K–12 Reforms and California’s English Learner Achievement Gap

May 31, 2018

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English Learner students are California’s future

- 1.3 million English Learner (EL) students
  - 21% of K–12 students
  - 38% including former ELs
- EL status is meant to be temporary
  - Assessed at school entry
  - Provided with services and supports to improve English proficiency
  - Reclassified as English proficient according to criteria set by district (with state guidance)
Most of the state’s ELs speak Spanish at home

- Spanish, 83%
- Vietnamese, 2%
- Mandarin, 1%
- Filipino, 1%
- Arabic, 1%
- Cantonese, 1%
- Other, 9%
EL students live in almost every county

Percentage of students who are English Learners

- 0%–10%
- 10.1%–20%
- 20.1%–22%
- 22.1%–25%
- 25.1%–43%
Some students take many years to reclassify

Source: CDE, 2016–17 school year.
Reclassified ELs are among the state’s strongest performers

Source: CDE Smarter Balanced Assessment Results, 2016–17 school year.
ELs are affected by new academic standards and tests

- Common Core State Standards
  - ELA and math standards require more language skills than old standards
  - Smarter Balanced assessment reflects this; students not scoring as well
- English Language Development standards
  - Align with new Common Core standards
  - New assessment (ELPAC) this year
- English Learner Roadmap will help implement and link
Reclassification rate is 13%

Reclassification decision is based on:
- English proficiency (CELDT → ELPAC)
- Basic skills in English (CST → SBAC)
- Teacher and parent recommendations

Reclassification policy should be uniform across districts
- Keep same basic criteria, using SBAC and ELPAC?
- Use fewer criteria – just the ELPAC?
- Allow multiple measures
- Should criteria vary by grade level or type of EL?
Reforms are intended to support EL progress

- Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) directs funding to EL (and other high-need students)
- Local Control and Accountability Plans
  - Establish priorities and goals
  - Explain how funds support goals, emphasis on high-need students
- Prop 58 (bilingual education)
- To monitor the impact of reforms, need to track spending and how it is helping students succeed
Accountability efforts require good data

- District and school dashboards
  - Allow parents to assess annual data
  - Will include all statewide and district-specific priorities
- State has made some data improvements
  - Reporting Smarter Balanced scores for “ever-ELs”
  - Counts of long-term ELs and of students at risk of becoming long-term ELs
- Using existing K–12 data to track student progress over time would be a tremendous improvement
  - Better still would be linking to post-secondary data
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.