



English Learner (EL) Task Force: Challenges and Recommendations

Report to the Legislature

As required by Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 115, article 1, section 19, subdivision 3 (6c)

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Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, braille or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.

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Legislative Charge

As required by Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 115, article 1, section 19, subdivision 3(6c)

Task Force on English Learner Programs

Subdivision 1

Task Force Established

A task force is established to analyze how public schools use English learner (EL) revenue at the site level and administrative level, consider how microcredentials or other certifications may be used to improve collaboration between teachers working with ELs, and make recommendations on how EL revenue can be used more effectively to help students become proficient in English and participate meaningfully and equally in education programs.

Subdivision 2

Members

The commissioner of education, in consultation with the executive director of the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, must appoint the following members to the task force by August 1, 2024:

- the commissioner of education or the commissioner's designee;
- the executive director of the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board or the executive director's designee;
- the executive director of the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership or the executive director's designee;
- one member who represents teacher preparation programs that enroll candidates seeking a field license in English as a Second Language (ESL);
- one member who represents school boards;
- one member who represents the superintendent;
- one member who is a teacher of EL;
- one member who is a teacher in a state-approved alternative program (SAAP);
- one member who is a director of an EL program in a school district;
- one member who is a director of a state-approved alternative program;
- one member who is a parent of a student identified as an EL;
- one member who is a parent liaison to families of EL in a school district;
- one member who is a parent of a student enrolled in a state-approved alternative program;
- one member from the Southeast Service Cooperative's Project Momentum; and
- one member from a community organization that works with families of ELs.

Subdivision 3

Duties

- a. The task force must:
 1. review best practices in EL programming, including:
 - i. an accountability framework that uses student performance on state assessments to determine whether the program is improving academic outcomes for ELs;
 - ii. staffing and managing an EL program, including providing appropriate professional development for teachers, administrators, and other staff;
 - iii. evaluation of the efficacy of the EL program; and
 - iv. ensuring meaningful communication and engagement with limited English proficient parents;
 2. review best practices in providing services to students who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.68, including:
 - i. an accountability framework that uses credit recovery rates and graduation rates to determine whether the program is improving academic outcomes for participating students; and
 - ii. professional development for teachers and other staff;
 3. analyze how EL revenue is used at the site level and administrative level and whether expenditures align with the best practices identified under clause (1);
 4. identify obstacles to hiring and retaining necessary staff to support effective EL programs;
 5. analyze how microcredentials or other certifications can improve collaboration among teachers working with EL, and recommend a process for awarding the microcredentials or other certifications; and
 6. to the extent time is available, review best practices for dual enrollment programs for students eligible for the graduation incentives program, including the provision of college and career and readiness counselors and:
 - i. an accountability framework based on the acceleration of dual credit accumulation before a student graduates from high school;
 - ii. professional development for counselors; and
 - iii. evaluation of the efficacy of the dual enrollment program.
- b. The task force must review data regarding student access to teachers with a field license in English as a second language.
- c. The task force must report its findings and recommendations on the current use of EL revenue at the site level and administrative level, implementation of microcredentials or other certifications, and how EL funding can be used more effectively to help students become proficient in English and participate meaningfully and equally in an education program. The task force must submit the report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education by February 15, 2025.

Subdivision 4

Compensation

Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059, subdivision 3, governs compensation of the members of the task force.

Subdivision 5

Meetings and Administrative Support

The commissioner of education or the commissioner's designee must convene the first meeting of the task force no later than August 15, 2024. The task force must establish a schedule for meetings and meet as necessary to accomplish the duties under subdivision 3. Meetings are subject to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13D. The task force may meet by telephone or interactive technology consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.015.

The Department of Education must provide administrative support to assist the task force in its work, including providing information and technical support, and must assist in the creation of the report under subdivision 3.

Subdivision 6

Expiration

The task force expires February 15, 2025, or upon submission of the report required under subdivision 3, whichever is later.

This one-time report is mandated by [Minnesota Laws 2024, chapter 115, article 1, section 19, subdivision 3 \(6c\)](#).

The report mandate: The task force must submit the report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education by February 15, 2025.

Introduction

Minnesota's English Learner (EL) student population has increased by 14.9% the last seven years; currently, ELs represent 9.7% of the total student enrollment within Minnesota public schools. The context of growth in the EL population presented an opportunity to critically examine ways to improve outcomes for Minnesota's EL students. This report is the culmination of the meetings of the EL Task Force which took place in August 2024 through January 2025 bringing together stakeholders to lend their voices to a thorough discussion of challenges and recommendations to create a more effective EL education system.

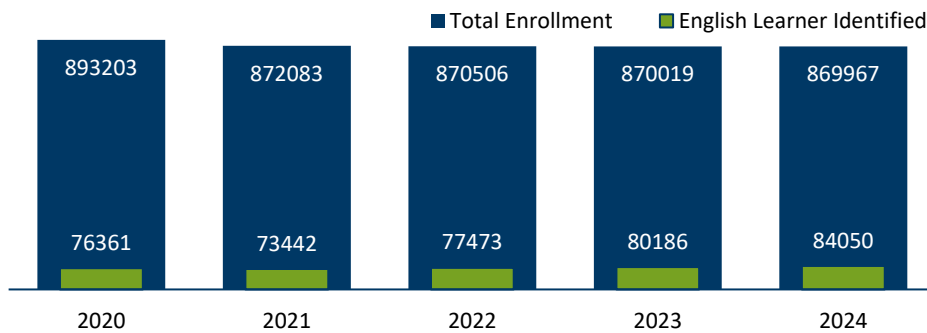
Background

Growth of the English Learner Population

In state fiscal year (SFY) 2024, 869,967 pre-K through grade 12 students were enrolled in Minnesota public schools with 84,050 students, or 9.7% of students identified as ELs. Figure 1 displays fall enrollment data from SFY 2020–24. The data indicates enrollment of ELs had continued to increase consistently since SFY 2020. In, SFY

2021, the first full school year impacted by COVID-19, enrollment of ELs and non ELs dropped, while in SFY 2022 there continued to be a drop in overall enrollment but an increase in EL enrollment.

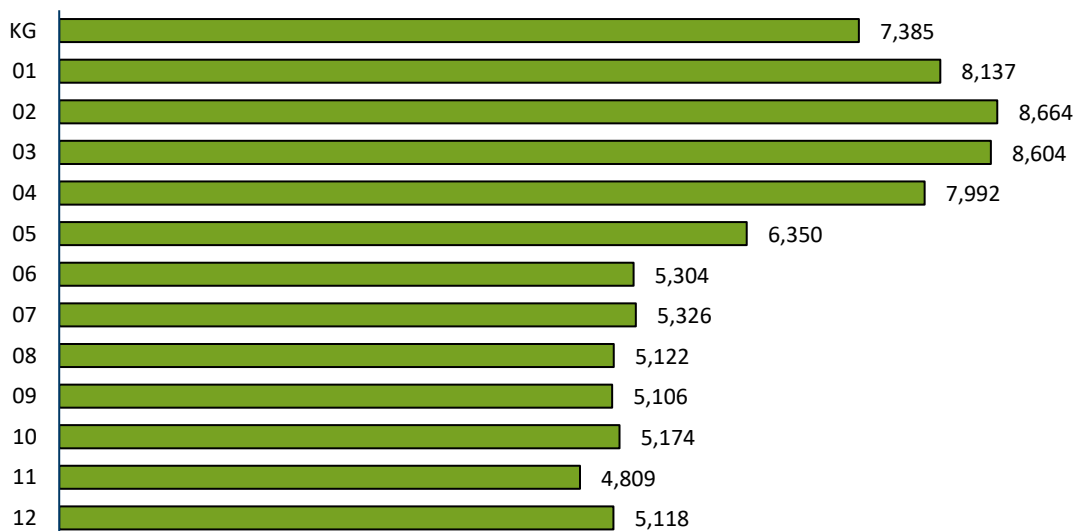
Figure 1. Total pre-K through grade 12 and EL enrollment in Minnesota public schools, SFY 2020–2024



Source: [MDE Enrollment Data](#)

Figure 2 shows the distribution of Minnesota’s ELs across the grade levels. The number of ELs in primary grades (averaging over 8,200 students per grade in grades K–4, dropping to 6,350 in grade 5) is much higher than in secondary grades (averaging about 5,200 students per grade in grades 6–12), which is due in part to students reaching proficiency in English and exiting EL status.

Figure 2. Distribution of K-12 Students Identified as EL Enrolled in Minnesota Public Schools by Grade, SFY 2024

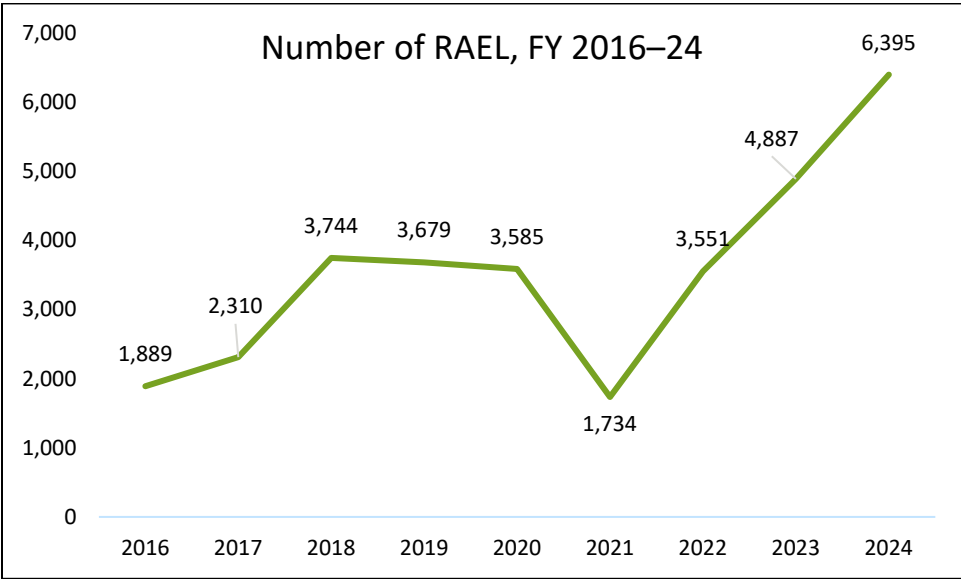


Source: [MDE Enrollment Data](#)

Increase in Recently Arrived ELs

The increase in the number of ELs can partially be explained by the increase of Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL). The RAEL numbers are reported every year by school districts and charter schools to MDE. Figure 3 shows that the numbers of RAEL identified students has risen since the pandemic. In SFY 2024, the number was almost double the number before the pandemic.

Figure 3. Number of RAEL, SFY 2016–24

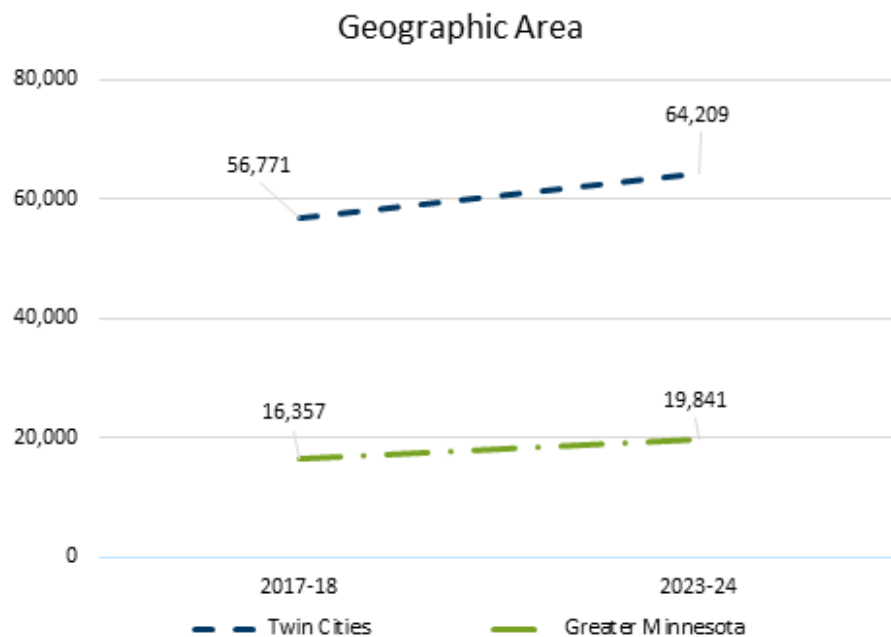


Source: [MDE Data and Analytics](#)

Increase of ELs in Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota

Figure 4 shows an increase in the number of ELs from 2017–18 to 2023–24 in the Twin Cities (i.e., the seven-county metro area of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties) as well as in the greater Minnesota. Both regions show similar proportions at both times.

Figure 4. Minnesota K–12 EL enrollment in seven-county metro and greater Minnesota, 2017–18 and 2023–24



Source: [MDE Enrollment Data](#)

ELs in State-Approved Alternative Programs

SAAP Secondary Enrollment Data presented in Table 1 and Table 2 below is extracted from MDE’s FY 2023 Data and Analytics Enrollment data which is based on October 1 counts. As the FY2025 Annual Legislative Report on Learning Year Programs report states, “Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 123A.05, subdivision 1, defines the types of alternative programs that Minnesota authorizes. A district may establish the following types as detailed in sections 124D.68, subdivision 3, paragraph (d), and 124D.69”:

- Area Learning Center (ALC),
- Alternative Learning Program (ALP), and/or
- Contract Alternative Program (CAP)

Table 1. EL Enrollment in SAAPs

Program Type	Sum of Total Enrollment	Sum of Total EL Identified Count	Percent of Total Enrollment
ALC	11695	1069	9%
ALP	879	61	7%
CAP	479	86	18%

In addition to individual enrollment, when programs across the state are disaggregated to see how many serve at least one EL student, Table 2 shows that over half of the programs in the state, regardless of type, have EL students.

Table 2. Count of SAAPs with EL Students

Program Type	Number of Programs Statewide	Count of Programs with EL Students Reported
ALC	122	67
ALP	22	10
CAP	8	6
Total	152	83

Challenges in Meeting Growing EL Needs

Shortage of EL Teachers

As the EL student population continues to grow in Minnesota, the challenge of how to ensure high quality education is met by a number of complexities. School districts and individual sites across Minnesota have different approaches to EL staffing. The number of EL coordinators and licensed ESL teachers varies widely. Some larger districts employ multiple coordinators and a full team of ESL teachers, while smaller districts might have a single person handling both roles or share these positions between schools. School districts and

individual sites across Minnesota have different approaches to staff EL programs. According to the Minnesota PELSB, ESL is considered one of the shortage areas of teacher licensures statewide.

Figure 5. Teachers teaching ELs under special permissions or out of compliance, 2020–24



Source: [PELSB Note](#). The percentages are based on an unduplicated headcount of teachers.

The rising number of EL students in Minnesota, combined with a shortage of licensed ESL teachers, has led districts to seek special permissions and out-of-field waivers to fill teaching positions. These arrangements help schools meet their immediate staffing needs while working toward long-term solutions. Thus, more teachers are teaching ELs under special permission or out of compliance indicating a higher demand for ESL teachers in relation to supply. Figure 5 shows the percentage of teachers who held Tier 1 or Tier 2 licenses or out-of-field permission in 2019–20 through 2023–24. It shows that the shortage rate is higher in 2022–23 compared to the previous years and stays at the same rate in 2023–24 and 2022–23. Greater Minnesota schools experienced a higher shortage rate of ESL teachers than those in the Twin Cities.

Content Teachers Unprepared to Provide Instruction to Multilingual Learners

The Minnesota Survey of Preparation, Insight, and Retention (MNSPIRE) indicated the need for content teachers to have professional development to better support their multilingual learners. Of the 13,769 licensed Minnesota teachers who completed a teacher preparation program, only 45% indicated that their preparation program prepared them to work with multilingual learners. Additionally, 4% of respondents did not complete a teacher preparation program at all, and of those teachers only 14% are currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program.

According to the 2024 Southeast Service Cooperative Project Momentum report based on a survey of 314 Minnesota educators, content teachers have room for growth in providing instruction for multilingual learners and are interested in professional development to do so. Of those surveyed, “60 to 66% of educators reported they were moderately or highly knowledgeable in models or approaches to teaching multilingual learners, the statewide annual English Language Proficiency assessment, identification procedures for ELs, and culturally competent instructional practices.” Additionally, 45% or more educators surveyed expressed interest in an ESL additional license, a bilingual/bicultural endorsement, or other type of multilingual certification. It appears that educators are most interested in understanding how to differentiate language differences from disabilities, collaboration and co-teaching, and students with interrupted formal education, and language for content areas.

In 2023, PELSB adopted new pedagogical standards with a greater emphasis on multilingual learners that all pre-service teachers who complete a teacher preparation program or licensure via portfolio must demonstrate. These standards include understanding language development, benefits of multilingualism and multiliteracy, and the role of language and culture in learning. There are many application standards including using the Minnesota English Language Development Standards Framework, making language comprehensible, creating opportunities for students to practice language in the content area, and using native languages as a resource. Additionally, anti-racism, cultural competency, and implicit bias are embedded throughout the Standards of Effective Practice. At this time, it is too early to see the impact of these new standards on teacher and student outcomes.

SAAP Secondary EL Teacher Assignments

Table 3 Number of SAAPs reporting an EL teacher assignment, the number of assignments, and the breakdown of FTE.

Total SAAPs Reporting EL Assignments	Count of Total Assignments	Average of Assignment FTE	Max of Assignment FTE	Minimum of Assignment FTE
27	80*	0.25	1	0.03

Source: PELSB Star Report

Table 3 shows the number of SAAPs that report to have an EL teacher assignment, the number of assignments, and the breakdown of full-time equivalent (FTE). The data presented in Table 3 is from PELSB's STAR Report for FY 2023.

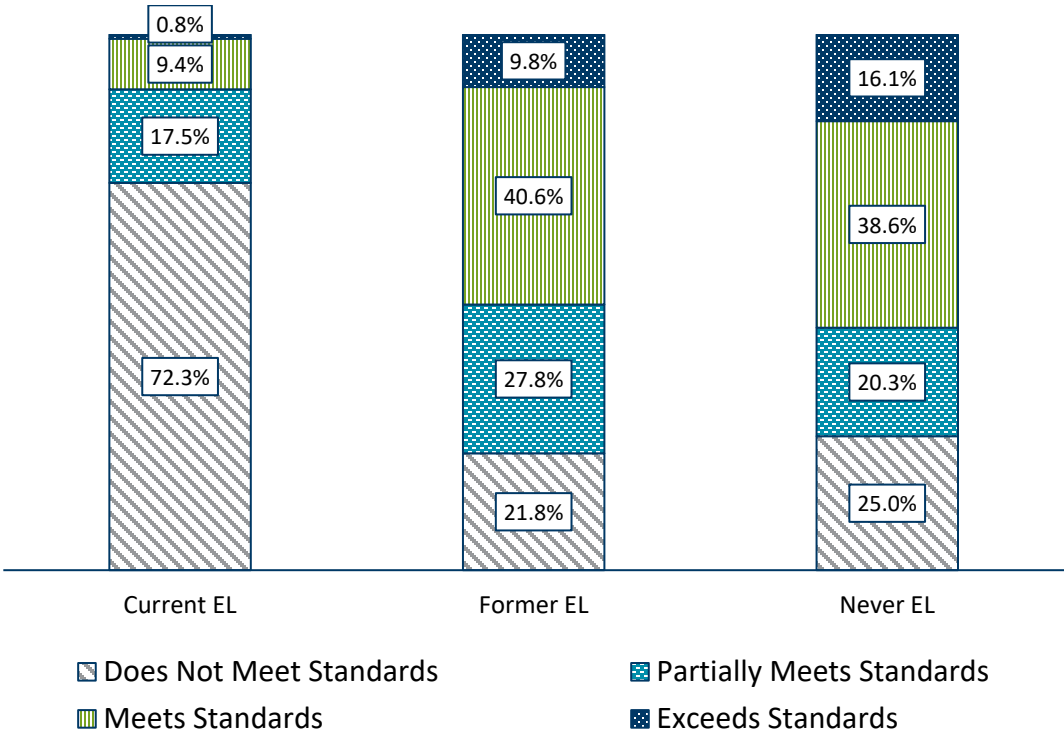
*Of the total 80 SAAP assignments, 46 are accounted for at one school alone.

Academic Achievement Gaps

EL Perform Lower in Academic Assessments Compared to Peers

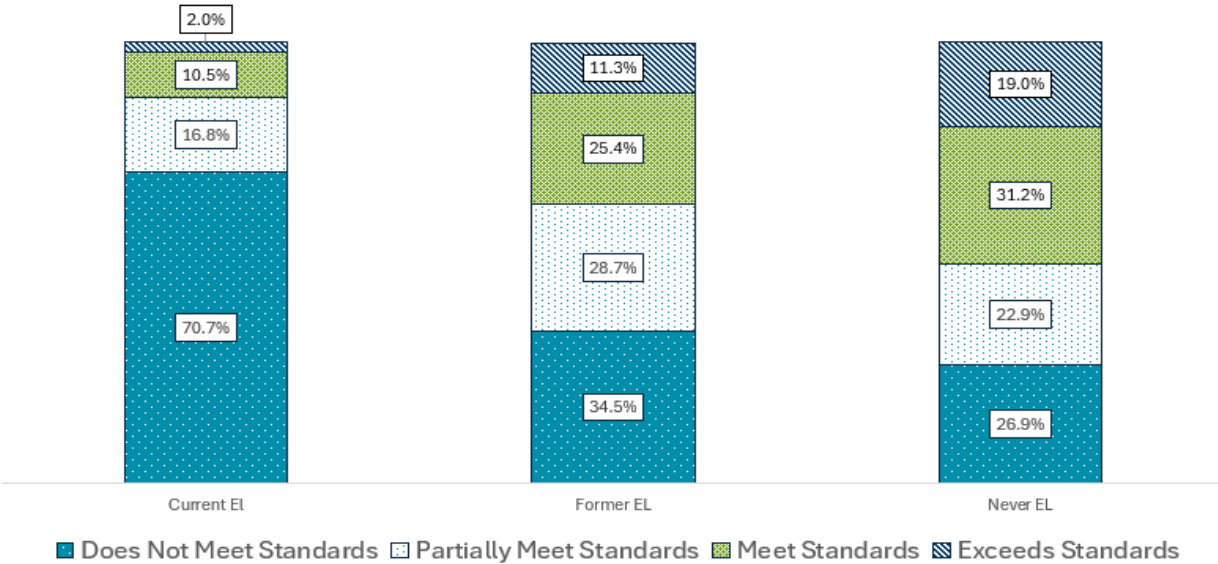
The extent to which staffing impacts EL student progress towards proficiency warrants further investigation. As demonstrated in Figures 3 and 4, however, most students identified as current EL in 2023, did not meet standards on the statewide assessments—Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments—MCA and Minnesota Test Academic Skills—MTAS—for reading or math. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, most students identified as current EL in 2023 did not meet the standards on statewide assessments, including the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS), for reading or math. Compared to students who were “never EL”, and students identified as “former EL”, smaller shares of then “current EL” met or exceeded the reading and mathematics standards. Such disparities suggest the need for increased and targeted support by educators to help current EL students to achieve parity with their former EL and never EL peers.

Figure 6. Reading achievement of EL students, 2024



Source: [MDE Assessment Data](#)

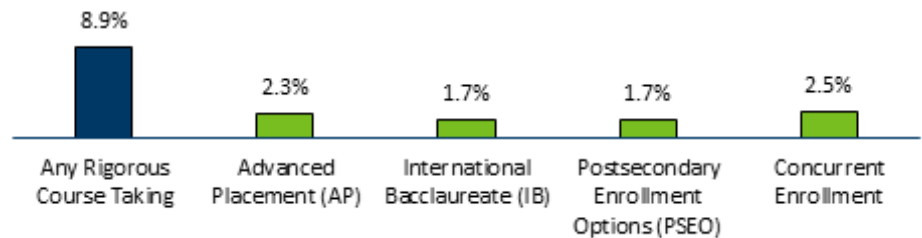
Figure 7. Math achievement of EL students, 2024



Source: [MDE Assessment Data](#)

Figure 8 shows the percentage of ELs who participated in rigorous coursework in high school, disaggregating for four types (Advanced Placement [AP], International Baccalaureate [IB], Postsecondary Enrollment Options [PSEO] and concurrent enrollment). While the percentages reported are low, some large EL districts did not report AP and IB data to MDE. Percentages are likely underestimates for these types of rigorous courses and for overall rigorous course taking.

Figure 8. Percentage of ELs taking rigorous courses in high school

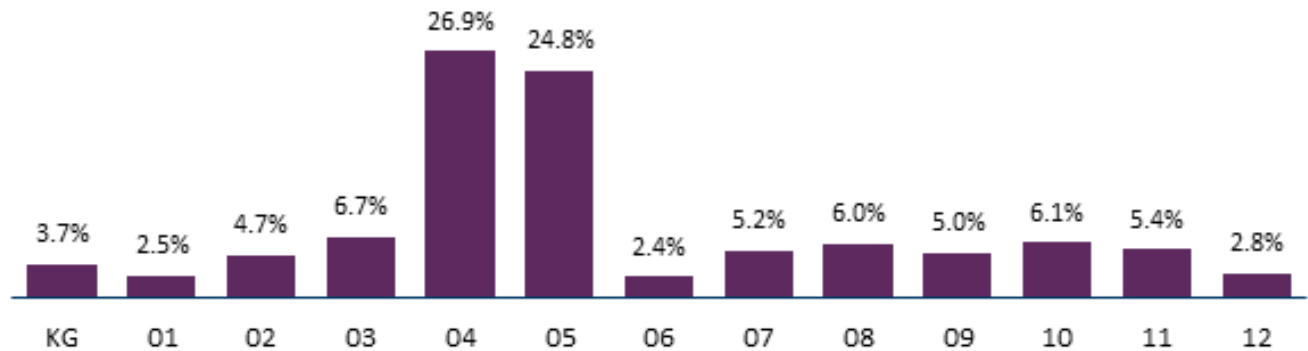


Source: [MDE PSEO, Concurrent and Minnesota Common Course Catalog Data](#)

Assessment of English Language Proficiency

English learners assess for English language proficiency (ELP) on an annual basis by taking the WIDA (ACCESS) assessment. Results of the assessment, as seen in Figure 9, show that about ELs are most likely to test proficient in grades 4 and 5. Figures 19 to 21 are sourced from MDE Data Reports and Analytics Assessment reports.

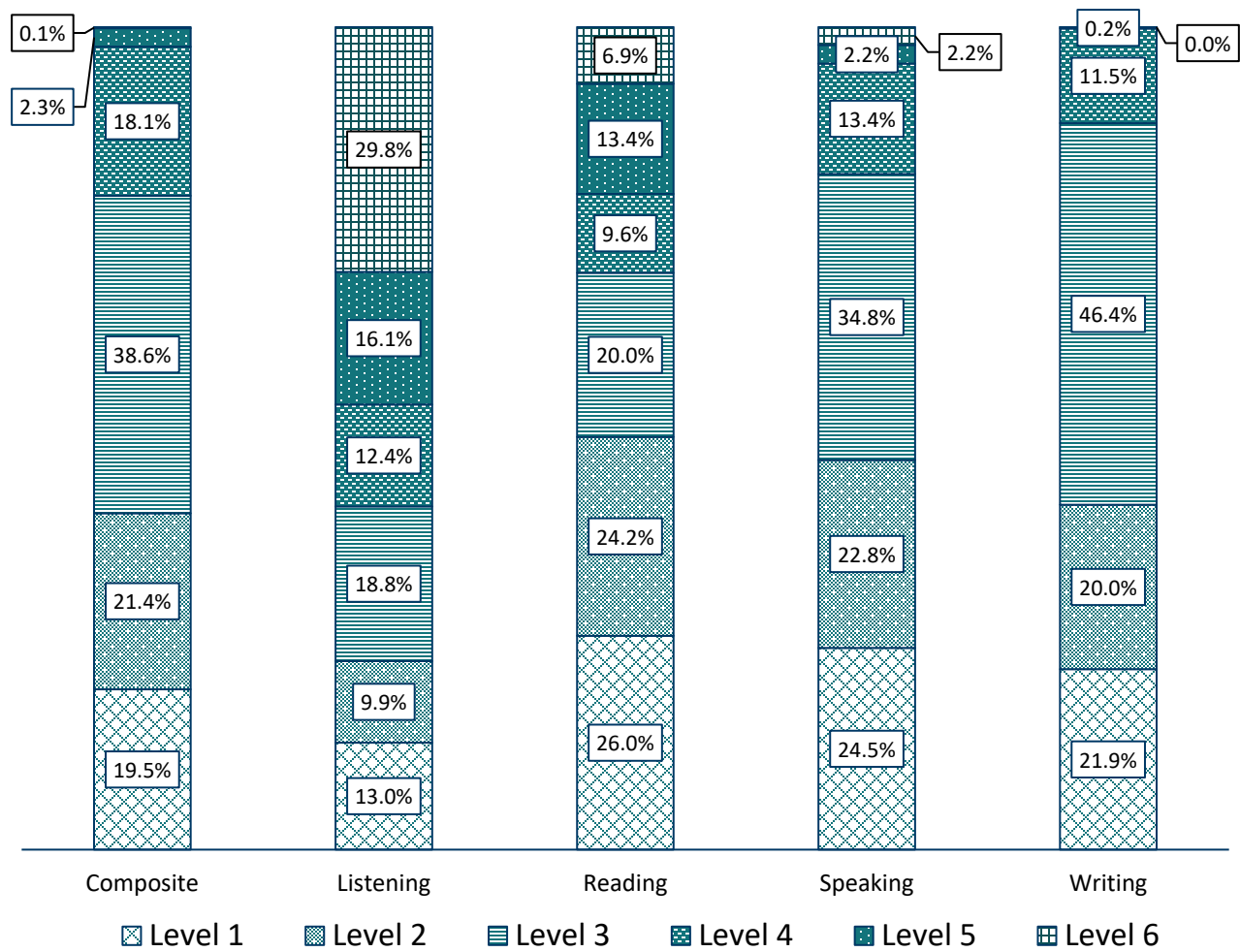
Figure 9. Percentage of ELs assessing proficient on the WIDA ACCESS, by grade level, 2024



Source: [MDE Data Reports and Analytics](#)

The distribution of ELs at each of the proficiency levels on ACCESS are displayed for the overall composite and each domain in Figure 10. Students typically progress to higher proficiency levels earlier in listening, which is reflected in seeing larger percentages at proficiency levels 5 and 6. Typically, the productive domains of speaking or writing are the last for students to master.

Figure 10. Percent Distribution of Students at Each Proficiency Level on WIDA ACCESS, K-12 Composite and Domain Scores, 2024



Source: [MDE Assessment Data](#)

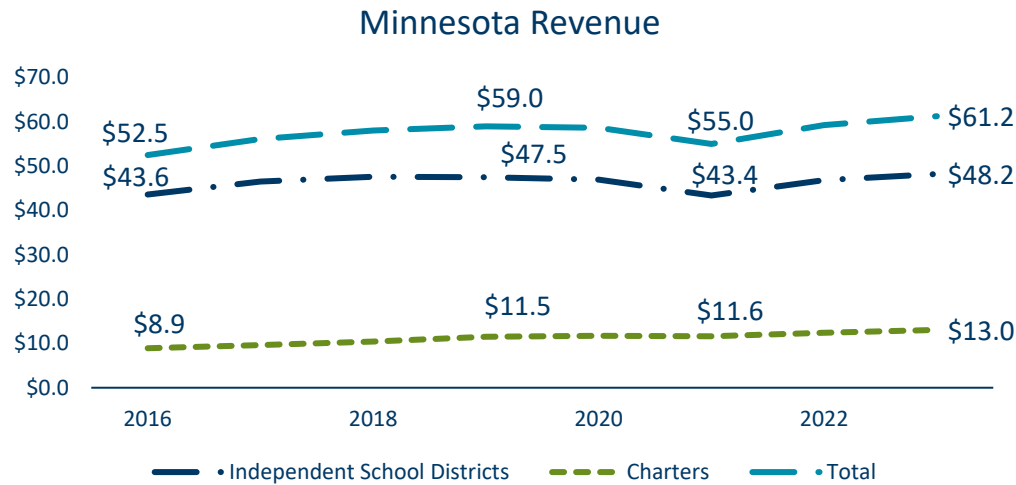
Funding

In the case of EL funding, comparable to the relationship between EL teacher support and proficiency outcomes, it is assumed that increased funding is positively correlated with proficiency outcomes. Still, like staffing supports, it is difficult to know the impact of EL revenue on progress and proficiency outcomes when there is a plethora of ways in which the revenue is determined and dispersed by district, geographical areas, and student population numbers. Minnesota State EL funding and Title III, Part A funding is provided to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure that ELs and immigrant students attain English proficiency and meet state academic standards. Title III funds are meant to supplement the LEA’s core EL program, not activities required of all EL programs by state and federal requirements, and therefore cannot be used to provide services that would occur even without Title III funding (e.g., assessment, screening, instruction, etc.).

Increase in the state EL funding and federal EL funding

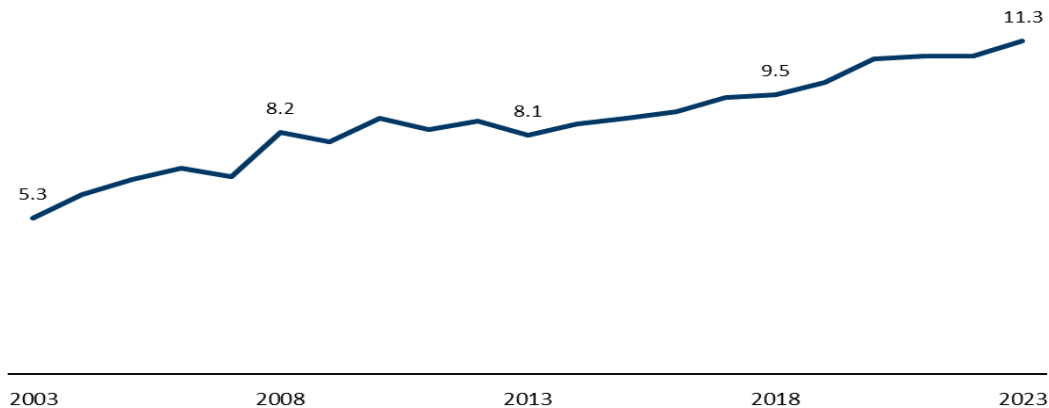
Figures 11 and 12 show an increase in state EL funding and Title III EL funding since the COVID-19 pandemic. Two million dollars in annual cross-subsidy reduction revenue was added in fiscal years 2022 and 2023. To best understand how revenue is and can be used to improve outcomes for EL students more evaluation is needed to see how and where funding has the strongest impact on outcomes.

Figure 11. State EL Funding in Millions of Dollars, 2016 to 2023



Source: [Minnesota Funding Reports, December 2024](#)

Figure 12. Minnesota’s Federal Title III EL Education Funding, in millions 2003 to 2023



Source: [United States Department of Education](#)

The preceding background information shows the relationship among contextual factors including EL population growth, licensure shortages (i.e., ESL teachers), and funding. These factors on their own and in tandem present

complexities for improving EL outcomes in the state of Minnesota. Appointed by the Commissioner of Education in consultation with the executive director of the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, the 2024-2025 EL Task Force has worked to examine some of the challenges and recommendations that should be considered and put forth before the 2025 Minnesota state legislature to continue making improvements in the state’s EL programming and student outcomes.

EL Task Force Members and Organization

The application for Task Force membership opened June 28, 2024, and closed July 12, 2024. The application was shared through MDE and PELSB newsletters and websites. Members selected were informed via email on August 1, 2024.

Table 4. includes a breakdown of the member type—as appointed to the 2024–25 EL Task Force, the individual members’ name and professional role, and their organizational affiliation. MDE and PELSB extend gratitude to this group for their dedication, time, and expertise.

Table 4. Task force membership

Member Type		Member Name	Member Affiliation
1.	commissioner of education or the commissioner's designee	Dr. Teresa Taylor, Director, Student Access and Opportunity	Minnesota Department of Education
2.	the executive director of the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board or the executive director's designee	Michelle Vaught, PELSB Chief of Staff (until November 2024 departure), Michelle Sandler and Grant Boulanger designated in November 2024 to replace Michelle Vaught	Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board
3.	the executive director of the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership or the executive director's designee	Hon. Carlos Mariani, Executive Director Leiataua Dr. Robert Jon Peterson, Senior Policy Fellow, Designee	Minnesota Education Equity Partnership

Member Type		Member Name	Member Affiliation
4.	one member from the Southeast Service Cooperative's Project Momentum	Claudia Tabini, Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator	Project MOMENTUM: Southeast Service Cooperative
5.	one member who represents teacher preparation programs that enroll candidates seeking a field license in English as a second language	Dr. Michelle Benegas, Professor	Hamline University
6.	one member who represents school boards	Adriana Cerrillo, School Board Director	Minneapolis Public Schools
7.	one member who represents the superintendent	Holly Ward, Superintendent	Dawson-Boyd Public Schools
8.	one member who is a teacher of ELs	Annie Connor, Teacher	Anderson United Middle School Minneapolis Public Schools
9.	one member who is a director of an EL program in a school district	Dr. Sarah Schmidt de Carranza, Director	Saint Paul Public Schools

Member Type		Member Name	Member Affiliation
10.	one member who is a parent of a student identified as an EL	Muhammad Tayyeb, Parent	Minneapolis Public Schools
11.	one member who is a parent liaison to families of ELs in a school district	Fowsia Dahir, Community Education Specialist	Robbinsdale Public Schools
12.	one member from a community organization that works with families of ELs	Deborah Seelinger, Volunteer Coordinator	Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA) Rochester, MN
13.	one member who is a director of a state-approved alternative program	Dr. Kasya Willhite, Director	Richfield College Experience Program Richfield Public Schools
14.	one member who is a parent of a student enrolled in a state-approved alternative program	Unfulfilled	
15.	one member who is a teacher in a state-approved alternative program	Dr. Erik Lien, PLC Facilitator and Social Studies Teacher	Norse Area Learning Center North Branch Area Public Schools

Membership Notes: Role 14—one member who is a parent of a student enrolled in a state-approved alternative program received no applications. MDE staff attempted to recruit for this role by connecting with leaders at ALCs and through the task force members but were unable to secure a commitment.

Legislative Charge

The task force was broadly charged with making recommendations in the areas listed below. More specific duties tied to these charges are outlined in their respective subsection in the analysis of this report.

1. Best practices in EL programming,
2. Best practices providing services for students eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.68,
3. EL revenue at the site level and administrative level,
4. Obstacles to staffing EL programs,
5. Awarding microcredentials and their utilization for collaboration in classroom settings, and
6. Best practices for dual enrollment (if time allows).

Subcommittee Assignments

To tackle the charges outlined by the legislature, the members of the task force assigned themselves across four subcommittees (i.e., Best Practices, Staffing and Managing EL Programs (hereafter referred to as Workforce subcommittee), State Approved Alternative Programs (SAAPs), and EL Revenue) aligned with their knowledge and professional experiences. The remaining sections of this report are sorted in accordance with these four subcommittees: Best Practices, Workforce, State Approved Alternative Programs, and EL Revenue. Within these sections, there is a brief description of the duties and focus of each subcommittee. Following this description are the identified challenges identified by the subcommittee. These challenges help contextualize the recommendations that the EL Task Force set forth within this report. Challenges and recommendations were identified based on review of existing data, individual task force members research and/or professional experience in the field.

Task Force Activities

The Task Force conducted its work through a series of structured monthly meetings and additional subcommittee work sessions that began in August 2024 through January 2025. Task Force work is characterized by analysis of existing data, collaborative problem identification and solving, and focused efforts to develop actionable recommendations.

Initial Phase (August–September 2024)

During the initial phase, the task force convened to review the legislative charge, establish a foundational understanding of the LEAPS Act along with current EL education practices, and review relevant data sources and findings which include the MNSPIRE survey data and Project MOMENTUM's report. Four subcommittees were formed during this time: Best Practices, EL Revenue, State Approved Alternative Programs (SAAP), and Workforce. During these meetings, members participated in grounding activities to identify current needs in each subcommittee topic and EL education overall.

Initial Phase meetings occurred on the following dates and times:

- August 13, 2024–10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Whole Task Force
- September 20, 2024– 3:30 to 5 p.m. Whole Task Force
- September 24, 2024–3:30 to 5 p.m. Best Practice Subcommittee
- September 30, 2024–3 to 4:30 p.m. Best Practice Subcommittee
- October 1, 2024–3 to 4:30 p.m. Workforce Subcommittee

Analysis Phase (October–November 2024)

In the Analysis Phase, the Task Force examined the North Star accountability system and how it is used to monitor EL Proficiency to identify schools with the most needs for support. The EL Revenue subcommittee also reviewed the new EL Funding cross-subsidy formula and concentration revenue for 2023-24 SY. The Workforce subcommittee reviewed EL teacher assignment data and licensure tier distribution data. During this phase, MDE partnered with Wilder Research to support the EL Task Force report development and data analysis.

Analysis Phase meetings occurred on the following dates and times:

- October 8, 2024–2 to 3:30 p.m. EL Revenue Subcommittee
- October 8, 2024–3:30 to 5 p.m. Whole Task Force
- November 5, 2024–3 to 4:30 p.m. Workforce Subcommittee
- November 12, 2024– 3:30 to 5 p.m. Whole Task Force

Recommendation Development Phase (December 2024–January 2025)

During this phase, working with Wilder Research, the Task Force members spent time in their subcommittees or attended the monthly Task Force meeting to begin formulating recommendations for the report.

Recommendation Development Phase meetings occurred on the following dates and times:

- December 2, 2024– 4 to 5 p.m. SAAP Subcommittee
- December 3, 2024–3 to 4:30 p.m. Workforce Subcommittee
- December 10, 2024–3:30 to 5 p.m. Whole Task Force
- December 30, 2024– 3 to 5 p.m. Best Practice Subcommittee
- January 13, 2025–3 to 5 p.m. Best Practice Subcommittee

Final Report Development (January 2025)

The whole EL Task Force engaged in intensive work on January 14, 2025, to finalize recommendations and complete the legislative report. Throughout the process, the Task Force maintained focus on practical implementation challenges and recommendations. The Task Force was also mindful to consider the variety of needs of the EL population in Minnesota across both urban and rural areas. Final recommendations reflect careful consideration of existing data, professional expertise, lived experience, and the time constraint stipulated by the 2024 legislation to complete the work.

Analysis

Best Practice Subcommittee Challenges and Recommendations

This section of the report outlines challenges and recommendations insofar as accountability with student performance and state assessments, staffing and managing EL programs, professional development opportunities for teachers, and needs around effective communication with the parents of EL students. The task force grappled with issues of rigor in assessments as they are useful for informing instruction, issues of equity including what is needed by geographical areas and in terms of professional development and staffing, and what is needed to support students and the parents of EL students.

Accountability Framework Using Student Performance on State Assessments

Challenges	Recommendations
<p>Limitations of Statewide Assessment Data</p> <p>Statewide assessments can provide valuable information, including standardized measures of student learning, evidence of achievement gaps, and insights to guide teaching and instruction for better outcomes. However, the representativeness and completeness of this data is often limited. For example, not all students take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), leading to gaps in the data. These participation gaps often occur disproportionately among students from historically underserved communities and backgrounds, which can affect how well the results represent the full student population.</p>	<p>Use State Assessment Data to Drive Student Success</p> <p>Promote a growth-centered approach in working with schools and districts in continuous improvement of their programs in order to drive meaningful improvements in student outcomes while acknowledging and supporting the diverse learning journeys of all students. Foster growth-oriented rather than deficit-based responses to metrics, including developing tools or models that can correlate proficiency levels (e.g., ACCESS scores) with academic growth potential. School principals and other administrators, for example, can utilize this data to work with teachers to create, and/or evaluate and enhance their strategies to improve EL performance and outcomes by grade level.</p> <p>Emphasize interpreting data in context by taking into account participation rates, all available North Star system data, and relevant student characteristics (e.g. newcomers, Students with Limited or Interrupted Education (SLIFE)) and recognizing results as reflecting developmental performance at a point in time rather than indicative of permanent non-proficiency.</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><i>Supporting Equal Opportunities for English Learners</i></p> <p>ELs face unique challenges in school that can impact their educational experience. When students are identified as needing English language support, two key issues often emerge:</p> <p>First, the EL designation can affect how these students are perceived and treated. They may encounter lowered academic expectations from others or face stereotyping about their abilities, which can impact their self-confidence and academic identity. This happens despite their capabilities in their native language or subject knowledge. Second, while English language support is essential, the way it is sometimes implemented can inadvertently limit opportunities. When English Learners are placed in separate language development tracks or pulled out for English instruction, they may miss out on advanced academic courses, enrichment programs, elective classes, extracurricular activities, and social interactions with English-speaking peers.</p> <p>The challenge for educators is to provide necessary language support while ensuring it doesn't come at the cost of other valuable educational experiences. The goal should be to support English language development while maintaining equal access to all academic and social opportunities available to native English speakers.</p>	<p><i>Develop and Implement EL Program Evaluation System</i></p> <p>To ensure equity between ELs and native English speakers while effectively supporting the growing EL population, Minnesota needs a systematic approach to evaluating and improving EL programs while ensuring appropriate staffing levels across the state.</p> <p>Build the capacity of MDE to develop a robust evaluation system that identifies successful EL programs by examining key indicators including but not limited to student progress toward proficiency targets, staff-to-student ratios in successful programs, teacher retention rates, implementation of specific programming models, participation rates in professional development, and effectiveness of extended learning opportunities (summer programs, additional instruction time). Districts and charter schools with strong EL student outcomes should be studied closely to understand what makes their programs effective. This would include assessing the effectiveness of programs aimed at improving EL academic performance and Tier 1 instruction. More specifically, focus on the districts, areas, or schools where EL students are meeting or making significant progress towards proficiency targets. These evaluation metrics might consider staffing ratios, staff retention, programming models, staff participation in professional development opportunities, summer programming or other alternatives to traditional classroom hours and months, what professional development is provided, how EL support in regular classroom instruction is integrated, and how resources and staffing levels are maintained.</p> <p>Require annual reporting of EL students who have exited the EL program through more robust systems for tracking and analyzing student progress. This</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
	<p>starts with comprehensive annual reporting on students who successfully exit EL programs. By collecting detailed data about these transitions - including how long students have spent in EL programs, their academic performance after exit, and which instructional approaches proved most effective - districts can begin to identify patterns of success and areas needing improvement. By increasing data collection, the state can better understand characteristics of districts and areas where EL students are experiencing success or challenges with instruction and programming.</p> <p>Additionally, summarize the accountability framework for transparency describing how EL students are performing in the context of state assessments (e.g., MCA and ACCESS) to ensure equitable opportunities for improvement. Require a disaggregation statewide of the assessment data by EL subgroups (e.g., SLIFE, RAEL, Long Term EL, Never EL, Former EL, Current EL) to better capture diverse experiences and ensure targeted support.</p> <p>For this system to work effectively, we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consistent protocols for tracking student exits from EL services. • Create regular cycles for analyzing and reporting performance data. • Develop systems for sharing successful practices across schools. • Build in time for educators to review and act on the data they collect.
<p><i>Understanding Distinct Purposes of MCA and ACCESS Assessments</i></p> <p>The purpose of the MCA assessment and the ACCESS assessment are different. While the former focuses on knowledge of subject matter content, the latter</p>	<p><i>Increase Clarity and Alignment when Using Assessment Data</i></p> <p>Identify ways to align EL performance with existing state assessment data (MCA and ACCESS) to systematically track, measure, and report progress</p>

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<p>focuses on language proficiency in reading, speaking, listening and writing. This may present challenges as MCA assumes proficiency of the student, which may be a disadvantage to students who have a command of the subject but not necessarily the English language content framing the test.</p>	<p>and outcomes. Integrate ACCESS growth and proficiency targets alongside MCA data in district and school report cards to provide a comprehensive overview of student performance. Include these components in continuous improvement plans across the state, including support built into Tier 1 instruction. Additionally, prioritize the relationship between language development and academic content, supporting teachers and administrators to increasingly make efforts to incorporate English language development in core content instruction (e.g., math assessed on MCA).</p>

Staffing and Managing EL Programs

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><i>EL Coordinator Role is Not Defined</i></p> <p>Currently, there is no statutory language regarding the role or qualifications of an EL Coordinator. The lack of a uniform statewide framework may lead to inconsistencies in the responsibilities and expectations of the role, excessive duties and tasks directed or indirectly associated with it, and significant variability in the needs of districts, schools, and their EL populations making evaluation excessively complex. Additionally, discrepancies in funding and resources due to shifting needs, difficulty with recruitment and retention of licensed EL teachers across districts and geographical areas, and fluctuating student populations throughout the year and on an annual basis further complicate the issues. These factors likely contribute to the ongoing unequal and inequitable oversight of EL programming.</p>	<p><i>Define the Role of EL Coordinator</i></p> <p>Establish requirements for a district-level EL Coordinator position. The EL Coordinator would hold a K–12 ESL license in order to oversee licensed EL teacher staffing and adherence to the required Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) and required English language development standards for the purpose of ensuring that EL students have access to educational opportunities required in state and federal law. The EL Coordinator should have administrative decision-making abilities. The office of the EL Coordinator should support EL associated operations (e.g., enrollment procedures and screening; data collection and dissemination; evaluation of instruction; recruitment, on-boarding, and off-boarding of staff; oversight of professional development, the Seal of Biliteracy program; support with master schedules in schools; design of after school and summer EL enrichment, language assessment, budget oversight and decision making, and more. Given the diversity of needs by geographical area, K–12 school levels, and academic content areas, the EL Coordinator and team would need to identify models that are both consistent and flexible. The EL Coordinator position should be required depending upon the EL student enrollment numbers such as being at or above 10% of total student enrollment.</p>
<p><i>Supply and Demand Discrepancy of EL Teacher to EL Student Ratio</i></p> <p>Like the shortage of licensed teachers in general within the state of Minnesota, there is also a shortage of licensed ESL teachers. ESL has been identified as one of the six designated teacher</p>	<p><i>Address the Supply and Demand Discrepancy of EL Teacher to EL Student Ratio</i></p> <p>Ensure that there is an effective EL student to EL teacher ratio by assessing student and geographical demographics across districts and school levels (primary and secondary). This assessment should</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
<p>shortage areas alongside, early childhood; special education; career and technical education; science, technology, arts, and math; and world languages (PELSB, 2024). In addition to a shortage of licensed EL teachers, the EL student population continues to grow at a faster rate than the recruitment of licensed EL teachers in the state (Najarro, 2023). This means that EL students are receiving their tutelage under less-than-optimal conditions. Moreover, these conditions do not allow teachers working with an out-of-field permission (OFP) to have the confidence or morale that they are providing instruction that is aligned with evidence-based best practices. While OFPs provide a temporary solution to ensure some form of EL instruction, they do not deliver the same quality of educations as focused EL training and monitoring.</p> <p>Additionally, the reality of geography and demographic composition across and beyond the metro complicates efforts to adequately provide support to meet the needs of EL students. In the more densely populated cities and metro areas, schools and districts feel the constraint of having higher concentrations of diverse EL students. In areas further removed from the city centers, which tend to be less densely populated with smaller numbers and percentages of EL students, districts and schools are constrained by budgets that may not allow for funding a full-time ESL teacher.</p>	<p>include a detailed analysis of the EL educator/licensure ratio to identify disparities, particularly in underserved areas. In tandem with this in-depth analysis, there should be continuous monitoring by the EL Coordinator and associated team to ensure equitable distribution of resources and support across geographical areas, districts, and by content areas.</p> <p>Develop continuous monitoring of EL student-to-teacher ratio needed by student demographics, geography, and content areas to maintain appropriate ratio. Provide supports to instructional coaches (licensed ESL teacher leaders) who work with classroom teachers and deliver or contribute to ELD professional development so that they can support classroom and Tier 1 instructors to embed EL supports. Tier 1 instructional support needs to have more EL support embedded within the curriculum itself, including materials with high expectations and enhanced accessibility especially for EL students. Consider requiring LEAs with achievement and integration dollars to set aside a percentage of their funds or utilize those funds to boost the EL program through a cultural and linguistic lens.</p>

Professional Development

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><i>Lack of Integration and Alignment Between Content Areas, EL Programming, and Other Personnel Functions</i></p> <p>Currently professional development across most aspects of K–12 education lacks integration or meaningful training that aligns EL programming and subject content areas. Additionally, ESL teachers may be seen as solely responsible for the social and academic experiences of EL students which misses the reality that EL students are best served when general education teachers attend to English language development, incorporate aspects of their language and culture into programming and even broader aspects of the school experience such as breakfast and the lunch hour, interactions in the nurse’s office, physical education and so forth.</p>	<p><i>Promote, Incentivize, and Require more EL-tailored Professional Development for All Staff</i></p> <p>Provide role-specific professional development for administrators, educators, and other staff to best support the social and academic outcomes of students. Professional development should be led or supported by a site-based licensed ESL teacher, and it should be on-going. Doing so would offer one systematic way of more comprehensively addressing EL needs while also lessening some strain and some over-reliance on EL teachers.</p> <p>Content of the professional development should relate to general staff or specialized roles (e.g., a school nurse may not need to write content and language objectives for a lesson, but professional development on culturally relevant ways to communicate with families who speak a language other than English at home would be helpful to their role). Local longitudinal research from the English Learners in the Mainstream (ELM) Project bears out that when general education teachers are supported by a site-based licensed ESL teacher via professional development and continuous coaching, Tier 1 instruction for ELs is improved (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2022).</p> <p>Professional development should also be grounded in existing frameworks and policies, including the Minnesota (WIDA) English Language Development Standards, the Standards for Effective Practice for pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as the Learning for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act.</p>

Ensuring Meaningful Communication and Engagement with EL Students and Families

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><i>Language and Communication Barriers for EL Parents Trying to Engage with Schools</i></p> <p>Limited English proficiency creates significant obstacles for parents trying to engage with schools (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). This includes difficulty understanding written communications sent home, parent-teacher conferences, school events and meetings, and grade reports and assessment results. Additionally, cultural differences in understanding school systems such as the role of teachers versus parents, understanding how to navigate the school system, and knowing their rights and responsibilities can occur.</p> <p>In general, parents of both EL students and native English speakers play a critical role in ensuring the success of students. However, given the challenges in performance gaps between those currently identified as EL students in relation to those previously identified as EL and never EL, it is imperative that more be done to support the parents of EL students. There are numerous ways in which EL parents are able to help support and foster a healthy learning environment for their children, and the onus for ensuring that these parents are equipped with the confidence and tools to do so lies largely with the educational structure.</p>	<p><i>Build Statewide Capacity to Address the Challenges of EL Parent Family Engagement</i></p> <p>Increase MDE’s capacity to implement the 2014 LEAPS Act as well as Minn. Stat. 123B.32 in order to promote meaningful communication and engagement with parents who may have limited communication abilities in English, including those speaking languages that are less common in Minnesota.</p> <p>Helping to ensure that parents are promoting English proficiency and supporting their students' social and emotional development can be supported by providing guidance via translation and interpretation services. Some districts have very limited-to-no translation services available for communicating with families who speak low-incidence languages. These limitations hinder parents' abilities to fully advocate for their children in the same way as the parents of native English speakers. There should be added communications for districts regarding which documentation requires prioritized translation and interpretation (i.e., state forms and documents, district-wide communications, school-specific communications, and classroom communications and materials; one-on-one communications, etc.).</p>

State-Approved Alternative Programs (SAAP) Subcommittee Challenges and Recommendations

Members of the SAAP subcommittee were tasked with reviewing best practices in providing services to students who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.68. Within this section, the task force underscores the possibility of inequitable outcomes depending on where EL students are when seeking elective credits and recovery credits. Additionally, the task force points out the need for more oversight and support from the state with monitoring SAAPs. These SAAPs, the task force notes, have the ability to reduce barriers to college access and enrollment but require accessible support that are tailored to the diverse circumstances of ELs who are working to make up for GPAs that may not be as high, and for other ELs who are seeking and need assistance identifying more rigorous coursework that will help with entry into colleges.

Accountability framework using credit recovery rates and graduation rates challenges

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<p><i>Lack of Staff and Oversight to Ensure SAAP Accountability</i></p> <p>Without formal oversight from the state, SAAPs may lack the coordination necessary for technical aspects of programming, the capacity to oversee the hiring, onboarding, and retention of qualified staff to support EL programming. Furthermore, the limited support reduces the ability to ensure that training and professional development opportunities are keeping up with best practices.</p>	<p><i>Build Capacity to Ensure SAAP Accountability</i></p> <p>Ensure the quality and equity of EL services provided within SAAPs in the effective screening and tracking of eligibility of EL students, availability of a licensed EL teacher, availability of accessible interpretation and translation services, comprehensive and inclusive content for EL students.</p> <p>Increase MDE’s capacity to provide oversight of SAAPs which requires personnel to track accountability including applications, continual learning plans (CLPs) as required by MINN. STAT. 124D.128 Subd 3, monitoring, and technical assistance. Coordinate alternative program accountability and professional development (i.e., data collection and monitoring of graduation rates and college acceptance for those who receive EL supports in relation to those who do not).</p>
<p><i>Barriers to College Access</i></p> <p>There is a need for improved understanding around the diversity of EL students, some who may have</p>	<p><i>Reduce Barriers to College Access</i></p> <p>Build MDE’s capacity to develop and promote access to Early and Middle College style programs. Provide</p>

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
trouble being accepted into college programs that have higher GPA requirements. In other cases, there may be additional support required for helping EL students identify opportunities that reflect their abilities and desires for more advanced level requirements that make college more accessible.	additional resources to sites targeted to developing and promoting access to Early Middle college programs for EL students enrolled in ALC programs and/or schools. Provide opportunities for credit recovery and subsequent continued student advancement.

Professional development for teachers and other staff challenges

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><i>Inadequate Staffing and Resources Dedicated to SAAP</i></p> <p>MDE currently has no staffing or resources specifically dedicated to SAAP professional development for staff. This means the potential for greater likelihood for inconsistent staff development and thus decreased adherence to best practice standards and reduced quality in support; greater likelihood of limited resources to make improvements and changes aligned with statewide policies and best practices; greater likelihood of staff retention issues including staff from diverse backgrounds and/or qualified to offer tailored support for diverse needs; greater likelihoods of widening achievement gaps; and continuous reduction of accountability.</p>	<p><i>Provide staffing and resources dedicated to SAAP</i></p> <p>Provide innovation grants to SAAPs to support piloting of programs and services that successfully meet the unique needs of SAAP-eligible students. Equalize the extended time revenue and couple future increases of the formula to inflation/CPI.</p> <p>Explore increasing the amount of extended time to align with research on how much time it takes to make up for learning loss.</p> <p>Increase MDE’s capacity to ensure that SAAP-eligible students are availing themselves of all resources and opportunities available to them such as extended time and Early and Middle College, especially EL’s as they universally qualify for ALC under the Graduation Incentives Act/Program.</p> <p>Provide joint professional development with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to meet the legislatively required partnerships to support students. Build statewide capacity to better serve students and achieve improved academic outcomes.</p> <p>Provide support and accountability centered on resource allocation to establish metrics to ensure SAAPs receive the necessary resources and professional development to meet state and federal requirements for ELs as well as the standards of the LEAPS Act to provide services beyond credit recovery. For example, provide dedicated funding to SAAPs for ongoing professional development for SAAP staff including joint professional development with community-based organizations and along with building PD.</p> <p>Provide a funding stream for alternative programs to meet the unfunded statutory requirement (123A.06)</p>

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
	<p>to partner with other available educational services, specifically the recommended community-based cultural organizations to meet the needs of EL students.</p> <p>Further define the role and build capacity of MDE to set quality standards, require programs participate in continuous improvement processes, process applications, review complaints, and if necessary, create compliance plans.</p>

EL Revenue Subcommittee Challenges and Recommendations

The EL revenue subcommittee was tasked with analyzing how EL revenue is used at the site level and administrative level and whether those expenditures align with the best practices identified under clause (1).

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><i>EL Program Funding is Not Sufficient to Meet the Needs of EL Students</i></p> <p>As base funding has gone up for all students, the categorical funding stream for ELs has remained static. Even with the recent increase in EL state funding, there is still a large deficit, and the funding is inadequate for EL students to meet all state standards. Since the funding is based on the number of students, this gap is most problematic for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a higher density of English learners (20– 30% or more of English Learner population in their district). Caps on EL concentration revenue and compensatory revenue further compound this issue. This lack of funding tells EL students and families they don't matter.</p>	<p><i>Analyze EL expenditures to consider further adjustments to the current EL funding structure.</i></p> <p>Analyze ways to adjust the current EL funding structure to ensure that funding is provided to meet state and federal requirements. This could include analysis of funding by student type or classification (i.e., recognizing SLIFE students in both policy and funding), and having funding follow students across schools and districts. Additionally, explore to what extent funding is commensurate with the number of EL FTEs in each LEA.</p>
<p><i>There is a Lack of Funding Parity Among Local Education Agencies (LEAs).</i></p> <p>There is a lack of parity with regard to best practice or proportional amount that LEAs put invest beyond formula funding. The current formula is not adequate for LEAs with lower numbers or concentrations of ELs.</p>	<p><i>Increase Data Transparency and Explore Evidence-based Revenue Assessments</i></p> <p>Conduct annual internal evaluations and periodic external evaluations to assess and audit the relationship between proficiency outcomes, staffing retention, and EL graduation rates. Solid evaluation plans could help, for example, with identifying return on investment or the benefits that could be associated with increases and/or reallocation in funding, or the impact of employing more dual language ESL teachers, and more. Share the findings in ways that are easily accessible to professionals and the public.</p> <p>Analyze the adequacy funding for LEAs with smaller numbers or concentrations of ELs. Particularly,</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
	<p>analyze the funding floor for LEAs with 20 or fewer students to make sure that this amount will generate enough funding for those LEAs.</p> <p>Analyze the impact of the 11.5% EL Concentration Revenue cap to ensure that EL funding goes where it is most needed.</p> <p>Analyze the impact of the 80% cap on Compensatory Revenue and require that the compensatory dollars generated by EL's must be used to serve EL's.</p> <p>Implement an annual review of Basic Skills Funding Deficit. Require an annual report to the Legislature on the difference between the amount of revenue expended by districts on students eligible for basic skills revenue and the amount of state and federal revenue generated by those students, which shall be designated as the Basic Skills Funding Deficit.</p> <p>Determine the basic skills revenue required to provide students with education that meets state standards. Require a plan to eliminate the basic skills revenue deficit.</p> <p>Provide funding to close the basic skills revenue deficit shall be used by school districts to increase the programs and services provided to the students who generate without supplanting, unless the district certifies that it has sufficient revenue to make continuous and substantial annual progress to meet school readiness goals; to close the academic achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty; have all students attain career and college readiness before graduating from high school; and have all students graduate from high school with a minimum of 15 dual credits earned upon graduation.</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
	Provide funding to develop and refine accountability measures. Build the capacity of MDE for staffing FTE's and developing accountability measures, to ensure each of these financial proposals are supported and held accountable.
<p><i>Lack of Investment in EL Teachers</i></p> <p>The current EL funding model does not adequately invest in capacity building for quality EL services and funding formulas are not tied to FTE. Moreover, there are few—if any, incentives for EL teachers to speak or learn additional languages which can be beneficial to working with EL students.</p>	<p><i>Provide Financial Incentives for EL Teacher Development and Recruitment</i></p> <p>This could include compensating relocation costs for out-of-state teachers (e.g., California, Texas), pay differentials for teachers to gain skill in working with ELs, and pay differentials for teachers who speak or learn additional languages.</p>

Workforce Subcommittee Challenges and Recommendations

The Workforce Subcommittee was tasked with identifying obstacles to hiring and retaining necessary staff to support effective English learner programs. Challenges and recommendations in this section highlight the complexity of addressing teacher retention and stress, particularly for EL teachers. Moreover, this section suggests that improving pay is important, but on its own, is not sufficient. To retain teachers and improve conditions, the task force is recommending systemic changes, including clearer role definitions, better collaboration, support structures, and pathways for professional growth.

For the purposes of this report, “microcredential” refers to recognition of the demonstration of knowledge and skills by completing a subset of a PELSB approved ESL program. Microcredential can show teachers have demonstrated competency with the tools and skills necessary to support language development and build content area knowledge and skills. The committee recognized variability between microcredentials as each approved ESL teacher preparation program determines requirements for its own ESL microcredentials. Refer to [Hamline University’s ELM Certificate](#) for an example.

Hiring and retention

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<p><i>Ratio and workload can be overwhelming for EL teachers, especially in rural areas.</i></p> <p>The growing number of EL students in schools creates pressure points around teacher ratios and support. When buildings or districts have relatively few EL students, serious resource gaps and workload issues often fly under the radar. Without reaching an obvious crisis point, these challenges may not grab the attention of administrators who control budgets and staffing.</p> <p>EL teachers face particular strain when it comes to their expanding responsibilities. While their primary role focuses on supplementary language instruction, many find themselves advocating for students' fundamental needs—from access to school supplies to helping families navigate social services. This stretches teachers well beyond their core educational duties. Rural areas feel this tension acutely, as</p>	<p><i>Establish ratio guidelines for service providers.</i> There is a need to establish EL ratio guidelines similar to Special Education ratio guidelines.</p> <p><i>Reduce EL teacher to EL student ratio ratios</i> either at the district or building level and ensure that there are adequate resources to support high-needs students.</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
<p>teachers typically cover multiple school buildings while carrying higher ratios.</p> <p>We are losing highly qualified ESL teachers at an alarming rate. The current response to this problem is to hire new teachers with limited qualifications.</p> <p>Teachers are stressed and burned out. There is a notable increase in stress and burnout among teachers, particularly those in the EL field. Many teachers report struggling with mental health issues, particularly related to stress, workload, and managing student behavior.</p> <p>Staff turnover and loss of seasoned EL teachers. When schools lose EL teachers with longer tenure and professional experience, they are often replaced with newer staff with less teaching experience. This can be challenging for newer staff, who may lack the mentorship, support, and guidance necessary for success in the school. Frustration with their situation can lead to burnout, turnover, and less than desirable outcomes in terms of student performance in those classrooms.</p>	
<p>Teacher pay is not commensurate with working conditions and demands. While policies to raise teacher pay exist, they don't address critical issues like workload, working conditions, and stress, which significantly affect teacher retention. EL teachers often face additional pressures, such as high ratios, lack of proper role clarity, and being overburdened with wraparound services when their primary role should be instructional.</p> <p>Women still face gender disparity in teacher pay. Despite teaching being a female-dominated field, women teachers, especially in charter schools, continue to face pay disparities. There is concern that this issue may stem from disparities in how teachers</p>	<p>Increase teacher pay.</p> <p>Explore models for incentivizing and expanding professional development, such as microcredentials that could lead to salary increases or career advancement.</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
are paid across different types of schools (e.g., charter vs. public).	
<p>EL teachers often assume duties outside of their teaching roles in order to meet EL student and family needs. EL teachers often provide additional services outside their instructional role when there is insufficient or inadequate support in their district or building. Support structures for EL teachers and their learners vary across urban and rural districts. EL educators increasingly serve as cultural bridges, family liaisons, and student advocates, on top of instructional responsibilities. Additionally, collaboration with general education teachers can be imbalanced, insufficient or nonexistent.</p>	<p>Encourage districts to develop clarity of expectations for general education teachers and support staff to allow EL teachers to focus on instructional roles. Clear protocols are especially needed when there are shortages of support staff and related service teachers, such as social workers.</p>
<p>Collaboration and support structures for EL teachers are often not sufficient. Teachers in smaller, rural schools may feel isolated, particularly if they are the only person responsible for a subject or group of students. Additionally, there is a lack of formal structures for collaboration or networking to find support among teachers, especially in rural areas. Teacher isolation also makes it harder for less seasoned teachers to advocate for themselves.</p>	<p>Create state or district-level support structures for EL teachers. These support structures should be designed to ensure that EL teachers are not isolated and have the support they need to succeed.</p> <p>Incentivize and support more experienced teachers and newer teachers. Experienced teachers are essential to the continued success of school structures. Moreover, they can be critical supports for newer teachers and the general morale of a school. It is also imperative to invest in the newer teachers providing adequate support and training to reduce turnover related to dissatisfaction. Failure to retain more experienced and newer teachers is costly and wasteful. We recommend a both/and response instead of simply recruiting new teachers. Students benefit from a variety of new to highly experienced teachers.</p>
<p>Content teachers report being unprepared to teach multilingual learners.</p>	<p>Incentivize microcredentials. The taskforce recognizes that a significant catalyst for EL proficiency growth needs to come from effective language</p>

Challenges	Recommendations
	<p>instruction from general education teachers who implement best practice strategies for multilingual learners in the general education context. To that end, there is interest in encouraging developing microcredentials for content teachers to enhance their skills to teach all students, and specifically their multilingual learners. However, questions remain about how these would be integrated into the teacher contract, and how and whether they would be recognized for salary increases or certification changes.</p> <p><i>Invest in multilingual strategy coaching for content teachers.</i></p> <p><i>Require Teacher Development and Evaluation to include criteria pertaining to the Standards of Effective Practice standards for teaching multilingual learners (for example, 1H, 1I, 4A, 4G, 5D).</i></p> <p><i>Refer to Professional Development section of this report for additional recommendations.</i></p>
<p><i>There is a lack of statutory requirement for EL leadership.</i> This lack of requirements at the district level results in EL needs being overlooked.</p>	<p><i>Administrator certification.</i> Create a requirement, possibly a microcredential, that administrators who oversee TDE have demonstrated skills and knowledge around teaching multilingual learners. Update administrative requirements to include knowledge about instruction for multilingual learners.</p> <p><i>Create protocol for district-level EL Coordinator position that requires an ESL license.</i></p>
<p><i>Shortage of ESL teachers and shortage of teachers of color.</i></p>	<p><i>Increase Grow Your Own pathways for multilingual, community-based educators.</i> There is a need to explore pathways for multilingual or community-based individuals to enter the teaching field, especially in areas with a high demand for EL</p>

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
	teachers. Pathways may begin as early as middle school.

Microcredentials and other certifications

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<p><i>Content teachers report being unprepared to meet the needs of their multilingual students.</i></p>	<p><i>Incentivize content teachers to earn ESL microcredentials but do not include the microcredential on the PELSB license.</i></p> <p>While microcredentials would enhance teachers’ skills, the recommendation is that the microcredential not appear on a teacher’s license. There is concern that adding the microcredential to teacher licenses would create confusion about the difference between the ESL license and the ESL microcredential. Additionally, establishing microcredentials that are recognized by PELSB would require significant resources, including rulemaking to define the microcredential standards, initial and continuing approval processes for the microcredential opportunities, and online licensing system updates needed to process microcredentials. If a teacher wishes to add the ESL license after earning an ESL microcredential, the teacher may choose to complete the teacher preparation program or pursue licensure via portfolio. This approach fits into a broader strategy of developing teaching talent through coaching and mentoring, while maintaining the high standards of full ESL licensure. Microcredentials can serve as building blocks toward deeper EL expertise.</p> <p><i>Add rubric to required licensure renewal reflection.</i></p> <p>Add a rubric based on Minnesota’s Standards of Effective Practice (Minnesota Rules 2023, part 8710.2000) to evaluate the required renewal reflection that targets measurement of teacher growth in skills, knowledge, and ability to provide effective instruction for multilingual learners.</p> <p><i>Monitor the impact of new teacher preparation standards on teacher preparation program</i></p>

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
	<p><i>completers' preparedness to provide instruction for multilingual learners.</i></p> <p>Since new standards for teacher preparation were recently adopted, changes for pre-service teachers are not recommended at this time.</p>

Conclusion

The EL Task Force, established by the 2024 legislation, conducted a review of EL programming, staffing, and funding. The EL Task Force's findings identified several structural barriers to EL student success: systemic challenges, insufficient funding, gaps in achievement on statewide assessment, inadequate professional development, struggles with teacher recruitment and retention, and unsustainable staffing models.

Further, the EL Task Force's review revealed challenges in meeting the growing and diverse needs of the EL student population in Minnesota. While there were limitations in terms of time constraints to accomplish this legislative charge, the EL Task Force determined that the current implementation of EL education requires significant updates to address the demographic shift and educational demands. As outlined in the analysis, key findings point to a need for a multi-faceted approach to address EL funding mechanisms, teacher professional development, workforce development, and program accountability. The EL Task Force recommended both immediate actions and long-term structural changes to create a more effective EL education system.

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