

English Language Learners

DEFINITION

English Language Learners is the percentage of all public school children (preschool through grade 12) who are receiving English Language Learner services in Rhode Island public schools.

SIGNIFICANCE

English Language Learner (ELL) students are a fast growing student population in the U.S.¹ Nationally and in Rhode Island, there are large achievement gaps between ELL and non-ELL students, with ELL students having lower rates of math and reading achievement than non-ELL students.² Many children of immigrants face challenges to succeeding in school, including poverty, limited access to health care, and low parental education levels, which may contribute to these achievement gaps.³

ELL students enter school without the English skills necessary for full participation in the education system. They face challenges based on their immigration status, socioeconomic status, academic background, and home language.^{4,5} Successful ELL programs use ongoing assessments of student progress, have highly qualified teachers trained to teach ELL students, and address students' learning, language, and cultural needs.^{6,7,8}

ELL students and children in immigrant families are more likely to attend schools that are large, under-resourced, urban, serve high proportions

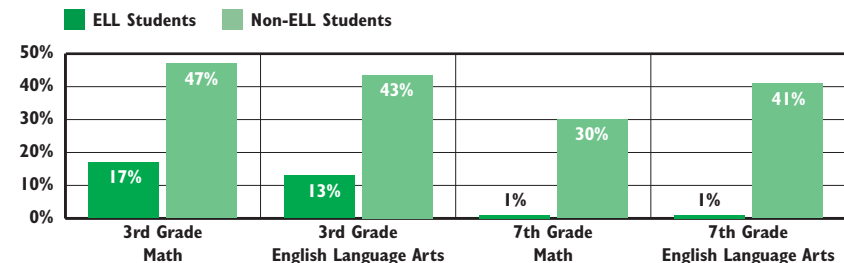
of minority students, and located in high-poverty communities. In the 2015-2016 school year in Rhode Island, ELL students were 7% of total students (9,990). Of these, 85% were enrolled in free or reduced-price lunch programs and 73% lived in the four core cities.^{9,10}

Children of immigrants believe that school prepares them to get ahead and most hope to go to college.¹¹ Schools that foster relationships and offer personalized instruction by effective teachers can help ELL students succeed.¹²

In the 2015-2016 school year, ELL students in Rhode Island public schools spoke 94 different languages. The majority (79%) spoke Spanish, 6% spoke Creole, 3% spoke Portuguese, 2% spoke Arabic, 2% spoke Chinese and, 10% spoke other or multiple languages.¹³

Bilingual education in the early grades can significantly improve English reading proficiency and support long-term academic and economic outcomes.^{14,15} During the 2015-2016 school year, bilingual and two-way/dual language programs were offered in the Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and South Kingstown school districts and at the International Charter School.¹⁶

Current English Language Learners Meeting Expectations in Math and English Language Arts, Rhode Island, 2016



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*, October 2016.

◆ In 2016, 13% of third-grade ELL students met or exceeded expectations on the *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)* English language arts assessment, compared to 43% of non-ELL students.¹⁷

◆ In 2016, 1% of seventh-grade ELL students met or exceeded expectations in the *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)* math assessment, compared to 30% of non-ELL students.¹⁸

Funding to Support English Language Learners

◆ In 2015, Rhode Island was one of only four states with an education funding formula that did not include designated ELL funding.¹⁹

◆ However, in 2016, the Rhode Island General Assembly established a pilot categorical program to provide additional support for the costs associated with educating English Language Learners. This fund, which is set to expire in June 2017 unless made permanent, provides additional aid equal to 10% of the per pupil core instructional amount for each qualified English Language Learner and is designed to support high-quality, research-based services for English Language Learners.²⁰

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Table 44.

English Language Learner Students, Rhode Island, 2015-2016

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS			TOTAL # OF ELL STUDENTS	% OF TOTAL DISTRICT
		ELEMENTARY (GRADES PRE-K-5)	MIDDLE (GRADES 6-8)	HIGH (GRADES 9-12)		
Barrington	3,272	34	*	*	45	1%
Bristol Warren	3,284	54	15	*	75	2%
Burrillville	2,370	*	*	0	*	<1%
Central Falls	2,609	375	122	220	717	27%
Chariho	3,187	*	*	*	11	<1%
Coventry	4,567	*	*	*	14	<1%
Cranston	10,121	316	107	88	511	5%
Cumberland	4,508	106	19	13	138	3%
East Greenwich	2,396	12	*	*	22	1%
East Providence	5,238	102	27	33	162	3%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,604	*	*	*	12	1%
Foster	280	0	NA	NA	0	0%
Foster-Glocester	1,144	NA	*	0	*	<1%
Glocester	556	*	NA	NA	*	<1%
Jamestown	489	*	*	0	*	<1%
Johnston	3,188	94	16	11	121	4%
Lincoln	2,953	17	*	*	26	1%
Little Compton	247	0	0	0	0	0%
Middletown	2,269	61	27	25	113	5%
Narragansett	1,291	*	*	0	*	1%
New Shoreham	113	*	*	*	11	10%
Newport	2,137	92	38	38	168	8%
North Kingstown	3,973	37	12	*	56	1%
North Providence	3,521	45	*	11	63	2%
North Smithfield	1,722	*	*	*	13	1%
Pawtucket	8,965	555	174	163	892	10%
Portsmouth	2,458	*	*	*	18	1%
Providence	24,106	2,930	994	1,337	5,261	22%
Scituate	1,363	0	0	0	0	0%
Smithfield	2,364	10	*	0	11	<1%
South Kingstown	3,207	27	10	*	38	1%
Tiverton	1,806	*	*	*	11	1%
Warwick	8,941	65	18	10	93	1%
West Warwick	3,466	43	*	10	62	2%
Westerly	2,845	33	*	*	45	2%
Woonsocket	5,835	249	98	92	439	8%
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>6,244</i>	<i>564</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>745</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>1,738</i>	<i>*</i>	<i>*</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>UCAP</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>41,515</i>	<i>4,109</i>	<i>1,388</i>	<i>1,812</i>	<i>7,309</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>90,879</i>	<i>1,209</i>	<i>349</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>1,858</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>140,513</i>	<i>5,887</i>	<i>1,841</i>	<i>2,262</i>	<i>9,990</i>	<i>7%</i>

Sources of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department Education, 2015-2016 school year. Total number of English Language Learner students is the number of students in each district who were actively enrolled in English Language Learner programs in the 2015-2016 school year. Students who are not yet fully English proficient but have exited ESL or bilingual education programs to regular education are not included in these numbers.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

NA indicates that the school district does not serve students at that grade level.

Due to a change in methodology, the percentage of English Language Learner students by district cannot be compared with percentages before the 2004 Factbook. The “% of Total District” is based on the total number of English Language Learners divided by the “Total # of Students,” which is the average daily membership in the districts of instruction.

Charter schools with ELL students are Achievement First Rhode Island, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, Highlander Charter School, Hope Academy, International Charter School, The Learning Community, Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College, Segue Institute for Learning, Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy, South Side Elementary Charter School, and Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts. State-operated schools with ELL students are William M. Davies Career & Technical High School, DCYF Schools, Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center and Rhode Island School for the Deaf. UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

- ¹ Calderón, M., Slavin, R., & Sánchez, M. (2011). Effective instruction for English learners. *The Future of Children*, 21(1), 103-119.

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