in EL-related teacher competencies and provide EL student clinical opportunities for pre-service educators.**
- ii. **Expand dual certification offerings (English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] combined with another certification area).**
- iii. **Invest in training for all current educators focused on the assets of multilingualism and improving academic outcomes for ELs.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should promulgate amendments to the educator preparation program approval and certification regulations to be presented to the State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board that include the following:
 - EL-related teacher competencies for all approved teacher preparation programs, including understanding language development and working with linguistically and culturally diverse students and families.
 - A requirement that pre-service educators complete at least one clinical experience with English learners.
 - Renewal requirements for certified teachers to include coursework or experiences related to working with English learners.
- MSDE should collaborate with LEAs to provide research-based training to all educators – including current educators – focused on the assets of multilingualism and improving academic outcomes for ELs, including young English learners.
- MSDE should leverage federal and state funding to incentivize cohorts of teachers and school leaders to complete core courses that would prepare them to add an ESOL endorsement to an existing teaching certificate. MSDE should operationalize these incentives through grow your own programs and apprenticeships.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Providing opportunities for existing certified staff to receive additional certification can quickly increase the supply of eligible teachers for English learners. These programs differ from grow your own programs in that they are designed for existing, degreed, and certificated teachers. The cost of these programs varies depending upon the magnitude of the incentive and what is included in the incentive.⁷³ Incentive structures can include:

- Signing/commitment incentives wherein a teacher receives a one-time bonus upon committing to or receiving the intended credential.
- Direct support for any costs associated with obtaining the ESOL endorsement.
- Permanent salary increases for teachers who obtain and subsequently fill these hard-to-staff but essential positions.

⁷³ Amelia Harper, "Districts seek new ways to recruit bilingual educators," *K-12 Dive*, (January 2, 2018), <https://www.k12dive.com/news/districts-seek-new-ways-to-recruit-bilingual-educators/513844/>.

Each option would require new State investment to ensure long-term sustained funding. One-time payments and fees constitute the simplest of the options in terms of cost. The amount required can be fixed and associated directly with the number of participating staff. Direct support for costs of obtaining the ESOL endorsement would vary and can be a difficult set of costs to isolate. For example: these programs can include just course costs, or they can include course costs, enrollment fees, substitute coverage, and more.

Ultimately, salary increases may be the strongest incentive, albeit they are also the most expensive. For example, upon adoption of the new National Board Certification salary increases in the Blueprint, fee requests for National Board Certifications quadrupled between Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. Salary increases are, however, the most expensive option and present a compounding cost to the State the LEAs for which the State would likely need to identify or create a long-term revenue offset upon adoption.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

MSDE is currently engaging the State Board of Education as well as the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board to promulgate new regulations that will address supporting English learners. MSDE should also advocate for permanent grow your own funds to support the teacher supply pipeline needs, including the need to diversify the teaching profession. The creation of this fund would require the establishment of the fund in Maryland Statute as well as a mechanism to drive revenue to that fund, with instruction to the Office of the Comptroller to execute that revenue distribution accordingly. The provisions of the fund can mirror existing, non-lapsing special fund Statute.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

California

In California, the underlying belief is that English learners are the shared responsibility of all educators and that all educators in California have a role to play in ensuring the success of California's ELs.⁷⁴ This commitment is reflected in the state's teacher credentialing requirements. As noted on the state's teacher credentialing webpage, "The Single Subject Preliminary Credential teacher preparation program includes content for teaching English learners that authorizes the credential holder to provide instruction for English language development and specially designed academic instruction in English within the subject area and grade level authorization of the Single Subject Teaching Credential."⁷⁵

Florida

Florida requires that all teachers of the core subjects assigned to instruct ELLs shall complete 3 semester college/university credit hours. Any teacher assigned to instruct ELLs in other subject areas shall complete district in-service training totaling 60 district in-service points or 3 semester college/university credit hours. It is also required that each school administrator, school psychologist, and guidance counselor obtain sixty 60 points of district in-service training or 3 semester college/university credit hours in ESOL-approved courses.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ "English Learner Roadmap Principles Overview," *California Department of Education*, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm/principles.asp>.

⁷⁵ [https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/Single-Multiple-Subject-Credentials-\(CL-560C\)](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/Single-Multiple-Subject-Credentials-(CL-560C))

⁷⁶ Jane Govani and Gloria Artecona-Pelaez, *Technical Assistance for Teacher Preparation: Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners (ELL) in Florida* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, 2011), <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7502/urlt/0071749-mnellf.pdf>

New York

New York's Blueprint for English Language Learner Success emphasizes that "all teachers are teachers of English language learners (ELLs)/multilingual learners (MLLs) and need to plan accordingly by:

- Designing and delivering instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for all diverse learners, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEP).
- Providing integrated language and content instruction to support language development through language-focused scaffolds. Bilingual, English as a new language (ENL), and other content-area teachers must collaborate purposefully and consistently to promote academic achievement in all content areas.
- Utilizing materials and instructional resources that are linguistically age/grade appropriate and aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards.
- Collaborating with school support personnel and community-based human resources to address the multiple needs of ELLs/MLLs.
- Explore a professional learning continuum for general education and ELD teachers to understand how to integrate content and language development."⁷⁷

Texas

Texas created a Grow Your Own Grant program that competitively awards state funds to applicants designing solutions that address several challenges Texas currently faces in terms of recruiting and retaining teacher candidates to the field, particularly in rural and small school settings. The program is designed to support paraprofessionals seeking degree attainment and a teaching credential, provide teacher stipends for teaching education and training courses, and fund the implementation and growth of education and training programs.⁷⁸

Currently, the program provides \$8,000 for paraprofessionals who have a degree and are adding certification, or \$19,000 for paraprofessionals seeking a bachelor's degree and teaching credential. The program also funds stipends of \$5,500 for non-dual credit; and \$11,000 for dual credit candidate teachers who are teaching Principles of Education, Instructional Practices, and/or Practicum.

Implementation funding for the program can be spent on events, conferences, membership fees, travel costs, consumable supplies, instructional materials, and other resources for education and training coursework.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Blueprint for English Language Learner/ Multilingual Learner Success. The State Education Department and The University of the State of New York, Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages 2021. <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/nys-blueprint-for-ell-success.pdf>

⁷⁸ <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/educator-initiatives-and-performance/educator-initiatives/grow-your-own>

⁷⁹ <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/TCLAS-Guidance-Document.pdf>

Recommendation 5b: Maryland Bilingual Teacher Certification

Contrary to ESOL certification, bilingual certification is not available in Maryland, unlike 20 states where bilingual certification is available and/or required.⁸⁰ Teachers in dual language programs need to possess not only the knowledge necessary for their grade level/content area but must also understand the process of second language acquisition, have strong proficiency in the language they teach, and be able to differentiate instruction according to the language level and background knowledge of individual students.⁸¹

Teachers' having specific training and fluency in an English learner's native language was associated with greater achievement gains in non-native English speakers compared to their English-speaking counterparts. These specific training experiences and language skills were also more relevant to English learner outcomes than traditional markers of teaching efficacy (e.g., test scores, non-EL teaching experiences, etc.).⁸² Research has also found that rigorous and specialized teacher training for English learners that is rooted in best practices and aligned to strong state requirements in a larger policy framework for all teachers is associated with positive student academic outcomes and reports of teacher self-efficacy.⁸³

Maryland does not offer a bilingual education certification or endorsement, unlike twenty other states that do offer a bilingual education certification or endorsement. If high-quality dual language programs are to expand in the State, Maryland will need bilingual teachers with expertise in second language acquisition and pedagogy. To ensure an adequate supply of effective bilingual teachers, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Adopt a bilingual certification.**
- ii. **Ensure that unnecessary barriers do not limit multilingual candidates from becoming certified teachers in Maryland.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should promulgate regulations for bilingual certification to be presented to the State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board.
- MSDE should promote the expansion of approved dual certification programs (ESOL plus another certification area) in Maryland's colleges and universities.
- MSDE should eliminate barriers for multilingual teacher candidates in all content areas and identify alternatives that can be implemented while still maintaining rigorous requirements.

⁸⁰ Alysa Rafa, Ben Erwin, Emily Brixey, Meghan McCanne, Zeke Perez, Jr., "50-State Comparison: English Learner Policies", (May 27, 2020), <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-english-learner-policies/>.

⁸¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices, (2015), https://ncela.ed.gov/files/rcd/TO20_DualLanguageRpt_508.pdf.

⁸² Ben Master, Susanna Loeb, Camille Whitney, and James Wyckoff, Different Skills: Identifying Differentially Effective Teachers of English Language Learners, Calder Working Paper No. 68 (2012), <https://caldercenter.org/publications/different-skills-identifying-differentially-effective-teachers-english-language>.

⁸³ F. Lopez, L. Santibañez, "Teacher Preparation for Emergent Bilingual Students: Implications of Evidence for Policy," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 26, no. 36 (2018).

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and therefore does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but that MSDE can implement recommended policy options with available fiscal and human capital resources. One proposed MSDE action is an exception for this recommendation.

Implementing an incentive structure that would encourage institutions of higher education (IHE) to expand and adopt dual certification programs would require the establishment of a one-time revenue source. Current one-time federal COVID-related resources are planned and/or awarded so the State would need to appropriate the one-time resources in its annual budget. MSDE anticipates that the cost for this program would be \$150,000 per IHE. MSDE derived this cost estimate from its recently implemented Maryland Leads program, in which several IHEs demonstrated the costs required for adopting and implementing various new programs. On average, IHEs require up-front position costs to craft and create the programs and subsequently submit the programs for approval. These costs also include the indirect cost rate IHEs charge for conducting grant-funded work.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Implementation of this recommendation will require amendments to COMAR regulations, in addition to other potential policy changes as well as coordination with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, to codify and enable educator preparation programs to offer Bilingual Certifications for Maryland educators.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

California

In California, Assembly Bill 1871, signed by the governor on September 30, 2008, provides for the issuance of bilingual authorizations rather than certificates and expanded the options available to meet the requirements for the Bilingual Authorization.⁸⁴

New York

New York offers a Bilingual Education Extension to a base certificate authorizing the holder to teach bilingual education. The educator must previously hold the appropriate base certificate. Candidates may obtain an initial bilingual extension through either a State-approved teacher preparation program or the individual evaluation pathway.⁸⁵

Texas

Texas offers both initial Bilingual certification and English as a Second Language (ESL) certification. To obtain bilingual education certification, educators must already hold a Texas teaching certificate and could then enroll in an alternative certification program. The LEA may also provide temporary certification through an Emergency Permit, which is non-renewable and valid for one year. All teachers in a Bilingual Education Program (one-way and two-way) must be certified in bilingual education.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/bilingual-authorizations-cl-628b>

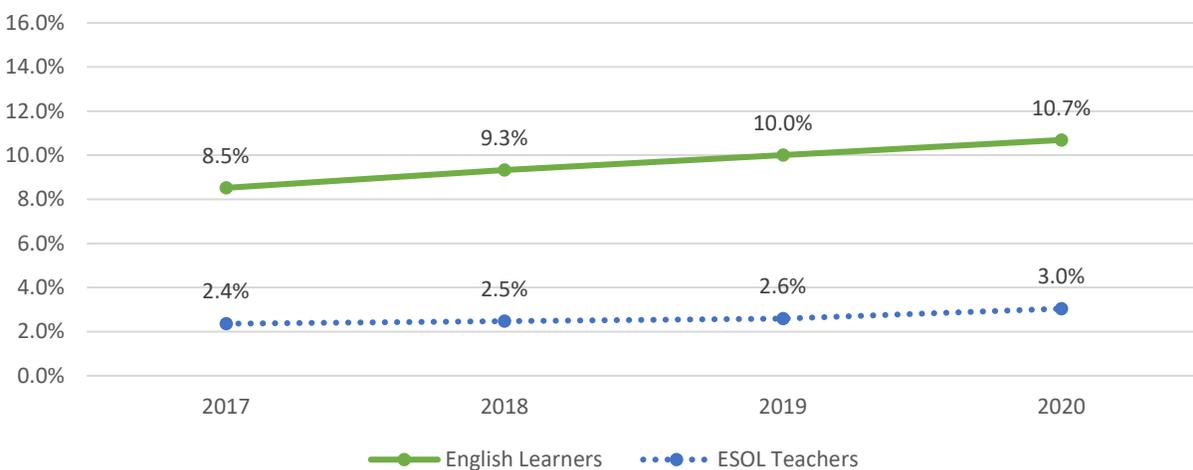
⁸⁵ <https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/typesofcerts/extbil.html>

⁸⁶ <https://tea-texas.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/8fdeed6e29b741ba8bac151ac023186d>

Recommendation 5c: Teacher Pipeline

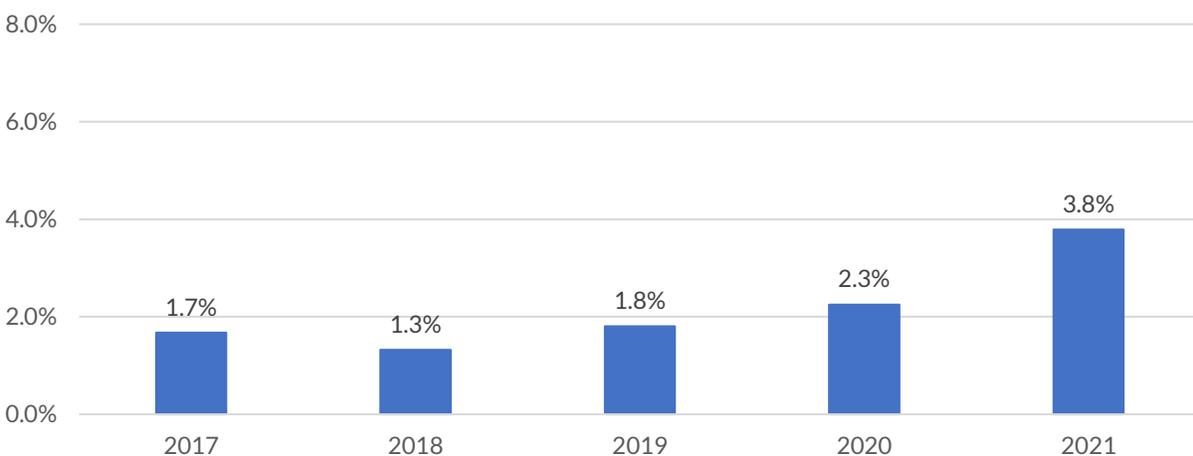
Maryland's English learners require a competent and talented workforce trained in the most effective practices and pedagogy to support the achievement of this rapidly increasing population. Currently, the growth in the share of Maryland students who are ELs has outpaced the number of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers formally trained and credentialed to work with ELs, as seen in Figure 38. The gap between the share of Maryland students who are English learners and Maryland educators who are credentialed in ESOL has grown each of the last five years to a 7.7 percentage-point gap in 2020.

Figure 38: Share of Maryland Educators Credentialed as ESOL Teachers and Share of Maryland Students who are English Learners, 2017–2020



Some Maryland LEAs have compensated for this shortfall by conditionally certifying teachers in ESOL to serve in schools while educators fulfill their full certification requirements. The share of ESOL teachers who are conditionally certified has grown steadily since 2018, reaching a peak of 3.8 percent in 2021, as seen in Figure 39.

Figure 39: Share of Maryland ESOL Teachers with Conditional Certification, 2017–2021



MSDE is in the process of updating the teacher preparation and certification regulations to align with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Under the new regulations, if adopted, proposed pathways to initial certification would be changed as follows for all teacher certifications, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL):

- Elimination of the “transcript analysis” pathway for teaching areas.
- Elimination of the “experienced professional” pathway (The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires all teacher candidates from other states/countries to pass a performance assessment).
- Establishment of the nonpublic teacher pathway based on demonstration of effective teaching experience in Maryland-approved nonpublic schools.
- Establishment of a pathway for those who hold an out-of-state/out-of-country certificate and have passed Maryland certification assessments.
- Establishment of an in-district alternative preparation pathway.

The proposed regulations also establish certification renewal requirements in which all teachers, not just ESOL teachers, must develop an Individual Professional Development Plan. Required pedagogy related to their certification would also include English learner strategies and culturally responsive teaching or diversity in education.

Maryland is a teacher import state, meaning that it regularly hires at least half of its teachers from out of state. This is true for the teacher population as a whole, as well as specifically for ESOL teachers. Of the 350 approved traditional preparation programs in Maryland, there are only nine approved ESOL programs. These programs are located in Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Carroll, Prince George's, and Wicomico Counties. Table 8 provides the historical number of program completers in ESOL and the projected number of completers in 2021 – 2022.

Table 8: ESOL Program Completers, 2016–2022

# of Program Completers in ESOL (PreK-12)	County	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	(Projected) ⁸⁷ 2021-2022
Goucher College	Baltimore	Started in 2018		0	0	0	1
McDaniel College	Carroll	8	6	8	10	6	6
Notre Dame of Maryland University	Baltimore City	16	20	26	28	11	38
Salisbury University	Wicomico	2	0	1	2	3	3
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	Baltimore	11	15	19	9	14	14
University of Maryland, College Park	Prince George's	12	29	32	39	36	40
Totals		49	70	86	88	70	102

⁸⁷ The projected number of completers in 2021 – 2022 are self-projected by the institutions of higher education.

In addition to the programs traditionally located in institution of higher education, alternative teacher preparation programs are also expanding the number of ESOL teachers in the classroom. Two alternative teacher preparation programs, Teach for America/Baltimore City and Prince George's County Resident Teacher program, have recently been approved and will help to develop ESOL resident teachers. Baltimore City's Teach for America had 23 resident teachers during the 2020-2021 school year and projects 14 additional candidates for 2021-2022. Prince George's County's program was recently approved in July 2021 and is planning to have its first residency cohort next school year.

There is a growing body of rigorous empirical evidence linking higher academic performance with students' access to teachers with bilingual training and certified in math, reading, and English proficiency.^{88, 89} In a 50-state comparison of EL policies, the Education Commission of the States found that "English learners perform best when teachers are required to have state certification to teach English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), bilingual or other type."⁹⁰ More prescriptive and stringent state requirements for bilingual certification were also shown to be more related to higher academic achievement for multilingual students compared to states that required all teachers to have only some cursory knowledge of multilingual approaches.⁹¹

Maryland's nine approved ESOL teacher preparation programs and two approved alternative teacher preparation programs will not meet the need for ESOL and bilingual teachers in the State, given the population's rapidly increasing size. To ensure that all ELs have the benefit of a certified ESOL and bilingual teacher, **Maryland should:**

- i. **Expand grow your own programs and other research-based efforts to recruit and train ESOL and bilingual educators.**
- ii. **Support LEAs in increasing the number of conditionally certified ESOL teachers who earn certification.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- Maryland should establish permanent funding opportunities to expand traditional pathways, community-focused pipeline programs, and approved alternative preparation programs leading to ESOL and bilingual certification.
- MSDE should support local education agency implementation of degree-based registered apprenticeship programs, which make federal funds available to develop and increase the supply of pre-service ESOL and bilingual teacher programs through local education agencies' grow your own programs and targeted postsecondary scholarships.
- MSDE should require LEAs, as part of their Blueprint implementation plans, to develop targeted retention and growth plans through their teacher induction program to increase the number of conditionally certified ESOL teachers who earn initial certification.

⁸⁸ Veronica Ruiz de Castilla, Teacher Certification and Academic Growth Among English Learner students in the Houston Independent School District (REL 2018-284): U.S. Department of Education, IES, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, REL Southwest, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/REL_2018284.pdf.

⁸⁹ Rachel Garrett, Elisabeth Davis, and Ryan Eisner, Student and school characteristics associated with academic performance and English language proficiency among English learner students in grades 3–8 in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (REL 2019–003), : U.S. Department of Education, IES, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, REL Midwest, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/REL_2019003.pdf.

⁹⁰ Alyssa Rafa, Ben Erwin, Emily Brixey, Meghan McCann, and Zeke Perez Jr., "50 State Comparison: English Learner Policies," last modified May 27, 2020, <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-english-learner-policies/>.

⁹¹ Francesca Lopez, Martin Scanlan, and Becky Gundrum, "Preparing Teachers of English Language Learners: Empirical Evidence and Policy Implications", Education Policy Analysis Archives 21, no. 20 (March 2013), <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v21n20.2013>.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Grow your own (GYO) staff programs have rapidly proliferated throughout the United States due in part to a national policy focus on teacher vacancies following the COVID-19 pandemic. GYO is a broad term that refers collectively to multiple pathways for the development of teachers and other instructional staff and school leadership positions out of currently enrolled high school students or currently employed staff members. One commonality between these programs is the involvement of an institution of higher education and the attainment and issuance of some kind of credential, which allows an individual to serve in an instructional or leadership capacity in a school. GYO programs require startup costs and, in many cases, dedicated annual funding to cover tuition costs, residency salaries, or apprenticeship salaries for participants.

Adoption of these policy recommendations will carry a cost and Workgroup recommends the State establish a fund that MSDE can seed and sustain GYO programs that yield certified ESOL and bilingual educators. The fund should be self-sustaining and MSDE should have the annual amount appropriated to the Department to carry out the GYO programs recommended herein. MSDE recommends conducting a study of local education staff to determine the potential participation rate of these GYO programs and ascertain a proper estimate of the annual appropriation necessary to seed and sustain the adoption of this recommendation.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Maryland should advocate for the statutory establishment of a permanent self-sustaining fund to support annual GYO program design, adoption, and implementation. MSDE would administer this fund. Each year, the State should appropriate spending authority to MSDE to allow MSDE to distribute money from the permanent GYO fund to eligible awardees for programs and pipelines aligned to this recommendation.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

New York

To address the growing ESOL and bilingual teacher needs, the New York State Education Department established 18 Clinically Rich Intensive Teacher Institutes (CR-ITI) at institutions of higher education. The CR-ITI programs' main initiative is to provide English Language Learners (ELLs) and Multilingual Learners with highly qualified and certified teachers. As of December 2019, 580 people completed coursework toward Bilingual Education or ESOL certification.⁹²

San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD)

In Texas, SAISD partners with the University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) for a paid teacher residency program. The students from UTSA spend a full year in a school as clinical teachers (CTs), guided by mentor teachers in lesson planning, delivery, reflection, and feedback. During the residency program, CTs take clinically embedded teacher preparation courses and commit to a yearlong clinical teaching residency. To support the preservice teachers, SAISD offers monthly seminars for clinical mentor teachers, a residency Professional Learning Community (PLC) with seminars, and professional learning workshops. In culmination, the clinical teachers are interviewed for potential hiring as dual language teachers in SAISD. Additionally, SAISD has been awarded a \$2.5 million-dollar national professional development grant entitled, Project SELFIES (Secondary English Learners and Families), by the United States Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition. The project will span five years and aims to prepare

⁹² <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/clinically-rich-intensive-teacher-institute-cr-iti>

secondary in-service teachers of emergent bilingual students to add the ESL or Bilingual Education supplementary certification endorsement.⁹³

Texas

Texas passed Senate Bill 560 (2021) which requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop a strategic plan for Emergent Bilinguals in coordination with Texas' Higher Education and Workforce Commissions to increase the number of bilingual certified teachers and increase the effective implementation of dual language one-way and two-way programs.⁹⁴

Washington

Washington state is committed to creating a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce who are reflective of the global society. To make this happen Washington state adopted Spanish Language Arts standards, created communication and professional learning tools, expanded their teacher preparation programs, and developed program evaluation criteria. Monthly statewide professional learning communities support tribal, heritage, and dual language program development. Washington's initiatives also include a bilingual teaching fellows program that enables paraeducators to become teachers in a variety of languages and pre-service teacher residency programs with tuition assistance, paid internships, and extensive classroom preparation.⁹⁵

⁹³ Dr. Olivia Hernandez. "Maryland English Learner Work Group: San Antonio ISD". Presentation to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Workgroup on English Learners, Online, November 9, 2021, <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Documents/11092021/MarylandELWorkgroup-SAISD110921.pdf>

⁹⁴ Senate Bill Number 560, Relating to developing a strategic plan for the improvement and expansion of high-quality bilingual education, <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/pdf/SB00560F.pdf>

⁹⁵ Dr. Kristin Percy Calaff, Washington State's P-12 Dual Language Initiative, Presentation to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Workgroup on English Learners, Online, October 13, 2021, <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Documents/10132021/WA-DL-Initiative-10.13.21.pdf>

Recommendation 6: Identification and Support for Young English Learners

Maryland does not have a formal procedure for identifying young English learners. Because these very young children are still actively developing their home language(s) along with an additional language, early childhood practitioners often describe them as dual language learners (DLLs). Identification of Maryland students as English learners begins in kindergarten; however, MSDE is prioritizing working with young English learners and developed a partnership with WIDA Early Years. The partnership with WIDA Early Years focuses on language development of multilingual children through connection of early learning and language standards, equitable access to early childhood education services and resources, an asset-based approach to language instruction, family engagement and the two-generational approach, and professional development.

The Migration Policy Institute has developed a framework of the most critical elements that would ideally be included in standardized, comprehensive DLL identification:

- Identifying young children who have exposure to a language other than English in their home environment.
- Collecting comprehensive information about DLLs' language environment and experiences
- Obtaining in-depth information about DLLs' individual language and preliteracy skills in English and in their home languages.
- Making these data and other relevant information accessible to programs and policymakers across early childhood and K-12 systems.⁹⁶

For DLL identification to work, there needs to be a comprehensive statewide early childhood data system aligned with K-12 systems to relay information to receiving institutions or programs. An extensive professional development plan on DLL assessment, instructional needs, and family engagement needs to be created and implemented. Additionally, effective, culturally relevant, and age-appropriate assessments and tools for use with children from ages 0-5 need to be developed.

Policy will drive what happens in the classroom; however, the classroom teacher needs to be prepared to support dual language learners. This happens when instruction is designed to help students master early learning concepts and content to develop English language skills while supporting their home language development. Through this dual language approach, school systems will promote equity, but districts and teachers need to rethink "best practices" for all. What works for one group of students may not be appropriate for DLLs. With underserved populations, teachers need to be trained regarding biases and language ideologies that may impact their practice. Teachers will need support and monitoring to be prepared to adapt their instructional practices to meet the language development needs of DLLs. Ongoing assessment and progress-monitoring as well as dialogue with families will be vital in providing equitable instruction for students.

⁹⁶ Maki Park and Delia Pompa, Ending the Invisibility of Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Systems: A Framework for DLL Identification (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2021), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/framework-dual-language-learner-identification>.

According to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASSEM), “Scientific evidence clearly points to a universal, underlying capacity to learn two languages as easily as one. Children who are dual language learners have an impressive capacity to manage their two languages when communicating with others.... evidence also points to cognitive advantages, such as the ability to plan, regulate their behavior, and think flexibly for children and adults who are competent in two languages.”⁹⁷ This highlights the need for programs, resources, training, and research to further the data to drive change.

Some states have implemented programs to support DLLs, but many others have not yet developed a plan for DLL screening and instruction. Those rules for screening procedures should:

- Be age and developmentally appropriate.
- Be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the children being screened.
- Include one or more observations using culturally and linguistically appropriate tools.
- Use multiple measures and methods (e.g., home language assessments; verbal and nonverbal procedures; and various activities, settings, and personal interactions).
- Involve families by seeking information and insight to help guide the screening process without involving them in the formal assessment or interpretation of results.
- Involve staff who are knowledgeable about preschool education, child development, and first and second-language acquisition.

It is important to remember that screening procedures may be modified to accommodate the special needs of students with IEPs.

Once screening protocols are in place, language instruction programs models need to be implemented. Finally, preschool teachers providing native language/ESL instruction must have the appropriate endorsement or approval to be effective supports for DLL students.

In summary, it is essential and beneficial to dual language learners for schools to conduct early screenings with in-depth information, to engage in authentic dialogue with family members, to collect and share data with early childhood educators and those in the K-12 systems, to provide professional development and training related to linguistic and cultural diversity for the early childhood workforce, and to develop culturally relevant and age-appropriate assessments for use with the birth-to-age-five continuum.

Research has found that “accurately identifying DLLs in their early childhood years (ages 0 to 5) in a way that informs early childhood education and care systems and programs of their language experiences, environments, and learning needs is a critical step toward ensuring that these young children and their families receive equitable and relevant early childhood services.”⁹⁸ Determining the linguistic background of a DLL lays the foundation for designing and implementing high-quality instruction placing students on a trajectory for academic success. It can also help address the current challenge of under-referrals of DLLs for early interventions and special education.”⁹⁹ Additionally, “during the first five years of life, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers require developmental screening, observation, and ongoing assessment in both languages

⁹⁷ National Academies Press, Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English, Children's Language Development. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/24677/toolkit/childrens-language-development.html>.

⁹⁸ Melissa Lazarin, Maki Park, *Taking Stock of Dual Language Learner Identification and Strengthening Procedures and Policies*, (Migration Policy Institute:2021).

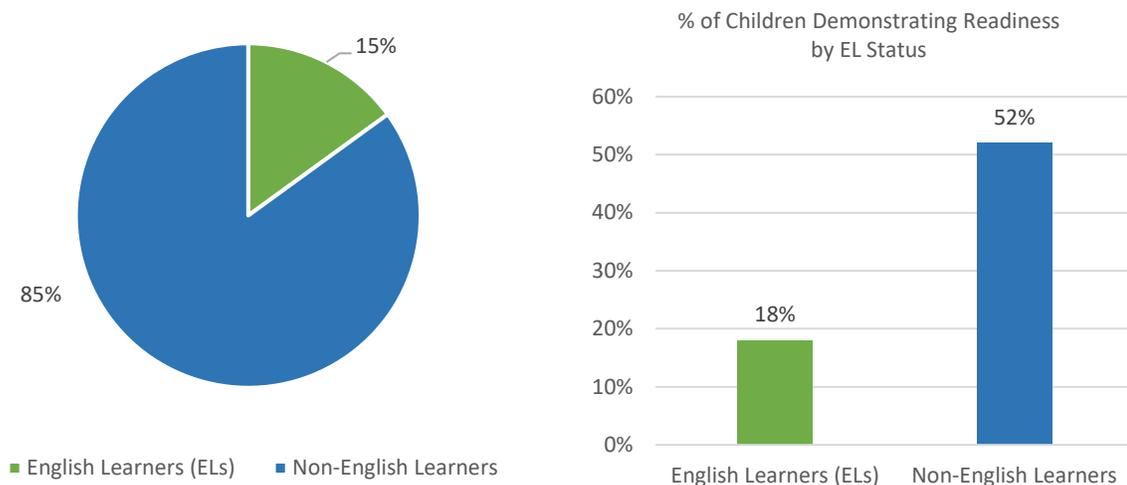
⁹⁹ Linda M. Espinosa, “Perspectives on Assessment of DLLs Development & Learning, PreK-Third Grade”, National Research Summit on the Early Care and Education of Dual Language Learners (2014), <https://www.cal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/NRSECDLL2014-Espinosa.pdf>.

to support planning for individualized interactions and activities that will support their optimal development.”¹⁰⁰

Data Spotlight: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) measures the knowledge, skills, and behaviors at a student's entry to kindergarten. Maryland began administering the KRA in 2014. In 2019, it was administered to every kindergartner in 18 local education agencies (LEAs) and to a sample of kindergarten students in the 6 remaining LEAs. EL performance data on the KRA in the 2019-2020 school year shows that only 18% of ELs are considered “ready” for kindergarten compared to 52% of children who are not identified as English learners.

Figure 40: Kindergarten Readiness by EL Status



When reviewing these data, it is important to note that the KRA assessment is administered only in English. Kindergarten teachers are provided guidance on administering the KRA to English learners through a secure testing guide that was developed by MSDE in collaboration with Johns Hopkins School of Education, Ready for Kindergarten Ohio, Ready for Kindergarten Maryland, and WestEd. Beginning in 2022-23, the KRA results will be disaggregated by multiple variables in order to better understand sub-populations of English learners in need of support. MSDE is currently working on the development of the KRA in Spanish that is scheduled to be piloted in the 2023-24 administration and then will be available for use beginning with the 2024-25 administration.

¹⁰⁰ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2017), 423.

Maryland has no policy or procedure in place for identifying and serving English learners enrolled in public PreK programs. To ensure early childhood education and care programs are responsive to the experiences and needs of English learners, **Maryland should adopt:**

- i. **A standardized, comprehensive method for identifying, collecting and sharing information about young English learners that is required across all LEAs and child care providers.**
- ii. **A statewide plan for supporting young English learners in PreK and early childhood settings that provides guidance, service models, and strategies for meeting their instructional needs and family engagement.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should develop and implement regulatory pathways for identification of young English learners.
- MSDE should identify and use developmental screening (conducted in the child's home language) to get a baseline of young English learners' cognitive development, social and emotional skills, and language development.
- MSDE should ensure that the KRA and Early Learning Assessment (ELA) are administered in Spanish. MSDE should also explore whether Maryland EXCELS rubrics, support, and EXCELS rating systems can be offered in Spanish.
- MSDE should amend statute to enable English learner students, students experiencing homelessness, and students with disabilities to count towards PreK Tier 1 Funding.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation includes the screening of and identification of students for whom the State would subsequently provide ELD services. Consequently, adoption of this recommendation would require additional spending in the MSDE Aid to Education budget unit to ensure the Department could administer the funding necessary for those respective ELD services to the identified children. MSDE may be able to absorb these costs within existing appropriation, but MSDE would need to better ascertain the likely scope of related costs prior to making that determination. The data required to estimate service costs are unavailable until and unless either 1) MSDE completes a data collection effort to estimate the number of potentially eligible children; or 2) the proposed regulatory change in this policy recommendation takes effect and MSDE identifies, and therefore has, the data associated with English learner counts. Additionally, MSDE should advocate that any appropriation necessary be mandated in statute in order to ensure sufficient available funding for ELD services each fiscal year.

In addition, any Statutory change associated with the inclusion of English learners, students experiencing homelessness, and students with disabilities in PreK Tier I formula eligibility would result in the State needing to provide the additional appropriation required by formula mandate for those newly eligible students.

To fully implement this recommendation, training will be required for early childhood and childcare providers on the state developmental screening tool.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Workgroup on English Learners anticipates the potential need for COMAR or statutory amendments to implement this recommendation. Additionally, an update to the Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan may be required.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

California

The California Department of Education (CDE) seeks to elevate the role of high-quality, inclusive, and multilingual preschool, strong early intervention services, and P-3 alignment to ensure the future of its students. Specifically, the CDE's P-3 alignment effort is designed to bring together stakeholders across systems to identify, develop and implement policy and practice solutions focused on ensuring developmentally informed, rigorous, and joyful learning experiences are available to all children across the preschool and early years. This means that DLLs are given the opportunity to learn in an inclusive, integrated environment that meets their individual needs.¹⁰¹

Illinois

Illinois is unique in requiring all school districts to identify DLLs ages 3 to 5 by their first day attending a preschool program. In programs that serve at least 20 DLLs who speak the same home language, districts are required to provide programming that supports English language development, and home language development in some instances.¹⁰²

New Jersey

In New Jersey, if the home language survey indicates the student's primary language is other than English, it should be followed up with an individual conversation between the teacher and the primary caregivers to develop a better understanding of the child's home language environment; and to help families understand the school district's linguistic, social-emotional, and academic goals for the children. The home language survey and information gleaned from family conversations should also be used by preschool teachers to inform instruction that addresses the linguistic needs of each child.¹⁰³

New York

The New York State Education Department requires that any organization or local school district that operates a state-funded preschool program to report on whether they have a process for identifying DLLs. To support a comprehensive collection of information, the New York State Department of Education developed the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile Protocol, which collects information about these learners' language experiences and environments.¹⁰⁴

Texas

Recognizing the benefits of dual language, Texas has implemented a pilot program, which began during the 2021–2022 school year and is implemented at 15 campuses statewide. The goals of the pilot are three-fold, to increase the effective implementation of dual language immersion (DLI), to expand DLI programs in PreK-5 to increase the student outcomes for DLI.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/p3/>

¹⁰² Melissa Lazarin, Maki Park, *Taking Stock of Dual Language Learner Identification and Strengthening Procedures and Policies*, (MPI :2021).

¹⁰³ <https://www.nj.gov/education/ece/psguide/HomeLanguageSurvey.htm>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/emergent-multilingual-learners-prekindergarten-programs>

Washington

Washington is providing equitable access to strong foundations by amplifying and building on inclusive, asset-based policies and practices through universal access to PreK, instituting a new K-3 literacy focus, and providing universal access to dual language learning by elementary school. Washington schools that receive state funding for full-day kindergarten are required experiences in a world language other than English.

Maryland Local Education Agency Spotlight

Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools)

Baltimore City Public Schools has an established practice to provide English language development (ELD) services to PreK English learners. After being identified through their home language survey, PreK English learners are screened using the standardized assessment tool PreLAS to determine their English proficiency level. ELD services, such as co-teaching and specialized instruction during content instruction, are customized according to student proficiency levels and school instructional programming. Including the EL PreK population in their student counts allows City Schools to determine and allocate staff that provide ELD instruction.

Recommendation 7: Support for Students With Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) comprise a relatively small proportion of recently arrived English learners in the United States, comprising about 10 to 20 percent of the population.¹⁰⁵ “However, these students often represent the most challenging of our ELLs because of their limited first-language literacy skills, frequent gaps in academic knowledge and skills, and, sometimes, critical social and emotional needs.”¹⁰⁶ Maryland welcomes a diverse group of immigrants and refugees that includes SLIFE. These families typically place great importance on education; however, civil unrest, refugee experiences, economic circumstances, and other variables are among the factors that interrupt schooling for these students. SLIFE undergo a unique and extensive process of adjustment to the school setting in the United States that may impact their ability to show what they know in formalized educational settings.

Maryland collects enrollment data on students who have missed six months or more of formal schooling prior to enrollment in a U.S. school above the age of 7. In school year 2020-2021, about 5% of Maryland's secondary level English learners were SLIFE. As shown in Table 9, SLIFE are largely enrolled in a handful of LEAs, with the largest number enrolled in Prince George's County.

Table 9: Number of Secondary SLIFE by Local Education Agency, 2020–2021

Local Education Agency	Number of SLIFE
Prince George's	684
Montgomery	384
Baltimore City	268
Baltimore County	165
Anne Arundel	129
Frederick	108
Howard	50
Talbot	43
Charles	26
Caroline	25
Wicomico	20
Washington	10
Cecil, Garrett, Harford, St. Mary's, Worcester	0 < N < 10

¹⁰⁵ Advocates for Children of New York, *Students with Interrupted Formal Education: A Challenge for New York City Public Schools* (New York: 2010); and J. Ruiz-de-Velasco and M. Fix, *Overlooked and Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Brenda Custodio and Judith B. O'Loughlin, “Students with Interrupted Formal Education, Understanding Who They Are”, *American Educator*, Spring 2020, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1249795.pdf>.

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) face unique challenges and are likely to need additional instruction and social-emotional support as they strive to meet success in classrooms with increasingly complex academic language while simultaneously building their English proficiency. **Maryland should implement specialized programs and customized supports for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) that ensure that all students have equal access and opportunities for success.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- MSDE should strengthen the definition of students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and create tools to identify them so that LEAs can meet their needs.
- MSDE should develop a toolkit for LEAs with guidance and best practices for programming, instruction, and assessment for SLIFE.
- MSDE should collaborate with community partners and LEAs to implement specialized programs and support for SLIFE.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy recommendation is, on average, a cost-neutral option and therefore does not include financial and professional learning resource implications. This does not mean the policy has no cost, but MSDE implement recommended policy options with available fiscal and human capital resources. However, adoption of the recommendation to strengthen the definition of students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and development of resources for LEAs is essential for additional recommendations in this report related to linking State aid formula resources to students with limited or interrupted formal education. This report provides a cost implication for the State aid portion of this recommendation within Recommendation Nine (“Funding Allocations and Spending Decisions that Support Success for English Learners”).

Implementation of this recommendation will require statewide rollout and professional learning on resources developed for SLIFE.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In the near-term, this recommendation may require formalizing the definition of “students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)” in COMAR regulations or in statute.

Recommendation Nine suggests modification of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future funding formula to provide additional funding for students with limited or interrupted formal education. Adoption of this recommendation’s corresponding funding formula revision would require Statutory change. Those changes are addressed in the ‘Policy Implications’ section of Recommendation Nine.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has developed a state definition of students with inconsistent/interrupted formal education (SIFE) and resources for LEAs. A webpage includes pre-screening and assessment tools for the identification and placement of SIFE, guidance on programming and curriculum, as well as other resources, including Supporting Multilingual Students with Inconsistent/Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE): A Practical Approach for Rhode Island Educators.¹⁰⁷

To expand state capacity, RIDE hired five ambassadors to connect with districts, create toolkits, and serve as spokespersons and policy advisors. The publication, Supporting Multilingual Students with Inconsistent/Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE): A Practical Approach for Rhode Island Educators, was developed by one of the ambassadors. This guide provides actionable steps for district administrators and educators on practice and procedures to meet the social, emotional, linguistic, and academic needs of SIFEs. The “L” that is used elsewhere in the country for “limited” is removed in the term to describe this student group to align with the asset-based approach. In the absence of a federal definition, the guide defined SIFEs as having the following characteristics:

- Being over-age for their grade-level placement due to their limited or interrupted formal schooling.
- Having needs that traditional ESL and bilingual programs may not be able to meet.
- Having low or sometimes no literacy in their first language and/or in English and have little academic content-area knowledge.
- Functioning two or more years below expected grade level both in native language literacy and numeracy compared to peers.
- Needing extra supports and approaches that will help them catch up with their peers.
- Being at risk for dropping out of school.

The guide includes practical tools that are useful during the student intake process, including SIFE Pre-Screener and Interview Questionnaire, SIFE Background Inventory, and Language and Life Skills Inventory. The SIFE Achievement Plan is used to monitor the student’s linguistic and academic progress and is created by an EL teacher, classroom teacher(s), and administrator(s). Tips for administrators and teachers, as well as community resources for SIFE are incorporated in the guide. The ambassador provided on-site training on the guide for districts and schools and created a webpage with additional resources for supporting multilingual SIFE.

Virginia

During the 2020 General Assembly session, Virginia passed Senate Bill 933 which required the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to develop and adopt a common statewide definition for the term SLIFE.¹⁰⁸ As a result of the legislation, the VDOE developed a document, SLIFE Guidebook, to provide Virginia educators with a definition and support on practices and procedures for meeting this population’s unique needs. It is not intended to limit student access to challenging, age-appropriate instruction and

¹⁰⁷ Rhode Island Department of Education, Supporting Multilingual Students with Inconsistent/Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE): A Practical Approach for Rhode Island Educators (2020), <https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/OSCAS/English-Learner-Pages/uploads%202020-21/RI-SIFE-Practical-Tool-Feb-2020.pdf?ver=2021-03-02-143626-047>.

¹⁰⁸ <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB933>

materials in grade-level core content courses.¹⁰⁹ The guidebook also addresses the importance of leading for equity and reminds division and school leaders to view SLIFE through an equity and asset-based lens:

- SLIFE have rich backgrounds and many skills that can be used to support their English language development and learning connected to grade-level Standards of Learning (SOL).
- Many SLIFE come to the United States for a quality education, become successful members of a community, and find new opportunities. Yet, SLIFE may be discouraged and frightened by the extent and complexity of the transition to the new school system's expectations. Programs and policies that honor and reinforce their assets and skills will provide them the greatest opportunity to achieve their goals.¹¹⁰

Maryland Local Education Agencies Spotlights

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Career Readiness Education Academy GED Option Program for ELs

The Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) is an academic and career readiness education program for older English learners in MCPS. Students are referred to CREA if they are at least 18 years old and unlikely to meet all graduation requirements prior to turning 21, are Montgomery County residents, are enrolled in an ESOL program in MCPS and/or if they are interested in pursuing an alternate pathway to a high school diploma via GED preparation. Students in CREA are provided with opportunities to prepare for the GED exam, learn valuable work skills, and earn industry certifications. There are daytime programs at two school sites and an evening program.

The students in CREA are predominantly native Spanish speakers whose countries of origin are El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The majority of students in this program are in the beginner stage of English language proficiency. Twelve percent of the students have children and nearly 80% of them work an average 40 or more hours per week, in addition to attending the CREA program. Students and families are connected with comprehensive wraparound services including health care, counseling, legal assistance, and social services. As of the 2021-2022 school year, five students have completed the GED and earned their high school diploma, many more have passed one or more section of the GED and are working on passing all four.

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), International High School at Langley Park

The International High School in Langley Park (IHSLP) is led by principal Dr. Eunice Humphrey. The school is part of The Internationals Network for Public Schools that are guided by the HELLO principle that promotes Heterogeneity and Collaboration, Experiential Learning, Language and Content Integration, Localized Autonomy and Responsibility, and One Model for All. It is one of two international high schools in Prince George's County that was created to combat the growing graduation rate gap between ELs and non-ELs, a 175% increase of EL enrollment from 2005 to 2015, and limited options for secondary ELs to participate in high school specialty programs and career academies.

Admission to the international high schools is filled via lottery system. One hundred 9th grade students are accepted each year. At least 15% of the new enrollments are reserved for newcomers (ELs are new to PGCPS) that enroll after the lottery deadline. The current student population is predominantly native

¹⁰⁹ Virginia Department of Education, *SLIFE, Students with Limited and/or Interrupted Formal Education Guidebook*, <https://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/esl/resources/slife-guidebook.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Ibid

Spanish speaking (89%), with Dari (2.4%), Amharic (1.8%), Arabic (1.5%), and Mam (0.9%) as the next top four native languages.

The daily operation of the IHSLP is centered around four Internationals Essential Practices. First, the instructional approach is based on backward-designed units that build up to a mastery project with focused and embedded language instruction throughout. Secondly, there is intentional structure and programming that ensures graduation credit bearing courses for all students beginning in 9th grade, advanced placement (AP) classes, daily advisory period, and planned college and post-secondary support. The third essential practice is staffing and ongoing learning. Content teams meet weekly and engage in plan, do, study, act (PDSA) lesson study cycles to reflect on their practice. The schools' staff are 12-month employees to allow for intensive summer professional development. Finally, the IHSLP embodies an asset and community-based culture. Students are grouped in cohorts to build community and establish safety and stability. Every student has a success coach (advisory period) that follows them from grades 9-12 and meet daily to monitor student success.

Student achievement data from the IHSLP shows growth. In 2019 and 2020 ELs at IHSLP graduated at a higher rate than ELs in other Prince George's County public schools and at nearly the same rate as all PGCPs graduates combined. Ninety percent of seniors will apply to Prince George's Community College to continue their education.

Recommendation 8: Equitable Access to College and Career Readiness Curriculum and Pathways

The College and Career Readiness Pillar of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is the “north star” for the Blueprint as a whole. All Blueprint programs and supports should align with each other and provide a coordinated effort to ensure that all students are well prepared for their next step after high school graduation. The Blueprint sets a new College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard that prepares graduates for success in college and the workforce by ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to succeed in entry-level credit-bearing college courses and work in high-wage and high-demand industries. The Blueprint aims to have all students meet this CCR standard by the end of their 10th grade year and definitely before high school graduation. It creates a series of Post-CCR Pathways that allow students, after they meet the CCR standard, to build on their strengths, through Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes, dual enrollment or early college classes, or a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. The CCR Pillar also develops CCR-Support Pathways to support students in meeting the standard, develops a Career and Technical Education (CTE) system that is aligned with industry's needs, and ensures that all PK-12 curriculum, standards, and assessments are all aligned with the new CCR standard.

The Blueprint's new Post-CCR Pathways provide students with the opportunity to develop in-depth knowledge in a subject area of their choosing. These pathways also enable high school students to earn a specific certificate, license, or other credential that is recognized and valued by higher education and industry. The Blueprint also emphasizes the value of developing accelerated pathways for gifted and talented students to reach the CCR standard before 10th grade, which requires advanced coursework in early grades as well.

However, research suggests that EL status often unfairly limits a student's opportunity to access advanced coursework such as AP and IB classes, which creates inequities in the learning environments for EL students. Across the United States, fewer than one in 10 ELs (7%) enroll in AP courses when their schools offer them, compared to more than one in five students (22%) overall. “Even if English learner students demonstrate academic readiness, their status as English learners may limit their access to accelerated and advanced course taking through ‘tracking’ policies and practices at their schools.”¹¹¹ Reclassification and years of pre-requisite requirements may prevent ELs from enrolling in these advanced courses. Additionally, biases and expectations of a student's abilities from teachers and other staff may unintentionally keep EL students from accessing AP or IB courses, despite the potential that this could be the best environment for them.¹¹²

ELs across all grade levels can be overlooked for identification as gifted. English learner students represent about 10 percent of our nation's students. However, fewer than 3 percent of students in talented and gifted programs nationwide are considered English learners.¹¹³ In Maryland, 1.8% of ELs participate in gifted and talented programs.

¹¹¹ Hanson, H., Bisht, B., & Greenberg Motamedi, J. (2016). Advanced course enrollment and performance among English learner students in Washington state (REL 2017–187). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2017187.pdf

¹¹² https://www.ncela.ed.gov/files/fast_facts/20210803-DeI4-4EL-AP-IB-FactSheet508.pdf

¹¹³ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/el-tag-infographic.pdf>

Maryland COMAR 13A.04.07 requires universal screening for all students, a practice that can increase the number of underrepresented students identified for GT programs.¹¹⁴ Targeted professional learning and the expansion of measures used to identify gifted students may also increase access to these programs for ELs. Gifted English learners can display a wide range of skills, for example, the ability to: acquire a second language at an accelerated rate, respect and appreciate languages and cultures that differ from their own, perform well in mathematics, switch between English and their native language with ease, interpret the English language, grasp and use American idioms and expressions, and adapt behaviors so that they are culturally relevant and appropriate.¹¹⁵

One of the Post-CCR Pathway options for students is to complete a dual enrollment or early college program where they can earn college course credits while still in high school. Early colleges are partnerships of school districts, charter management organizations, or high schools, and two- or four-year colleges or universities. Early colleges offer students the opportunity to earn an associate's degree or up to two years of college credits toward a bachelor's degree in high school—at no or low cost to students. Early colleges also intentionally aim to close the opportunity gaps for historically underserved students so they can access advanced coursework and proper college and career preparation opportunities.¹¹⁶ These programs have the potential to impact high school and college outcomes for ELs.

ELs in Maryland should have the same opportunities to Post-CCR Pathways and be able to succeed in these classes as easily as their non-EL peers. To support a student's English language development while they are completing a Post-CCR Pathway, concurrent supports could be provided so that the students continue to work towards meeting the requirements for the pathways and for graduation while also improving their English proficiency. Students should have the ability and flexibility to collaborate with their counselor to develop a course schedule that works for their unique circumstances. The label of being an English learner should not preclude students from being identified for gifted and talented services, accessing advanced coursework, or participating in Post-CCR Pathways such as early college or apprenticeship programs.

Through the Post-CCR Pathway structure, some students may choose to pursue dual enrollment courses at their community college, which would require coordinating schedules with course offerings at the college. Other ELs may choose to pursue a CTE or apprenticeship program that includes requirements for immersive on-the-job training experiences. These students need to coordinate their schedules with their employer to schedule their work hours and also ensure that they are continuing to meet all academic graduation requirements. However, a compounding issue for the design of these programs is that decision makers often lack access to the voices and lived experiences of ELs when considering CTE program improvement.¹¹⁷ ELs may also be preferred employees for many businesses as their multilingualism is an asset to communicate with customers or coworkers.

To ensure that all ELs understand and can take advantage of all available college and career opportunities, LEAs should also offer dedicated outreach and engagement events focused on ELs and their families. These can provide information on the pathway opportunities available as well as directly connecting students and families with employment opportunities.

¹¹⁴ http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=13A.04.07.*

¹¹⁵ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/el-tag-infographic.pdf>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.air.org/project/evaluating-impact-early-college-high-schools>

¹¹⁷ https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/ELL_EquityBrief_060822.pdf

To implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's goal of ensuring that all Maryland public school students benefit from rigorous curricula aligned to the College and Career Readiness standards, are College and Career Ready, and will succeed in Post-CCR Pathways, **Maryland should implement specialized programs and customized supports for ELs that ensure that English learners are accurately identified for gifted and talented services, have access to advanced coursework, and have equal access and opportunity to achieve success in a Post-CCR Pathway.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- Maryland should ensure that all ELs have access to Post-CCR Pathways.
- MSDE should develop a toolkit for LEAs to implement specialized programs and support for ELs.
- Maryland should formally adopt multiple measures to be used to demonstrate College and Career Readiness, potentially including GPA, CTE Concentrator course completion, completion of an apprenticeship, or earning an industry-recognized credential as indicators of a student's readiness.
- Maryland should explore whether COMAR regulations should be amended to codify practices to accurately identify English learners as gifted and talented and to codify English learner students' opportunities to access advanced coursework.
- Maryland should explore the creation of an Early College High School Designation process as well as the creation of a funding source to facilitate the launch of new Early College High Schools that intentionally serve historically underserved students, including English learners.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The costs associated with the recommendation to ensure access to Post-CCR Pathways for ELs can largely be absorbed by repurposing existing funds and braiding together existing resources. MSDE would absorb costs associated with providing substantive support to local education agencies related to programs and services that drive equitable access to college and career readiness curriculum and pathways. MSDE would also absorb the costs of providing technical support to LEAs to encourage and enable districts to strategically and creatively leverage braided funding opportunities.

The second portion of this recommendation requires the establishment of a fund to support the start-up costs associated with designing, adopting, and implementing an early/middle college high school program that specifically targets and enrolls students who are English Learners, first generation students, or who are otherwise in historically underserved groups.

Braided Funding Options for LEAs

Braided funding refers to the use of multiple different funding sources in support of a single project or work stream. Braided funding requires additional oversight and strict control and reporting mechanisms to ensure funds are all used properly but, when done successfully, braiding can increase available revenue to support important LEA initiatives.

Braided funding also requires a shift in the normal process most LEAs use for fund budget planning – LEA staff would reverse the typical order of program and fund planning. In most circumstances, LEAs identify fund sources and plan programs and activities based upon the allowable types of spending and other local, state, or federal statutory and regulatory requirements associated with that fund source. However, utilizing LEA funding sources individually can result in the creation and operation of siloed programmatic opportunities. Also, processes of this kind can miss out on the efficiencies achieved through pooling different fund sources in support of a single program. Figure 41 below compares the two budget process

frameworks: one rooted in existing common budget practice, and a second that reflected a process for braided budget planning.

Figure 41: Comparison of Non-Braided and Braided Budget Planning Processes

Existing Common Budget Practice	Braided Budget Practice
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of State and Federal fund allocations 2. Planning of State and locally-funded budget programs 3. Planning of Federal Title program budgets 4. Track spending to ensure correct budget pacing and spending compliance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design an EL plan 2. Identify costs associated with the EL plan 3. Assign planned costs to a respective, allowable, fund source 4. Review to ensure compliance 5. Track spending to ensure correct budget pacing and spending compliance

Braided Funding Example: Post-CCR Pathways for ELs

Post-CCR Pathway access for ELs presents an opportunity where LEAs could utilize a braided funding approach to expand opportunities to ELs using multiple existing funding sources. For example:

- LEAs can use State aid CCR funding for ELs who have met the CCR standard when providing pathways specific to EL students.
- LEAs can use State aid CCR funding in the foundation program to support ELs who have not met the CCR standard.
- LEAs can use State aid EL funding for activities that support EL education.
- LEAs can use students with disabilities (SWD) State aid for EL students who qualify for SWD eligibility.
- LEAs can use federal Title III program in direct support of qualifying, eligible ELs.
- LEAs can use federal Title II program funding for staff instruction and professional development to support EL instruction and training.
- LEAs can use federal Carl D. Perkins program funding to enhance and support college and career readiness for EL students who are eligible.
- LEAs can use federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) for EL students who are eligible for those funds.

Within the revenue sources above, an LEA could, for example, combine State and local funding sources to establish a program to increase identification of ELs as students who are gifted and talented. Creation of this kind of program could pool several funding sources together to support a full and successful program implementation. In this case, LEAs could use EL funding and Title III funding for program costs as well as Title II funding for associated staff development.

Start-up Costs for Specially Designated Early/Middle College Programs

This recommendation also calls for the creation of a program that would incentivize the creation of designated early/middle college high schools that specifically target and enroll English learners. MSDE estimates this recommendation would require an additional \$900,000 in appropriation each year, annually for five years to establish the funding necessary for a Designated Early/Middle College Program Incentive Grant. The total cost would be \$4,500,000. The program would incentivize LEA adoption of an early/middle college program through a \$150,000 grant that would be provided for one planning year and four subsequent years to support start-up and early administration costs of the programs. The Grant would be designated only for programs that set and demonstrate high likelihood of success in meeting targeted student enrollment goals for first generation, academically-underserved, English learners.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Workgroup on English Learners anticipates the potential need for COMAR or statutory amendments to implement this recommendation. Additionally, an update to the Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan may be required. Further, the annual appropriation required for the Designated Early/Middle College Program Incentive Grant program portion of this recommendation would require codification in law either through a regular bill or through budget bill language.

NATIONAL AND MARYLAND EXEMPLARS

Denver Public Schools

The ACEConnect program within the College and Career Success office at Denver Public Schools provides individualized support for students with unique needs in reaching their college and/or career goals. The ACEConnect program offers a model for how to offer EL students the supports they need while enabling EL students to continue to work towards their College and Career Readiness status. Alternative Cooperative Education or ACEConnect supports students with unique needs – such as those with disabilities, English learners, those in foster care and teen parents – in achieving their college and/or career goals. ACEConnect provides individualized support to students as they explore any of the nine career fields offered by DPS CareerConnect in its school-based and work-based learning opportunities. CareerConnect partners with DPS's Division of Student Equity & Opportunity to ensure options for effective career and college preparation are available and accessible to all students. The ACEConnect program offers classes such as Career Discovery, Career Navigate, Career Engage, Career Advance, Work-Based Learning, Business Management, and Transition to Higher Ed, as well as the opportunity to participate in paid internship experiences.¹¹⁸

Los Angeles Unified School District

LA Unified provides a district initiative focused exclusively on supporting and identifying “Diverse Gifted Learners,” which are English Learners (ELs), Standard English Learners (SELs) and Twice-Exceptional (2E) students who demonstrate advanced talents.

“L.A. Unified strives to identify all gifted and talented students, including our culturally and linguistically diverse ELs and SELs. A significant number of Gifted/Talented Programs policies, procedures and programs are intentionally designed to promote the identification and participation of gifted/talented ELs and SELs. To that end, Gifted/Talented Programs, Advanced Learning Options, identifies students as gifted/talented in seven categories and increasingly uses measures that are culture- and linguistic-free and solicits referrals

¹¹⁸ <https://collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org/aceconnect/>

for identification from multiple sources, i.e., parents, staff, community and self, and methods, including universal screening, i.e., 2nd grade OLSAT-8 administration. To address the underrepresentation of ELs and SELs and ensure their equitable referral and identification, L.A. Unified has clearly established policies and procedures that address all aspects of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) and are in alignment with California Department of Education regulations and standards of best practice.”¹¹⁹

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, together with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, facilitate the Massachusetts Early College Initiative, which creates and maintains partnerships connecting the state’s districts and high schools with the state’s colleges to give thousands of Massachusetts students, especially first-generation college-goers, access to college completion and career success. LEAs in Massachusetts can launch an Early College program with a partnership with a two- or four-year institution of higher education. The Commonwealth will then officially approve the “Massachusetts Early College Designation” if the program successfully completes the application process.

Massachusetts employs a framework for its Designation Criteria for Early College programs that has five guiding principles: Equitable Access, Guided Academic Pathways, Enhanced Student Support, Connection to Career, and Effective Partnerships.

The Equitable Access guiding principle encourages designated programs to “prioritize students underrepresented in higher education enrollment and completion. To facilitate this, programs should be structured to eliminate barriers to student participation.”

“The Designation Criteria under [the Equitable Access Principle] aim at keeping entry into early college pathways as open as possible, particularly with regard to prior academic performance. It is also focused on prioritizing program design and enrollments for students who have historically been underrepresented in higher education. Designation applicants are encouraged to make real, targeted, and thoughtful efforts to aggressively recruit students who may be the first in their family to go to college, who are part of demographic groups historically underrepresented in higher education, who may be English language learners, or who may otherwise not yet possess a perception that they may be a college going student.”

“Program enrollment policies should be as broad as possible. Students should not be excluded from participation in the program based on prior or current GPA, test scores, or placement scores. Enrollments should not rely solely on teacher recommendations or other highly subjective processes.”¹²⁰

New York City

The New York City Department of Education established the Office of Equity and Access in 2012 to end long-standing racial, ethnic and socioeconomic gaps; promote education equity; and empower schools to address the needs of all learners. The office launched AP for All in 2016 to ensure that students in every high school in New York City will have access to at least five Advanced Placement (AP) courses.¹²¹

With the large expansion of the number of ELL students who now have access to more AP courses, researchers studied the relationship of these courses with overall academic success. The study found that

¹¹⁹ <https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/14720>

¹²⁰ https://www.mass.edu/strategic/earlycollege/documents/Early%20College%20Designation%20Companion%20Document_2022.pdf

¹²¹ <https://www.nms.org/Resources/Newsroom/News/NYC-NMSI-APforAll.aspx>

AP course participation was a statistically significant predictor of ELA Regents scores, when controlling for all other variables. More specifically, students who participated in AP courses, on average, scored 3.50 points higher on the ELA Regents exam compared to their non-AP participating counterparts. The second research question explored the association between participation in more than one AP course and ELLs' ELA Regents scores. The results of the second research question showed that ELLs who participated in two or more AP courses, on average, scored higher than ELLs who participated in only one AP course or no AP courses. However, while AP course participation had a positive effect on ELL students' ELA Regents scores, it did not have an effect on students achieving the "college readiness" score, showing that there are limits to the positive effects that AP course participation can have.¹²²

Texas

Texas state law directs the state education agency to "establish and administer an early college education program for students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who wish to accelerate completion of the high school program."¹²³ To implement this program, the Texas Education Agency¹²⁴ developed the Early College High School (ECHS) Blueprint, which provides foundational principles and standards for innovative partnerships with colleges and universities. All Early College High Schools are required to meet all the design elements for each benchmark as well as meet Outcomes-Based Measures (OBMs) on student performance indicators related to access, attainment, and achievement.¹²⁵

All ECHSs must implement and meet the requirements: "The ECHS recruitment and enrollment processes shall identify, recruit, and enroll the subpopulations of at-risk students (as defined by Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081 and PEIMS), including, but not limited to, students who have not passed two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum during a semester in the preceding or current school year, students who are of limited English proficiency, or students who have failed a state administered assessment. Enrollment decisions shall not be based on state assessment scores, discipline history, teacher recommendations, parent or student essays, minimum grade point average (GPA), or other criteria that create barriers for student enrollment. The ECHS shall identify, recruit, and enroll subpopulations (in addition to those who are at risk as defined by PEIMS) that are historically underrepresented in college courses (e.g., first generation college goers, students of low socioeconomic status, English learners, and students with disabilities). The ECHS shall coordinate activities with feeder middle school(s), and higher education partner(s) shall coordinate with the ECHS to participate in recruitment activities to target promotional efforts at priority populations. Enrollment of target student populations should be representative of a district's demographic make-up."¹²⁶

Texas further incentivized establishment and adoption of ECHS programs through its Early College High School Planning and Implementation Grant program. This program provides annual grants of \$150,000 to eligible Texas schools for the initial planning and opening of an Early College High School. Eligible programs provide "dual credit at no cost to historically underserved students, targeting those who are at-risk and/or economically disadvantaged" and offer "rigorous instruction and accelerated courses and provides academic and social support services to help students succeed in college level coursework."¹²⁷ The program is designed to last three years before sunseting.

¹²² https://scholar.stjohns.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1507&context=theses_dissertations

¹²³ <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm#29.908>

¹²⁴ <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/college-career-and-military-prep/early-college-high-school-echs>

¹²⁵ <https://www.texasccrsm.org/models/echs/echs-blueprint>

¹²⁶ [https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2020-21%20ECHS Blueprint 6.8.20 Final.pdf](https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2020-21%20ECHS%20Blueprint%206.8.20%20Final.pdf)

¹²⁷ <https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/grants/grants-administration/grants-awarded/2021-2023-early-college-high-school-planning-and-implementation-grant>

Maryland Local Education Agency Spotlight

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Anne Arundel Community College and Anne Arundel County Public Schools designed a summer bridge program for rising high school seniors designated as English learners (ELs). Rising EL seniors would complete the “English for Academic Purposes-Capstone Grammar and Editing” course as well as the “Student Success Seminar” at the college to build up their English proficiency so that they would be more likely to test out of EL designation before graduating high school. While the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the launch of this program, students participated in the program for the first time in Summer 2022 and are now more familiar with college course offerings and are well poised to “make their college dreams a reality.”¹²⁸

¹²⁸ <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/opening-dual-enrollment-door-english-learners.html>

Recommendation 9: Funding Allocations and Spending Decisions that Support Success for English Learners

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future funding formula establishes a funding mandate for English learner State aid each Fiscal Year. The formula represents a substantial investment in English learners, more than \$832 million in Fiscal Year 2023 in the State and local share of English learner State aid. Maryland's English learner per-pupil amount is one of the largest in the country amongst other English learner weight amounts. Nonetheless, the English Learner Workgroup identified substantial gaps in where the funding formula amount does and does not provide sufficient funds; and in where guidance and accountability in the use of those funds is most needed.

CURRENT ENGLISH LEARNER STATE AID – FORMULA AND AMOUNTS

The formula for the Blueprint is a weighted-student formula. That means, the formula provides resources to local education agencies (LEAs) based on total student enrollment and on the enrollment of certain student subgroups. The formula also provides program funding for Blueprint-mandated programs.

In practice, the Blueprint formula first establishes a base, target per-pupil foundation amount (the Foundation Program). Statute then mandates the provision of additional funding to students in various student subgroups. English learner funding is one of these student subgroups for which LEAs receive additional funding. Maryland's Blueprint formula provides for English learner funding each year that is the product of a per-pupil amount and the number of students identified as having "limited English proficiency" (5-224). For example: if the per-pupil amount is \$100 and there are 100 eligible students the funding amount would equal $\$100 * 100 = \$10,000$. Those two data elements – eligibility count and per-pupil amount – are defined in the English learner State aid program as:

- **Eligibility.** "Limited English proficiency" is defined, in law, as a non-English speaking student or one who has limited English proficiency under the reporting requirements established by the Department for the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP).
- **Per-pupil Amount.** The exact per-pupil amount each year is determined by the statutory EL funding weight, where a weight is a proportion that is subsequently multiplied by a dollar amount, in this case the target per-pupil foundation amount. The amount of the weight is identified in law and, overall, decreases over time – in FY 2023 the weight is 100%; In FY 2033 and beyond, the weight is 85%. The FY 2023 per-pupil amount is \$8,310 (\$8,310 target, per-pupil foundation amount * 100%); the FY 2033 per-pupil amount is \$10,510 (\$12,365 target, per-pupil foundation amount * 85%).

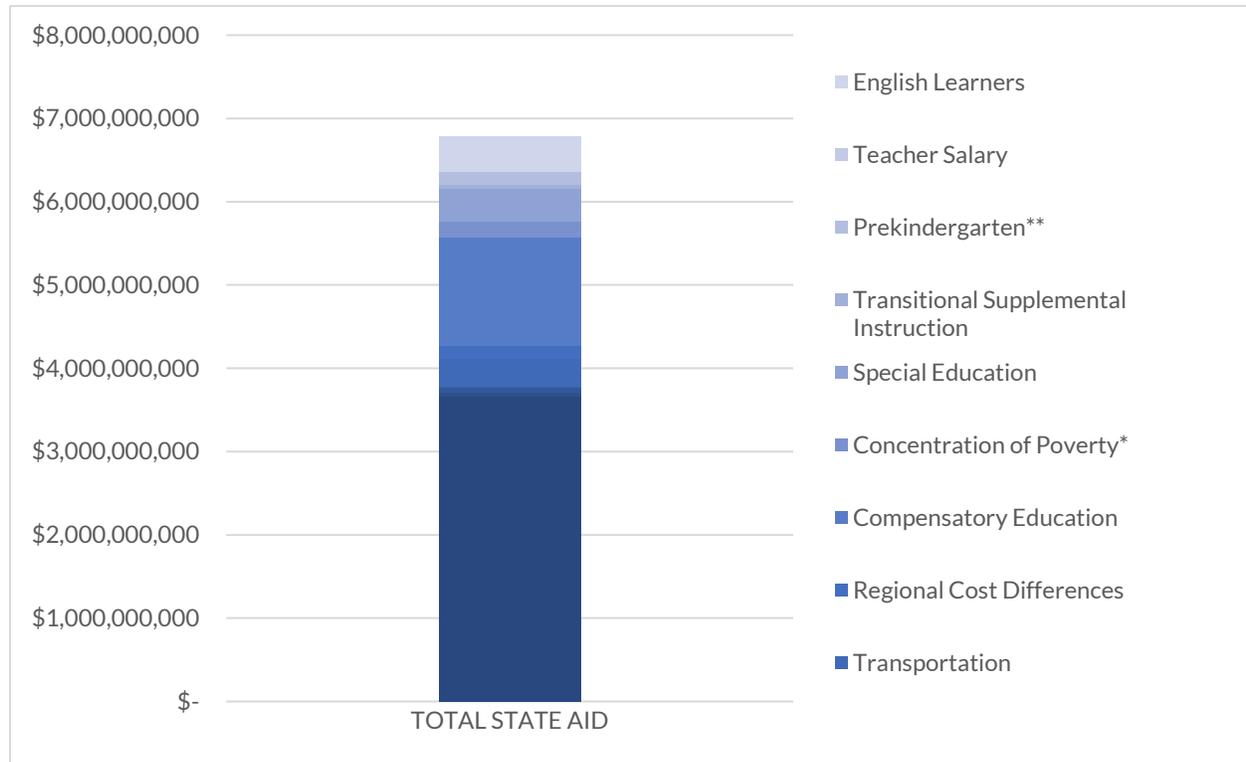
Table 10 below, illustrates the relative magnitude of (how much) EL funding per-pupil in the context of the other Major aid categories of the Blueprint formula. State aid is divided into a State share and a local share. The exact split between State and local share is wealth adjusted but is, on average 50% State share and 50% local share. Districts with more local wealth have a large local share; districts with less local wealth have a smaller local share. The table below reflects only the State share of State aid. As a result, the per-pupil amounts listed are approximately half of the program weight (i.e., the English learner FY 2023 weight amount of \$8,310).

Table 10: Calculating English Learner State Aid. FY 23 State Aid by Aid Category, Per-pupil

Major Aid Category	State Share of State Aid, Per-Pupil
Foundation Program	\$4,238.68
Guaranteed Tax Base Program	\$53.03
Blueprint Transition Grant Program	\$66.82
CCR Program	\$270.00
Transportation	\$12,345.75
Regional Cost Differences	\$182.90
Compensatory Education	\$4,004.20
Concentration of Poverty	\$586.12
Special Education	\$3,686.48
Transitional Supplemental Instruction	\$332.50
Prekindergarten	\$5,048.12
NBC Teacher Salary	\$4,885.62
English Learners	\$4,286.07

The English learner program weight (in State share) is the fifth largest State aid program per-pupil amount in FY 2023. Due to the number of eligible students, the English learner program is the third largest program in total funding (see Figure 42, below).

Figure 42: State Share of State Aid for Major Aid Categories, FY 2023. Preliminary State Aid Calculations



The EL State share of State aid is \$422,465,014 in Fiscal Year 2023, which is behind only the Foundation program and the Compensatory Education program in terms of total State share amount in Fiscal Year 2023.

Maryland’s English learner funding is not fixed year-to-year. It changes throughout the Blueprint formula phase-in. Specifically, the weight changes from 100% of the target per-pupil foundation amount in FY 2023 to 85% of the target per-pupil foundation amount in FY 2033. The target per-pupil foundation amount increases during this same time span from 8,310 in FY 2023 to \$12,365 in FY 2033. Consequently, while State aid for English learners does increase, per-pupil, through FY 2033 the increase is not as large as the increase in State aid for students who are not identified as having additional resource needs.

Table 11: Blueprint and English Learner Formula Phase-In Amounts

	Student Without Identified Needs	English Learner Student
FY 2022	\$7,390	\$14,780
FY 2033	\$12,365	\$22,875.25
Percent Increase	↑67%	↑55%

As indicated in Table 11 above, a student eligible only for the foundation program would receive a 67% increase in funding from the first year of the Blueprint formula to full phase in of the Blueprint formula. In contrast, EL funding does not increase at the same rate, generating a 55% increase in funding from beginning to full phase in of the Blueprint formula.

CURRENT ENGLISH LEARNER STATE AID – FUND UTILITY

While ‘how much funding’ is an essential question, ‘how well those funds are used to meet the needs of English learners’ is equally important. English learner funding utility in local education agencies can vary widely under current statutory language.

Maryland’s Blueprint law does not restrict EL fund usage but does require LEAs to ensure at least 75% of EL funds are allocated to the schools to directly support and serve ELs. Title 5, section 234 of the Maryland Education article requires that each LEA distribute “at least 75% of the per pupil amount applicable to...the English learner education program under §5–224...multiplied by the school enrollment for the applicable program”. LEAs must also report funding allocations to schools as per §5–234 of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, but the law stops short of describing examples of fund use or requiring that allocations be spent on services and assistance for ELs once funds are allocated to each school.

Most LEAs in Maryland do not employ site-based management models, wherein each school has autonomy and discretion over planning spending related to its personnel and discretionary resources. Most schools in Maryland, instead, only have autonomy over a small portion of discretionary funding and the remaining resources a school receives are determined using staffing and program-based allocation formulas (e.g., 1 ESOL teacher to 24 ELs). Statutory requirements as to use of funds and LEA resource allocation models could constrain how and on which students schools ultimately spend EL funding.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future requires the State to provide specific, targeted resources to local education agencies (LEAs) that enroll English learners. The precise amount of funding each year is prescribed in law within the Education Article, §5–224. The English learner funds in the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future reflect a single formula amount for any eligible English learner. However, this approach is not the only policy option to determine and deploy resources to support English learners. This section identifies an array of nationally benchmarked policy options for State aid English learner funding and compares those options to existing law in Maryland. The section concludes with recommendations to strengthen the Blueprint formula’s current English learner funding formula to better address the resource needs of a diverse range of English learners that enroll in differing concentrations and have differing distributions of languages within those concentrations in different parts of the State.

FEDERAL TITLE FUNDS

In addition to state funding, The United States Department of Education provides state education agencies federal funding under the following titles of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Title II, Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders; Title III, Language Instruction for English Learners, and Immigrant Students; and Title IV, Twenty First Century Schools. Local education agencies can maximize resources for English learners with thoughtful approaches to braiding funding to plan activities using a combination of federal funding sources.

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by local education agencies (LEAs) is intended to provide financial assistance to local education agencies to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. The annual Title I, Part A grant awarded to MSDE is a formula grant for the concentration of poverty in local education agencies. Allowable school-based strategies and activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing additional academic support and learning opportunities to help all children who attend Title I schools master challenging curricula and meet state standards.
- Supporting interventions in reading, mathematics, additional staff, socio emotional activities, materials of instruction, as well as after-school and summer programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum.
- Supporting parent and family engagement opportunities to reduce barriers with attendance at school and district events.

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction is intended to increase student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards, improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders, increase the number of teachers, principals and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools, and to provide low-income and minority students with greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Allowable school-based strategies and activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Recruiting and hiring effective teachers and principals.
- Improving the quality of the teaching force.
- Retaining and providing support to effective educators.
- Improving equitable access to effective educators for all students.

Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition (ELA) Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act is intended to help ensure that English learners (ELs), including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement in English, to assist ELs to achieve at high levels in academic subjects, to assist in establishing, implementing, and sustaining effective language instructional educational programs, to develop and enhance capacity to provide effective instructional programs designed to prepare ELs to enter all-English instructional settings, and to promote parental, family, and community participation in language instructional educational programs. Allowable strategies and activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing the English language proficiency of ELs by providing effective language instruction education programs.

- Providing effective professional development to classroom teachers, principals, administrators, and other school or community based organizational personnel.
- Providing parent, family, and community engagement activities.

Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant provides funds to increase the capacity of state educational agencies, schools, and local communities to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; improve school conditions for student learning; and improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Allowable strategies and activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and implementing programs and activities that support access to a well-rounded education.
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive programs and activities that support safe and healthy students and schools.
- Improving the use of technology to improve academic achievement, academic growth, and digital literacy of all students.

STATE AID POLICY APPROACHES TO FUNDING ENGLISH LEARNERS

Different States adopt different policies for providing resources to local education agencies in support of serving English learners. The 2020 EdBuild report “Common Sense and Fairness: Model Policies for State Education Funding” details three categories of State-level English learner funding policies: silver, gold, and moonshot.¹²⁹ These recommendations were also presented to and discussed with the EL workgroup by Zahava Stadler, Special Assistant for State Funding and Policy, at The Education Trust.

This report adapts those categories as policy levels one through three and explores the specific resource policy approaches within each level. Each level reflects the incremental inclusion of additional policy options that, together, could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced English Learner funding formula allocation. The levels are cumulative and as such, Policy Level Three is broader and contains more recommended formula modifications than Policy Level one.

Policy Level One - In policy level one, a generous weight is applied to the base amount for every EL. The weight provides districts with a substantial amount of supplemental, flexible funding to support appropriate instruction, including obtaining materials, developing programs, hiring staff, and providing training.

Policy Level Two - Policy level two is in effect in various states across the country. In policy level two, generous weights should be applied to the base amount for ELs in three tiers, with greater levels of funding provided for students with lower levels of current English language proficiency.

In this policy option, the State would also employ a mechanism to account for the diseconomies of scale associated with serving a small number of ELs overall. Maryland’s formula is a per-pupil formula. This presents challenges when an LEA has only a small number of ELs, or an enrollment of ELs that is geographically disbursed such that EL enrollment remains small at the school-level. In each of these cases, LEAs have to provide proper instructional support but may not have enough students to generate the minimum funding required to provide that support. States use different methods to address diseconomies of scale. For example:

¹²⁹ EdBuild, “Common Sense and Fairness: Model Policies for State Education Funding,” EdBuild (2020), <https://edbuild.org/content/edbuilder/reports/full-report>.

- **Minnesota.** Minnesota sets a minimum EL count for local education agencies and provides funding on that inflated basis. In FY 2018, for example, Minnesota provided \$14,080 to any LEA that enrolled between 1 and 20 ELs, then provided State aid on a per-pupil basis for LEAs that enrolled above that amount.¹³⁰

Policy Level Three - Policy level three includes recommendations that would make Maryland's English learner formula among the strongest in the nation. In this policy option, the Blueprint formula would provide generous weights to the base amount for ELs in tiers based on:

- Students' levels of current English language proficiency.
- The prevalence of their native language in the district.

The prevalence of given native language spoken in a district directly relates to the resources required to adequately serve English learners. If all ELs in a local education agency have the same native language, the LEA can focus its resource deployment on instructional opportunities geared toward English learners speaking that same language. LEAs with a wide array of native languages distributed across the LEAs schools experience additional diseconomies of scale. For example, imagine a district with two schools:

- School One – Ten English learners; 5 different native language.
- School Two – Ten English learners; 1 native language.

In School two, the LEA can use its resources to implement a focused bilingual instruction sequence that aligns with a single, non-English language. In contrast, school one must acquire additional materials and structure its instructional delivery program to account for students who speak different languages at home. If resources are equal, school two will have more flexibility given its benefit of having its ELs speak a common, native language.

Policy level three also recommends identifying and providing additional resources for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). These are students whose transiency means 1) the students often require additional services due to time transitioning between schools or school districts; and 2) these students may not always be captured in a local education agency's enrollment count due to the students' transiency. That results in a district serving some students without having received funds for those same students. Providing additional per-pupil resources based on students eligible for SLIFE or providing district-wide fixed allocations for districts that enroll students with limited or interrupted formal education helps alleviate district costs for properly serving these children.

¹³⁰ Minnesota Department of Education, Student Support Division, "Minnesota English Learner Funding," (2018), p.11, https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE074707&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.

Maryland and the Policy Levels

As Table 12 indicates, Maryland meets the criteria for policy level one. However, Maryland's funding formula stops there.

Table 12: Maryland and English Learner Funding Formula Policy Levels

Policy Level One	Policy Level Two	Policy Level Three
Magnitude of the weight	Magnitude of the weight	Magnitude of the weight
	Differentiation by proficiency level	Differentiation by proficiency level
	Diseconomy of scale in the formula	Diseconomy of scale in the formula
		Differentiation by native language prevalence
		Formula funding for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

The table also highlights the areas in which the Blueprint formula has room for growth. These areas: differentiation by proficiency level; differentiation by concentration; diseconomy of scale addressed in the formula; differentiation by native language prevalence; and uniformity in classification of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education constitute the Departments policy action recommendations, below.

This report groups funding allocation policy options into three levels. Each level reflects the inclusion of additional policy options that, together, could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced English Learner funding formula allocation. Formula amendments to the Blueprint formula English learner weight would ensure the Blueprint for Maryland's future can provide the resources necessary to ensure proper opportunities for English learners regardless of the local prevalence of their native language, diseconomies of scale associated with low EL enrollments not generating the per-pupil revenue necessary to serve ELs, and the relative English proficiency level of a local education agency's EL population. These additional resources would position Maryland's LEAs to implement the best-in-class instructional opportunities the Blueprint envisions. **Maryland should adopt policy level three, which recommends amending the formula to provide additional funding weights.**

MSDE ACTIONS

- Maryland should establish a method to support LEAs that serve small EL populations.
- MSDE should identify specific uses of State EL funding for LEAs and schools.
- MSDE should provide guidance for LEAs and schools on braiding funding.
- Maryland should adopt policy level three to ensure the Blueprint for Maryland's Future can provide the resources necessary to ensure proper opportunity for English learners regardless of the local prevalence of their native language or concentration of. Adopting policy level three would position Maryland's LEAs to implement the best-in-class instructional opportunities the Blueprint envisions.
 - Differentiation of per-pupil formula weight by proficiency level in three tiers.
 - Diseconomy of scale per-pupil supplement.
 - Native language prevalence LEA supplement.
 - SLIFE weight or SLIFE LEA supplement.

FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This recommendation omits this section due to the comprehensive fiscal nature of recommendation nine.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future funding formula is enshrined in Statute. Section 5-224 of the Education Article outlines the specific formula eligibility and per-pupil amount for English learners. Adoption of policy level three will require statutory modification of 5-224 to include the additional formula calculations in order to make policy level three a formula mandate. The law must clearly identify a calculatable formula to establish a mandate so any amendments would need to specify the exact weight, per-pupil, or program amount of the new English learner formula components and would need to clearly define an eligible student population for which MSDE can collect and report eligibility count data to the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Legislative Services each year.

NATIONAL EXEMPLARS

Michigan Department of Education

Michigan's Section 41 Bilingual Education Funding has increased from \$1.2 million to \$25.2 million from 2017 to 2022. The funding was originally designated for bilingual programs only; it evolved to a categorical or supplemental funding source available to LEAs that administer the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs.

The Section 41 funding amount is differentiated based on the student's English proficiency, with more funding allocated for students with the greatest need:

- \$935 for each EL with a WIDA composite score of 1.0 - 1.9.
- \$645 for each EL with a WIDA composite score of 2.0 - 2.9.
- \$105 for each EL with a WIDA composite score of 3.0 - 3.9.

The supplemental funding can be used for direct instruction by ESL or bilingual staff, professional development, computer-assisted instruction, parent engagement, purchase of English language development instructional materials, and transportation to support extended learning and community activities. The legislation requires a fiscal report each year; adequacy of funds will be reviewed every three

years. While not required in the state law, the Michigan Department of Education requires each LEA to submit an application for the funds that includes goal(s).

California Department of Education

California's Local Control Funding Formula implements formula weight differentiation with an additional nuance. California (and other states, like Massachusetts) has the same weight for ELs but applies the weight to a base amount associated with a particular grade span.¹³¹ Those are:

- Grades K-3
- Grades 4-6
- Grades 7-8
- Grades 9-12

The application of the same weight on differing base amounts results in ELs generating a different amount of revenue based on the grade of the EL. For example, if the weight = 1.0, and there are two base amounts, \$1,000 and \$2,000, the weighted amounts for each would be \$1,000 and \$2,000, respectively.

Maine Department of Education

Maine refers to its State aid formula as the "Essential Programs and Services (EPS) Funding" formula and through that formula provides a multiplier to English Learner per-pupil funding based upon total local education agency EL enrollment.¹³² Maine uses three tiers:

- Districts that enroll fewer than 15 ELs
- Districts that enroll between 16 and 250 ELs
- Districts that enroll more than 250 ELs

Districts with less than fifteen ELs receive a larger multiplier than districts with more than 250 ELs. This multiplier is designed to ensure that systems with fewer ELs can still generate the revenue necessary to ensure districts can provide adequate education services to meet Maine's Learning Results.

¹³¹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>

¹³² "Essential Programs & Services State Calculation for Funding Public Education (ED279)", https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov/doe/files/inline-files/EPS%20Cost%20Component%20Calculations%20ED279%20Line%20by%20Line_updatedSeptember2017.pdf.

Learning Loss and English Learners

In the establishment of the Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future included a responsibility for the Workgroup to "measure and make recommendations to address learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic for ELLs."

The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted or altered learning environments for all students for the duration of the pandemic. Nationally, fewer students are meeting proficiency criteria in English language arts and mathematics assessments as compared to pre-pandemic assessment trends. Research has combined spring 2021 state standardized test scores with data from 12 states showing that pass rates from spring 2021 declined compared to prior years. The study indicated that the mode of instruction (in-person versus hybrid or virtual learning) likely played a role with larger declines in school districts with less in-person instruction. The average decline in math was 14.2 percentage points and this decline was estimated to be 10.1 percentage points smaller for districts that were fully in-person. The average decline in English language arts was 6.3 percentage points.¹³³ In Maryland, the early fall 2021 modified MCAP assessment data results for English language arts showed almost a nine-percentage point decline from 2019, while mathematics results indicate an 18-percentage point decline from the 2019 rate. Performance from all demographic student groups declined in 2021, including English learner students.¹³⁴

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified English learners as one of the "vulnerable student populations that were more likely to have students who faced significant obstacles to learning and an increased risk of falling behind academically." Further, the GAO estimated "that teachers who were teaching in a virtual environment with at least 20 percent English learners were more likely than their peers to have students who regularly faced significant obstacles. For example, English learners struggled with understanding lessons and completing assignments, having an appropriate workspace, accessing school meals, and getting assistance at their workspace."¹³⁵

To close long-standing opportunity and achievement gaps and meaningfully address the recent learning loss experienced by students, including English learners, a long-term comprehensive approach must be taken. Through adopting an asset-based culture, identifying English learners early, implementing strong instructional programs, utilizing equitable assessment systems, developing teachers to support ELs, and ensuring that all students have the supports, opportunities, and access to the programs and coursework they need, the recommendations explained in this report will create the environment necessary to accelerate the learning of ELs and address the learning loss exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the recommendations presented in this report, schools should prioritize school-day tutoring for students who experienced learning loss as a result of the pandemic, especially historically underserved and at-risk student groups, including English learners. School should also restructure the schedule or redesign the school day to embed more opportunities for high-quality tutoring during the school day, and build a high-quality pipeline for tutors (college students, paraeducators, teachers, non-teaching professionals, tutoring providers, etc.) to implement school-day tutoring. This high-quality tutoring should

¹³³ Clare Halloran, Rebecca Jack, James C. Okun, and Emily Oster, "Pandemic Schooling Mode and Student Test Scores: Evidence from US States," *National Bureau of Economic Research*. (2021).

¹³⁴ Maryland State Department of Education, "Maryland Early Fall Assessment Data and Kindergarten Readiness Results Reflect National Trends on Learning Loss," December 8, 2021, <https://news.maryland.gov/msde/maryland-early-fall-assessment-data-and-kindergarten-readiness-results-reflect-national-trends-on-learning-loss/>.

¹³⁵ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105815.pdf>

have tutors work full time with the same students at a single school throughout the school year. Tutoring should be treated like a class, meeting daily for a full class period, during the normal school day, yet with no more than a few students for every teacher.¹³⁶ English learner students should be prioritized to receive the high-quality tutoring services.

As Maryland continues to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and transform education, the State must be innovative, collaborative, and bold in our approach to enhance and accelerate student achievement. A return to normal is not good enough. The current struggles of our students cannot be solely attributed to the pandemic. The goal is to ensure that every Maryland student has access to excellent educational opportunities to realize their full potential, especially those who have been historically underserved, including English learners.

Given long-term achievement trends, historically underserved students, including English learners, should be prioritized to ensure the academic success of these students.

¹³⁶ Matthew A. Kraft and Michael Goldstein, "Getting tutoring right to reduce COVID-19 learning loss," Brown Center Chalkboard (blog), May 21, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/05/21/getting-tutoring-right-to-reduce-covid-19-learning-loss/>.

Appendices

Reference information and required data collections from the Blueprint for Maryland's Future are provided in the following appendices:

APPENDIX A

Glossary of acronyms used in this report and related literature.

APPENDIX B

The number and percentage of English learners at each public early-childhood, primary, and secondary school in the State.

APPENDIX C

The services available to English learners in public early-childhood, primary, and secondary schools throughout the State.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

DLI: Dual Language Immersion

DLLs: Dual Language Learners

ECE: Early Childhood Education

ELs: English Learners

ELLs: English Language Learners

ELA: English Language Arts

ELD: English Language Development

ENL: English as a New Language

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act

FARMS: Free and Reduced Priced Meals

HLS: Home Language Survey

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

IES: Institute of Education Sciences

IHE: Institution of Higher Education

KRA: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

LEP: Limited English Proficient

LEAs: Local Education Agencies

MCAP: Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program

MCPS: Montgomery County Public Schools

MLLs: Multilingual Learners

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

NASEM: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

PGCPS: Prince George's County Public Schools

RELS: Reclassified English Learners

TWI: Two-way immersion