



English Learners in Minnesota Report

2023-24

English Learner Education in Minnesota

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) ensures educational equity for multilingual learners through supporting school districts and charter schools to develop, implement and evaluate research-based language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) so that multilingual learners, including students with English learner (EL) status, attain academic language proficiency and achieve state academic content standards.

Unless otherwise noted, this report provides information using the previous state fiscal year's data on funding available for ELs, EL demographics and achievement. It includes statutory and regulatory references pertaining to English learners and describes MDE's support of local education agencies (LEAs) in implementing effective LIEPs to ensure ELs are able to reach their full academic potential. MDE thanks Minnesota districts and charter schools, universities, families and community members for their continued efforts to collaborate with each other to implement effective systems and programs that continue to increase equitable educational outcomes and opportunities for all ELs!

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Minnesota Multilingual Learner Education Strategic Framework

MDE is committed to ensuring educational equity and access for multilingual learners through high-quality language instruction and rigorous academic instruction. MDE supports school districts and charter schools (referred to as LEAs) to develop, implement and evaluate research-based language instruction educational programs so that multilingual learners attain academic language proficiency and achieve state academic content standards.

Definitions

English Learner (EL) – As defined in Minnesota under [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D. 59, subdivision 2](#), an English learner is:

“a pupil in kindergarten through grade 12; an early childhood special education student under Part B, section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, United States Code, title 20, section 1419; or a prekindergarten student enrolled in an approved voluntary prekindergarten program under [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 142D.08](#) or a school readiness plus program, who meets the requirements under subdivision 2a or the following requirements:

1. the pupil, as declared by a parent or guardian uses a language other than English, comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English, or usually speaks a language other than English; and
2. the pupil is determined by a valid assessment measuring the pupil’s English language proficiency and by developmentally appropriate measures, which might include observations, teacher judgment, parent recommendations, or developmentally appropriate assessment instruments, to lack the necessary English skills to participate fully in academic classes taught in English.”

Immigrant Children and Youth – The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Section 3201[5]), defines an Immigrant student as someone who:

1. is a child who is aged 3 through 21;
2. was not born in any state or any U.S. territory; and
3. has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years (on a cumulative basis).

Note: While most immigrants in Minnesota are also English learners, students who are not ELs can also be immigrants. Also, not all ELs are immigrants. For additional information, see the MDE web page on [Immigrant Children and Youth Grant](#).

Long-term English Learners (LTEL) – Minnesota does not have a formal definition of LTELs within its statute, and ESSA does not formally define long-term English learners. However, under ESSA, all states are required to report the number and percentage of ELs who have not attained English language proficiency within

five years of initial classification as an English learner and first enrollment in the local educational agency [ESSA, Section 3122(a)(6)].

Migratory Children – According to sections 1309 of the ESSA, a child is a “migratory child” if the following conditions are met:

1. The child is not older than 21 years of age; and,
 - a. The child is entitled to a free public education (through grade 12) under state law, or,
 - b. The child is not yet at a grade level at which the LEA provides a free public education, and,
2. The child made a qualifying move in the preceding 36 months as a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher, or did so with, or to join a parent/guardian or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher; and,
3. With regard to the qualifying move identified in [2], above, the child moved due to economic necessity from one residence to another residence, and,
 - a. From one school district to another; or,
 - b. In a state that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such district; or,
 - c. Resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence.

Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL) – A RAEL is an English learner enrolled in a school in one of the 50 States in the United States or District of Columbia for less than 12 months (ESSA 1111(b)(3)(A)).

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) – A student with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) is an English learner with limited or interrupted formal education [and] is an English learner under subdivision 2 who has at least two fewer years of schooling than the English learner's peers when entering school in the United States.

English Learner Education Legislation

Both state and federal legislation address needs of English learners. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 initially determined that students who do not demonstrate English language proficiency have a right to a language instruction educational program that provides them access to the academic content instruction that all children receive. Court decisions and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights with the United States Department of Education have described in more detail the responsibilities of LEAs. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), delineated more specifically the responsibilities of LEAs and state education agencies (SEAs). For a detailed list of state and federal laws as well as Supreme Court cases, see [English Learner Education Legislation](#).

WIDA™

Minnesota joined the WIDA Consortium (formerly known as World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) in 2011 and adopted the [WIDA English language development \(ELD\) standards in Rule](#) in January of 2012. WIDA provides language development resources to states and districts to support the academic success of multilingual learners. They offer a comprehensive, research-based system of language standards, assessments, professional learning and educator assistance. The consortium consists of 41 states.

The ESEA, as amended by ESSA (2015), requires that states set standardized procedures all districts must follow to screen and identify English learners. As part of Minnesota's entry criteria and procedures, all students must have a parent or guardian complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS). Students whose completed MNLS indicates that the student uses or understands one or more other language in addition to English must be screened for language proficiency level. Minnesota districts use the WIDA Screener appropriate for the student's grade level.

Under the ESEA, identified as ELs be assessed annually for English language proficiency, including students who receive special education services. Minnesota uses the ACCESS for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) and the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs as the annual state English language proficiency assessment. Based upon stakeholder input, Minnesota established proficiency definitions for all English learners. The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an assessment of ELD for students with English learner status in grades 1–12 who also have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

The WIDA framework consists of four different components:

- WIDA ELD Standards Statements provides educators a link between content classes and language development.
- Key Language Uses. There are four different types of language use across disciplines narrate, inform, explain, and argue. Educators utilize the language use to help prioritize curricular planning to integrate language and content in the classroom.
- Language Expectations assist both educators and students to understand the language use within the content classroom.
- Proficiency Level Descriptors. Educators are able to see the growth and development of students across the six level of English proficiency.

For further information visit [ELD Standards Framework | WIDA](#).

The Five WIDA English Language ELD Standards Statements:

- **ELD Standard 1:** English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
- **ELD Standard 2:** English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.

- **ELD Standard 3:** English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.
- **ELD Standard 4:** English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.
- **ELD Standard 5:** English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies,

Some Applicable Uses of the WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors

- Collaboration between language development and content area educators
- Professional learning activities about language development
- School team discussion about the language growth of multilingual learners
- Conversations with families in their preferred language
- To help design and scaffold classroom instruction and assessment tasks (among other tools)
- To support teacher and student discussions around language performance in relation to learning goals
- To monitor progress of multilingual learners as they show language growth over time
- To evaluate evidence from student work (portfolio of speaking and writing samples) to inform instruction

Inappropriate Uses of the WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)

The PLDs should not be used as restrictive examples or as a finite list of student abilities. Nor should they be used to limit access to complex texts and grade-level materials, participation in rigorous learning, or engagement in meaningful classroom discussions. Finally, the grade-level cluster PLDs should not be used to lower expectations. For more on intended and inappropriate uses of the PLDs, see page 35 of the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#).

WIDA™ Resources

MDE embraces an asset-based approach in providing equity and meaningful access for multilingual learners. Minnesota focuses on expanding staff access to training and resources to improve instruction and assessment. Following are resources available to Minnesotans:

[Minnesota ELD Standards Page](#)

[WIDA ELD Standards Framework - 2020 Edition](#)

[ELD Standards in Action](#)

[Minnesota WIDA Membership Page](#)

[WIDA Focus Bulletins](#)

Learn more about the WIDA Consortium, its assessments, the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, resources and training for educators on the [WIDA website](#).

Funding for English Learner Education

State Funding

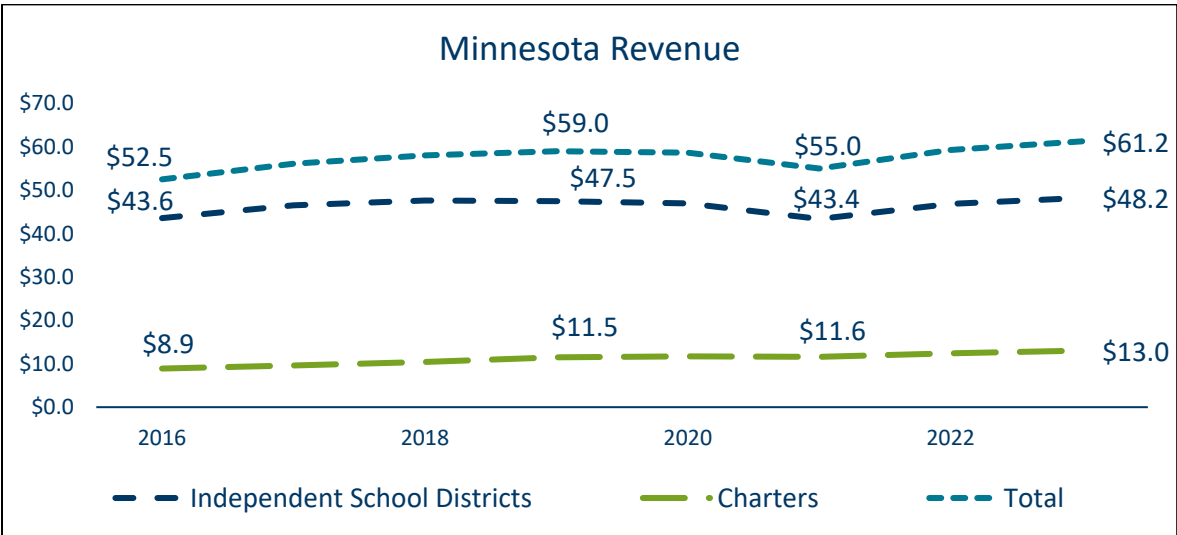
The primary responsibility in meeting the needs of ELs lies with the LEA. The LEAs cover the costs associated with addressing student needs by leveraging a variety of state and federal resources, which are used to supplement (but not supplant) local resources. Students with EL status qualify for the same revenue that every Minnesota child in public education generates. In addition, ELs also generate supplementary state aid. State funding sources that can be used for quality EL programming include: general education revenue, state EL funding, compensatory funding, transition revenue, and others.

State EL funding is allocated to students who:

- have been identified as English learners by state definition ([Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.59](#));
- have generated fewer than seven years of average daily membership (ADM) in Minnesota public schools; and,
- are served in a language instruction educational program for English learners during the current fiscal year.

State EL funding status is not to be used in determining service for ELs. The funding formula exists simply to distribute the state funds available for ELs in an equitable manner across all the LEAs in the state. Figure 1 shows an increase in funds to districts and a corresponding increase in funds to charter schools. In 2022, the state began adding an additional two million dollars for the cross subsidy for ELs.

Figure 1. Actual State EL Funding in Millions of Dollars, 2016 to 2023



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

Federal Funding

Title III, a component of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, is another source of funding to supplement the resources of a LEA. These funds aid the district in enhancing: 1) language instruction educational programming for ELs and immigrant students; 2) English learner’s parent, family and community engagement opportunities; 3) and professional development for staff working with English learners. The federal government awards Title III grants to all states, including Minnesota, based on their EL and immigrant student enrollment numbers, and Minnesota, in turn, distributes the funds to LEAs based on their number of enrolled students identified as English learners as well as immigrant counts. Figure 2 shows that Title III funding amounts for Minnesota have increased from \$5.3 million in 2003 to \$10.8 million in 2023.

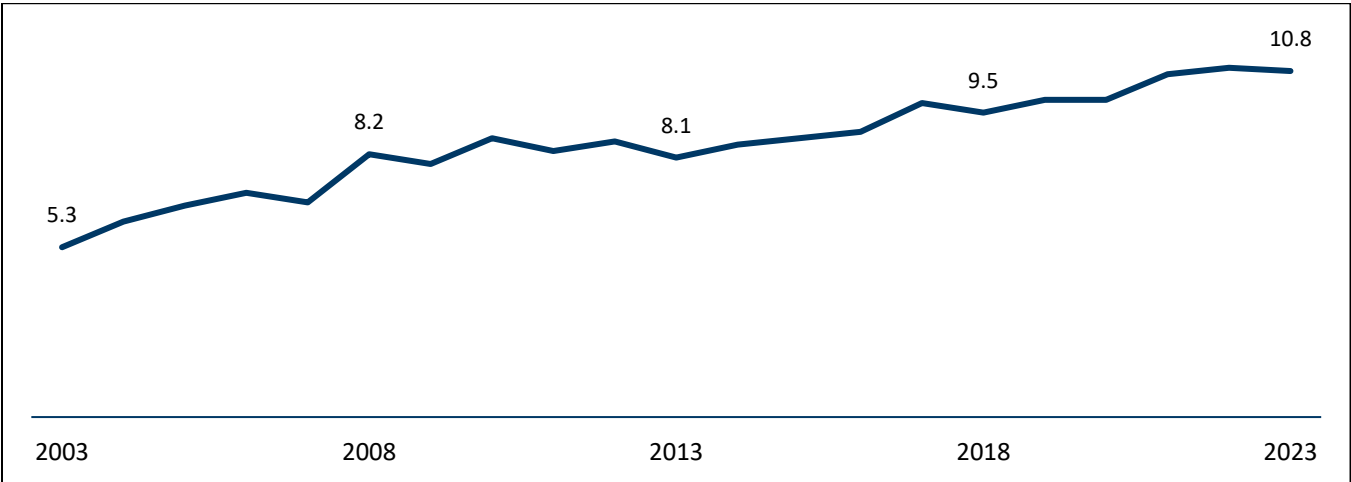
In order to be eligible for Title III funds, an LEA must enroll enough students identified with English learner status to generate a minimum of \$10,000 in aid, based on each year’s per pupil funding unit. An LEA that does not meet the threshold may join other LEAs and form a consortium to reach the \$10,000 requirement and apply for funding.

In addition, states must set aside a certain percentage of the grant allotment for LEAs highly impacted by a significant increase of immigrant children and allocate these funds to eligible LEAs.

ELs are eligible on the same basis as all students to receive both state and federal funding. LEAs need to consider the allocation and coordination of all state and federal funding to coordinate services to meet all student needs including students identified with EL status or immigrant status.

Note: The federal fiscal year is calculated differently than the Minnesota state fiscal year. The 2023 federal fiscal year runs from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023.

Figure 2. Minnesota’s Federal Title III EL Education Funding, in millions 2003 to 2023



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

English Learners in Minnesota

In 2024, 869,967 PreK—12 students were enrolled in Minnesota public schools with 84,050 students, or 9.6% of students identified as English learners. Figure 3 displays fall enrollment data from 2019-20 through 2023-24. The data indicates enrollment of ELs had continued to increase consistently since 2019-20. In the 2020–21 school year, in the first full school year impacted by COVID-19, enrollment of ELs and non ELs dropped, while in 2021–22 there continued to be a drop in overall enrollment but an increase in EL enrollment. Figures 3 through 7 are sourced from MDE [Data Reports and Analytics’ Enrollment reports](#).

Figure 3. Total PreK-12 and English Learner Enrollment in Minnesota Public Schools, 2020 to 2024

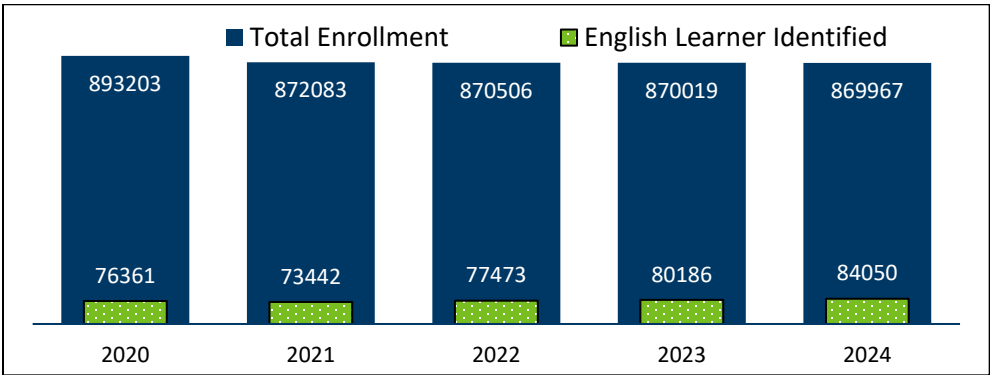


Figure 4 shows the distribution of Minnesota’s ELs across the grade levels. The number of ELs in primary grades (averaging over 8,200 students per grade in grades K–4, dropping to 6,350 in grade 5) is much higher than in secondary grades (averaging about 5,200 students per grade in grades 6–12), which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

Figure 4. Distribution of K-12 Students Identified as ELs Enrolled in Minnesota Public Schools by Grade, 2023–24

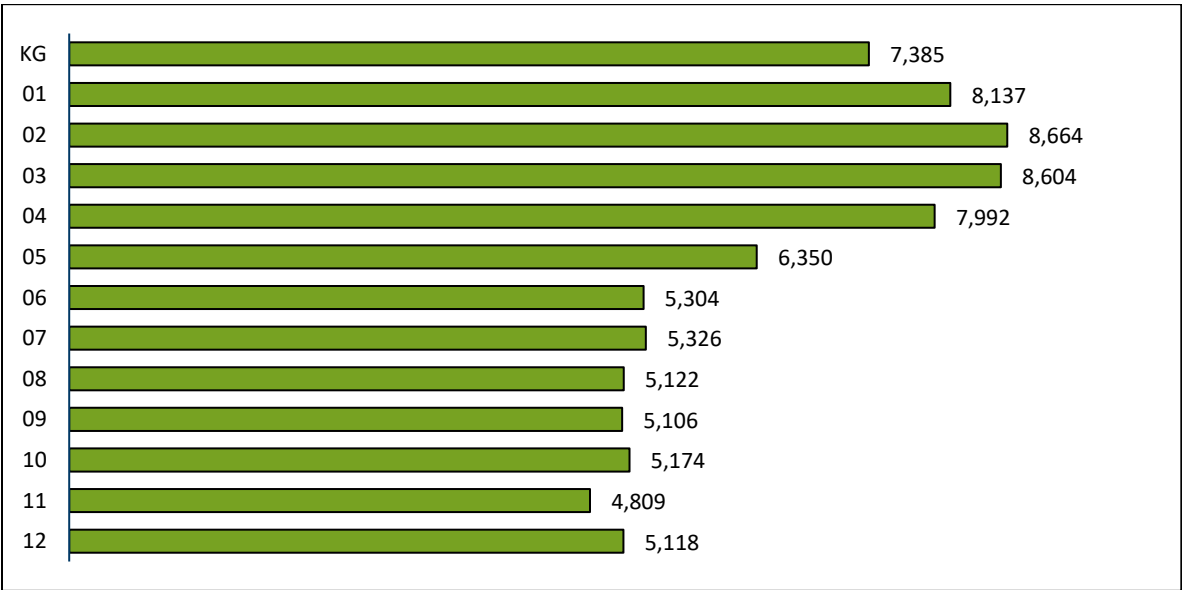


Figure 5 illustrates the growth in the number of ELs within the 15 LEAs serving the most English learners in the state. Eleven LEAs showed increased numbers of ELs (Anoka-Hennepin, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, Osseo, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage, Bloomington, Robbinsdale, Columbia Heights, Worthington, South Washington and Roseville). The two largest increases from 2020 to 2024 were in Anoka-Hennepin and Columbia Heights school districts. Of the 15 LEAs, Minneapolis and St. Paul showed the most significant decreases in EL enrollment, followed by St. Cloud and Rochester.

Figure 5. English Learner Enrollment in the 15 Minnesota Public School Districts with the Most ELs, 2020 and 2024

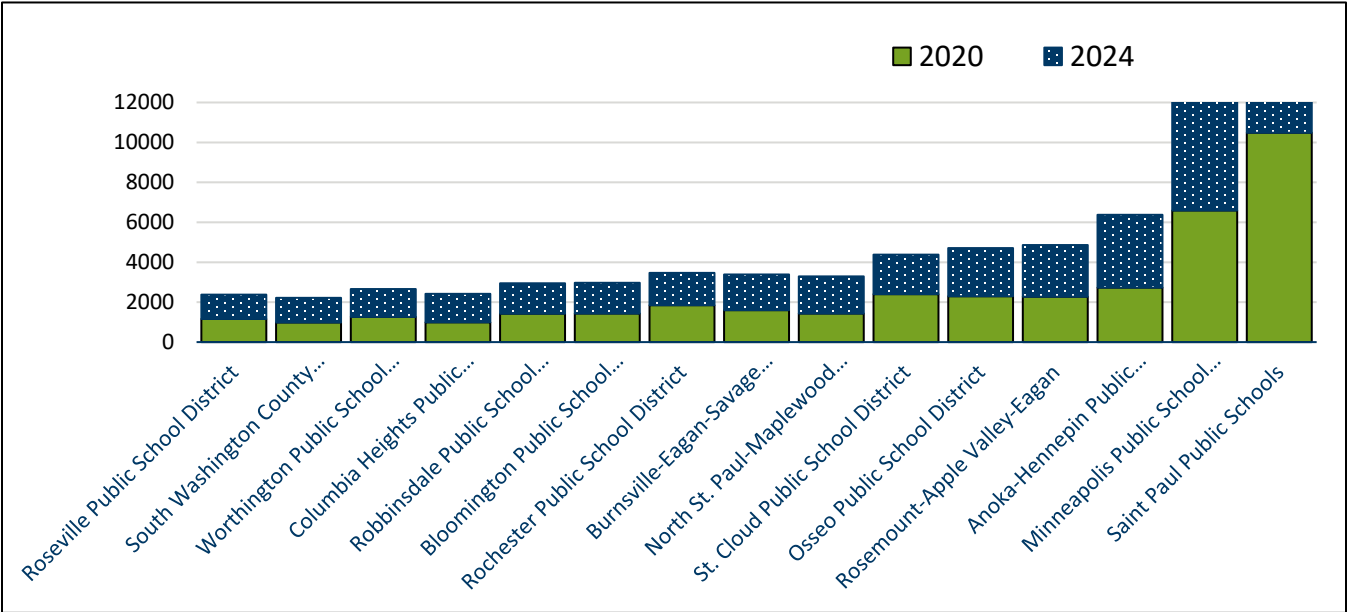


Figure 6 shows that growth in numbers of English learners has increased in the seven-county metro area of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties (57,958 in 2020 to 64,209 in 2024) and has remained fairly consistent outside the seven-country metro area (18,403 in 2020 to 19,841 in 2024).

Figure 6. Minnesota PreK–12 EL Enrollment Comparing 7-County Metro Area and Non-Metro School Enrollment, 2020 and 2024

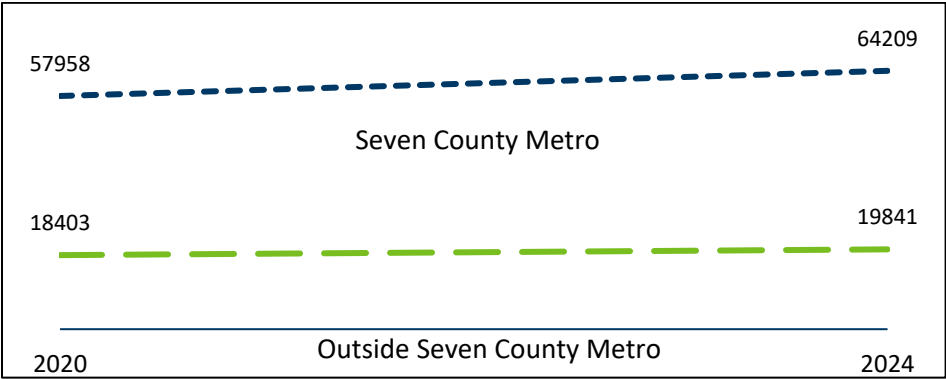
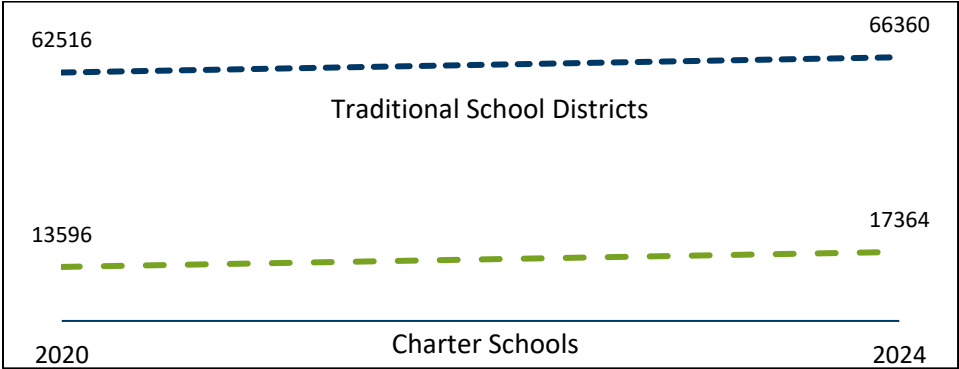


Figure 7 shows that English learner enrollment in charter schools) has increased (from 13,596 in 2020 to 17,364 in 2024). Both traditional school districts and charter schools EL’s growth has been positive. Charter school growth was at a higher rate than traditional school districts (from 62,516 in 2020 to 66,360 in 2024).

Figure 7. Minnesota EL Enrollment Comparing Traditional School District and Charter School Enrollment, 2020 and 2024

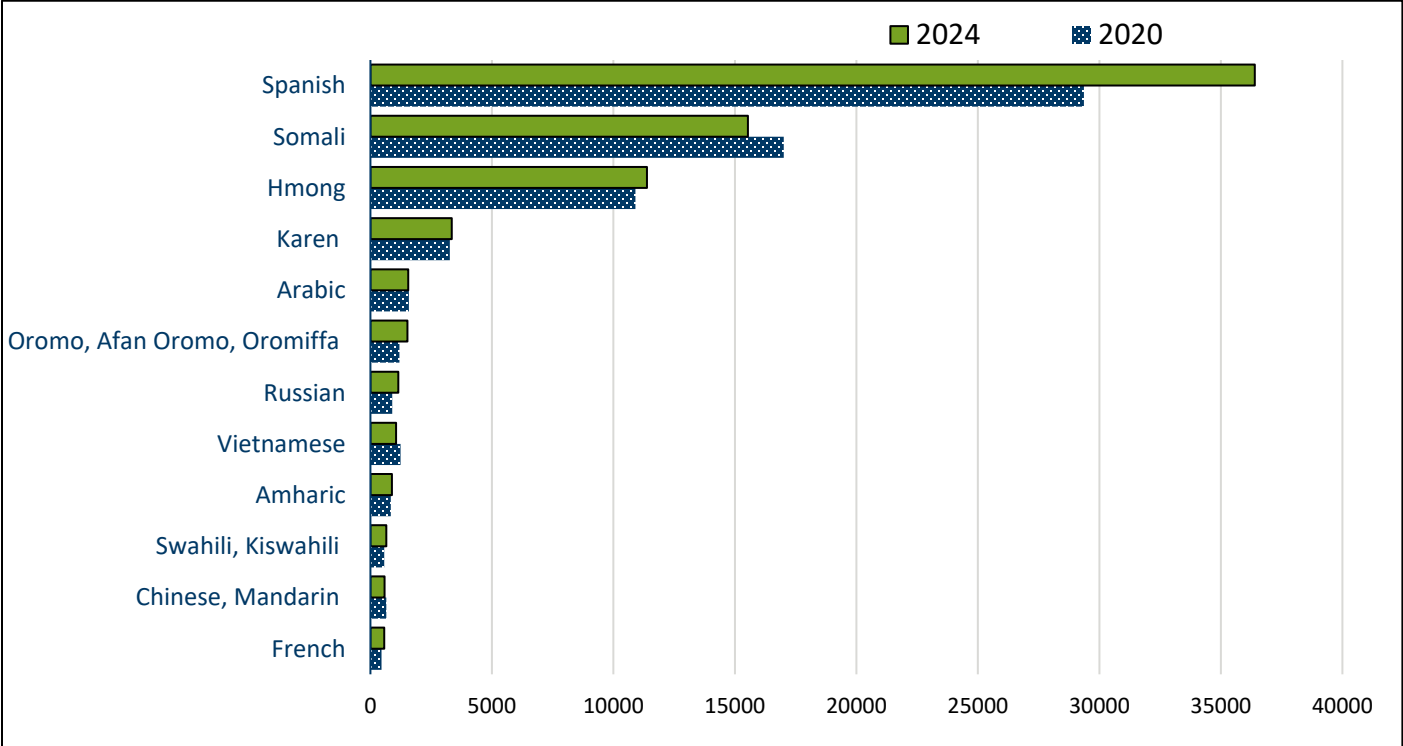


Primary Home Languages

In the 2023-24 school year, 348 languages, including English, were reported for the 851,268 students identified in the data set of “Primary Home Language Totals” located in the MDE Data Center. All districts report the individual student’s home language to MDE. While EL totals could not be identified at the state level using public data, a primary home language that is not English is the first step in the identification of an English learner.

Figure 8 provides information on the top 12 primary languages other than English, comparing 2020 and 2024. The top 12 languages spoken by English Learners generally do not change drastically from year to year. However, there was a noticeable increase in the number of English learners who speak Spanish and a decrease in the number of English learners who speak Somali in 2024 compared to 2020, which may be due, in part, to an increase in the number of Spanish speakers who have settled in Minnesota.

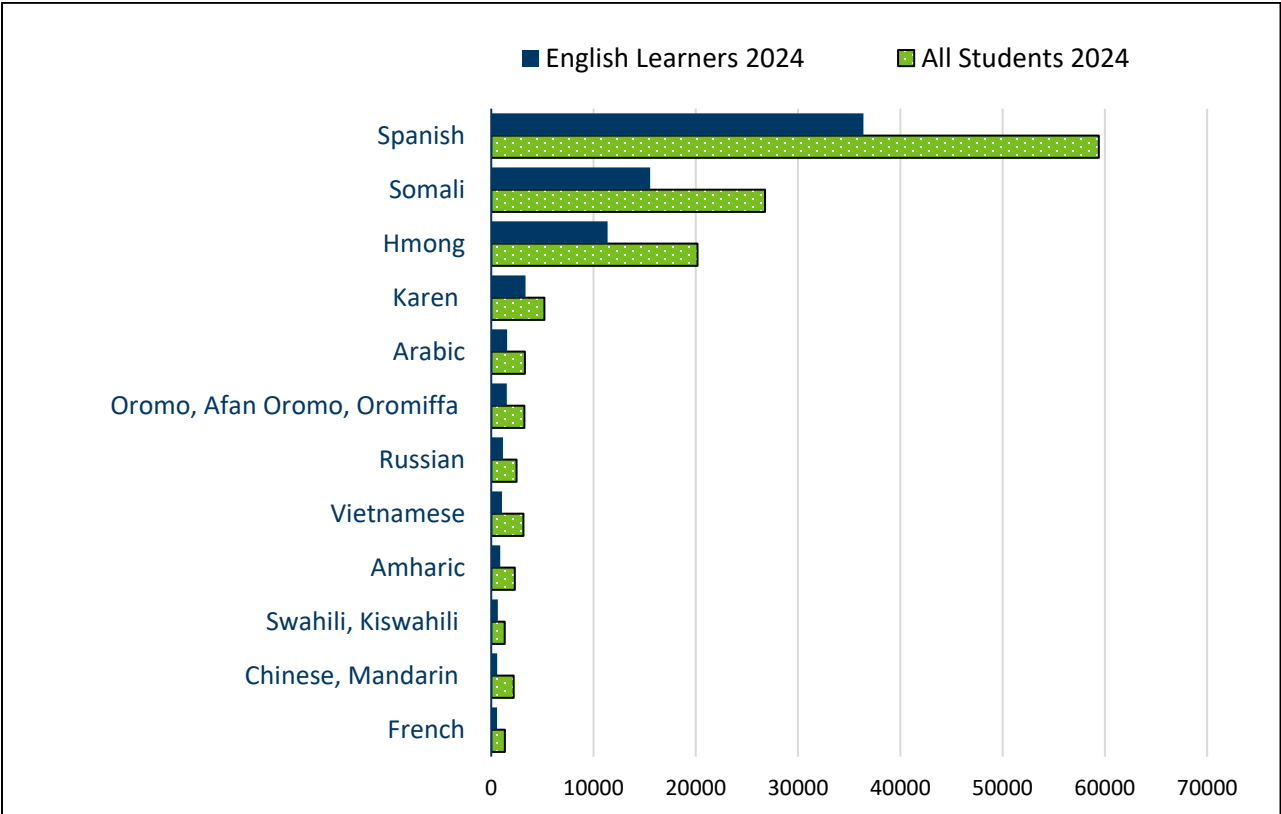
Figure 8. Minnesota's Top 12 Languages Other than English for English Learners in 2020 and 2024



Source: MDE Enrollment Data

When comparing the top 12 languages spoken by all Minnesota students to the list of English learners only a slightly different list of languages emerges (see Figure 9). For both groups, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong continue to be the largest languages spoken by Minnesota students other than English. However, overall, across the state more students speak Vietnamese than Russian and there are more Chinese speakers than Swahili.

Figure 9. Comparison of Minnesota's Top Languages Other than English Spoken by English Learners Versus All Students, 2024



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

Figure 10 represents the 2023-24 distribution of the top 12 primary home languages spoken by English Learners, reported for the top eight EL-enrolled Minnesota counties.

Hennepin County has the largest number of English learners (25,091). Among them, Spanish (11,652, 46%) is by far most identified as the primary home language, followed by Somali (6,034, 24%) and Hmong (2,653, 11%). The second largest enrollment of English Learners is in Ramsey County (19,668); of those, Hmong (6,203, 32%) is by far most frequently identified as the primary home language, followed by Spanish (4,703, 24%) and Somali (3,047, 15%). The third largest enrollment of English learners is Dakota County (6,994). Among them, Spanish (3816, 55%) and Somali (1,209, 17%) are the most frequent languages represented in the county.

Figure 10. The Top 12 Languages Spoken by English Learners in the Top Eight Minnesota Counties by Enrollment, 2024

Home Primary Language	Anoka	Dakota	Hennepin	Olmstead	Ramsey	Scott	Stearns	Washington
Amharic	65	276	138	19	247	17	<10	72
Arabic	484	144	232	183	207	28	23	74
Chinese, Mandarin	37	72	160	34	79	17	11	96
French	77	65	192	<10	81	11	21	20
Hmong	988	125	2653	33	6203	9	<10	808
Karen	9	12	6	<10	2632	1	<10	37
Oromo, Afan Oromo, Oromiffa	452	122	324	<10	466	10	16	83
Russian	173	139	445	<10	25	160	<10	19
Somali	609	1209	6034	525	3047	448	1791	177
Spanish	2810	3816	11652	689	4703	1065	902	862
Swahili, Kiswahili	61	38	180	13	193	34	13	28
Vietnamese	126	143	332	22	144	88	26	62
Total ELs in top 12 languages	5891	6161	22348	1518	18027	1888	2803	2338
Total ELs	6707	6994	25091	1931	19668	2228	2947	2781

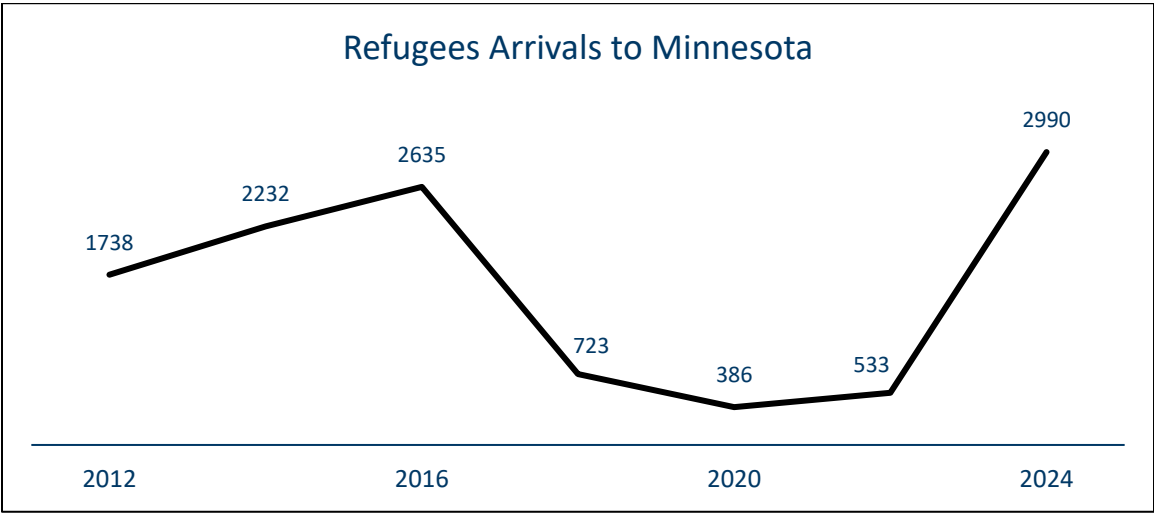
Source: Minnesota Department of Education Enrollment Data

Primary Arrivals in Minnesota

Using information provided by the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) operating within the Office of Admissions at the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), which is the humanitarian bureau of the U.S.

Department of State, Minnesota has seen an overall increase in primary immigrant arrivals to Minnesota from 2012 to 2024. Due to changes in federal procedures and policies, there were fewer primary refugee arrivals between the years 2016-20, especially noticed during 2020 and 2021, when the COVID pandemic reduced movement globally. However, since 2022, the number of primary refugee immigrants to Minnesota has been increasing.

Figure 11. Primary Refugee Arrivals in Minnesota, 2012 and 2024

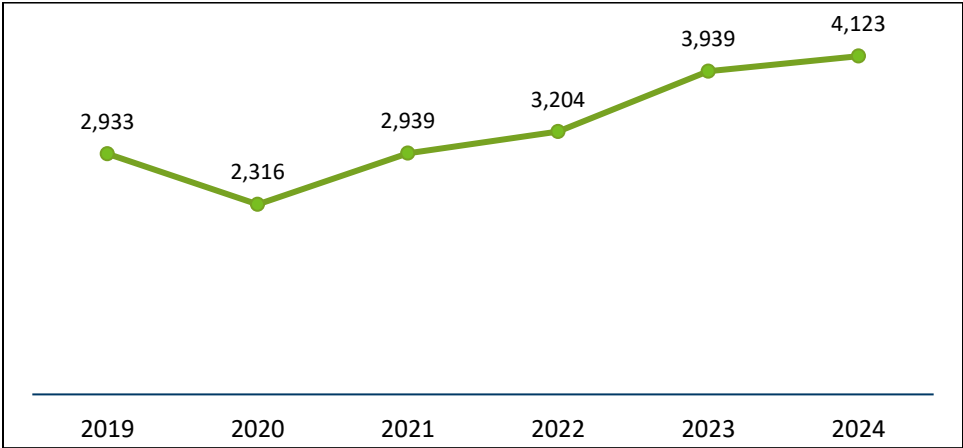


Source: [Refugee Processing Center - Archives](#), 2012 and 2024

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)

Each year, Minnesota districts report the number of SLIFE enrolling in their districts to MDE. Figure 12 shows the number of SLIFE reported for the past four years, which dropped slightly in 2020 from 2,933 to 2316 but rose consistently each year to 4,123 in 2024. For the most current definition for SLIFE, please visit MDE’s [SLIFE webpage](#).

Figure 12. Number of SLIFE Reported to MDE, 2019 to 2024

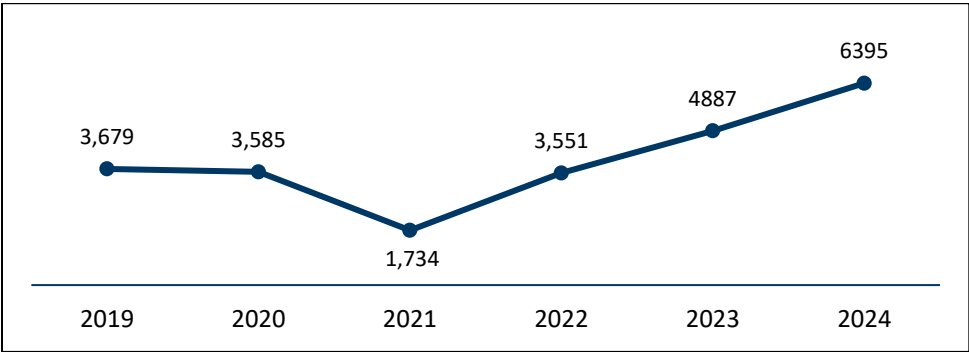


Source: Minnesota Department of Education State Student Data Collection (SSDC)

Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL)

Numbers of RAELs in Minnesota are reported to the SSDC by June 1 annually. Figure 13 shows that numbers of students identified as RAELs have risen from 3,679 in 2019 to 6,395 in 2024, dropping only in 2021 to 1,734.

Figure 13. Number RAEs Reported to MDE, 2019 to 2024

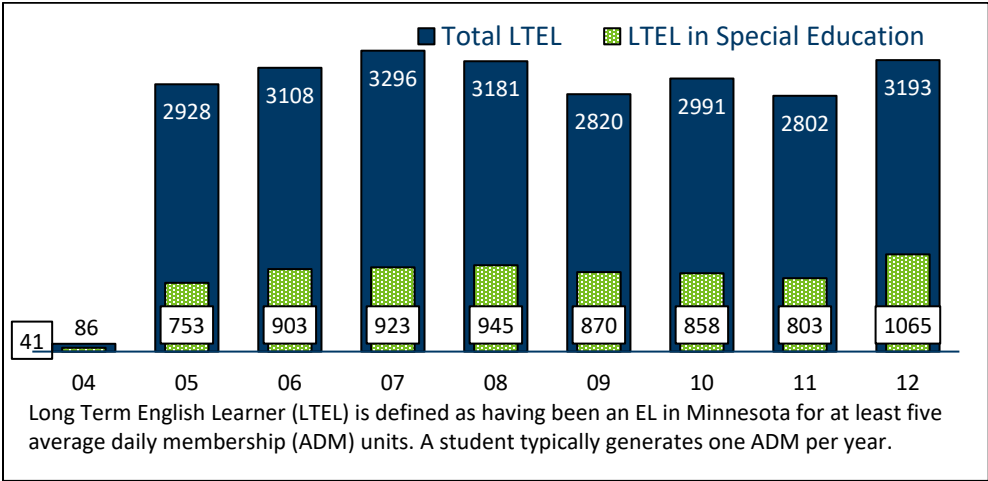


Source: Minnesota Department of Education State Student Data Collection (SSDC)

Long-Term English Learners (LTEL)

Minnesota does not have a formal definition of “Long-term English learners (LTEL)” within state statute. The data displayed represents the number of students who have been identified as English learners for five or more years. According to Figure 14, there is a significant difference in the number of students with LTEL status between grades 4 (86 students) and 5 (2,928 students). From grades 5 through 12, the number of LTELs ranged from 2,802 (in grade 11) to 3,296 (in grade 7). Of LTELs in grade 4, 47.6% were dual identified as eligible for both EL and Special Education programs. On average, about 29% of LTELs in grades 5-12 were dual identified for EL and Special Education programs.

Figure 14. Number of Students Identified as LTELs by Grade and Special Education Status, 2024



Source: Minnesota Department of Education Enrollment Data

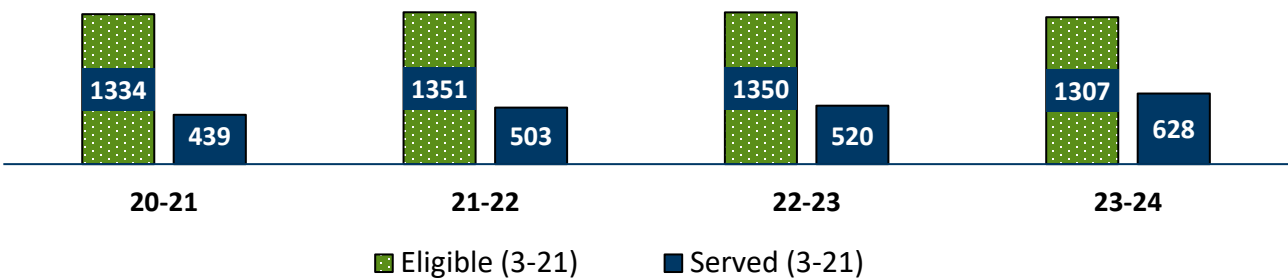
Migratory Children

In the summer of 2024, Minnesota supported migratory children (see [definition](#)) through seven summer migrant education programs (MEPs). Throughout the school year, migrant liaisons in each district are expected to seek to identify eligible migratory families and provide advocacy to address migratory children’s unique language, social and academic challenges due to high mobility. Migrant education programming in Minnesota ensures that

migratory children fully benefit from the same free public education provided to other children. For more information, visit the [MDE Migrant Education Program website](#).

As shown in Figure 15, between the 2020-21 and 2023-24 school years, eligible migratory child numbers have remained relatively stable. However, the number of students served increased from 439 to 628.

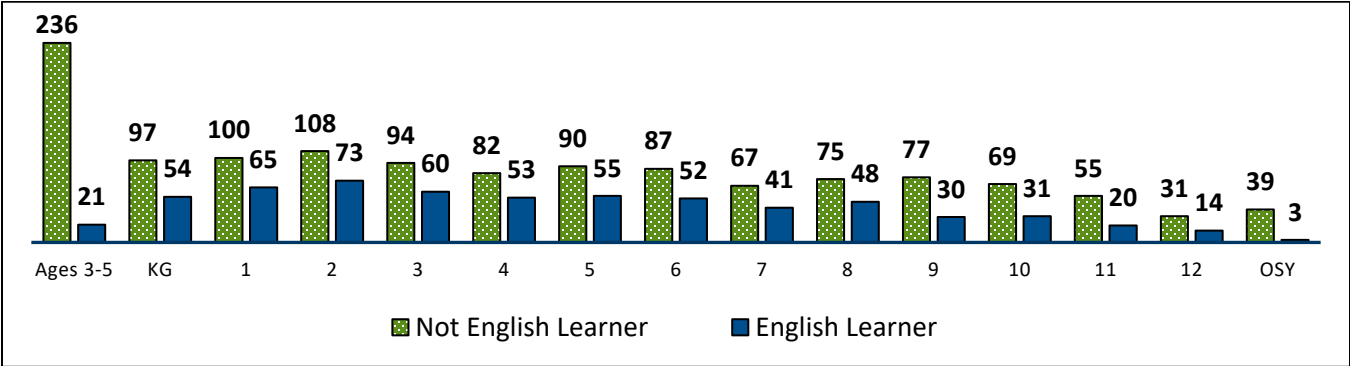
Figure 15. Total eligible Migrant Children in Minnesota (ages 3 through 21), Total Served, Number Enrolled during School Year 2021-22 to 2023-24



Source: Minnesota Department of Education Consolidated State Performance Reports (2021 to 2024)

Forty-seven percent of migratory students ages 3-21 in Minnesota were identified as ELs. Figure 16 shows the breakdown of eligible migratory children and those also identified as English learners by grade level. The number of students identified with EL status decreases from 73 in grade 2 to 14 in grade 12 (and 3 for out-of-school youth (OSY)).

Figure 16. Eligible Migratory Children in Minnesota (ages 3 through 21) by EL status in the 2023-24 Performance Period



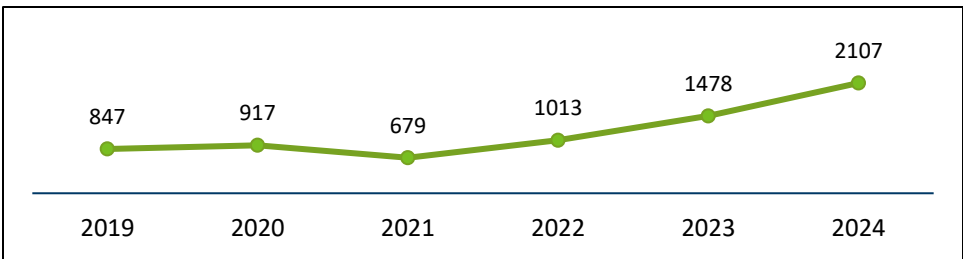
Source: Minnesota Department of Education Consolidated State Performance Reports (2023-24)

English Learners Experiencing Homelessness

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, the term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals; who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and who are migratory children who live in one of the above circumstances.

Figure 17 below shows the number of English learners identified as homeless. Numbers of homeless ELs have been increasing rapidly since 2021.

Figure 17. Number of Minnesota English Learners Identified as Experiencing Homelessness, 2019 to 2024



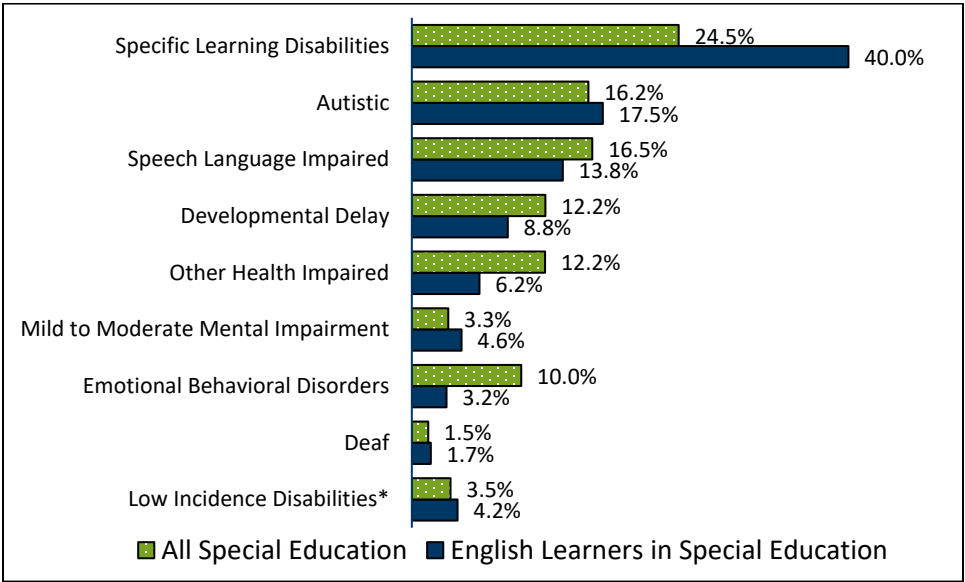
Source: MDE Enrollment Data

English Learners and Special Education

Title III of ESSA and other federal laws require that ELs who also qualify for special education services (dual-eligible students) receive both EL and special education services. Under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, EL students who have a disability must be identified and evaluated for special education services in a timely manner, as would any student suspect of a disability. For more information on dual identification, see Part II, Section F of the January 7, 2015, guidance letter from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

Figure 18 shows the distribution of Minnesota ELs and all students with disabilities in 2024. English learners who are dually identified are most likely to have a specific learning disability (6,165 students; 40% of the total), followed by autism spectrum disorder (2,697; 16.2%), speech or language impairment (2,133; 13.8%), and developmental delay (1,355; 8.8%), each seeing an increase in the past year. English learners are overrepresented in the specific learning disability, mild to moderate cognitive disabilities, deaf, and low incidence disabilities* groups and underrepresented in the other disability groups compared to all students in special education.

Figure 18. Distribution of ELs and all students with Disabilities, 2024



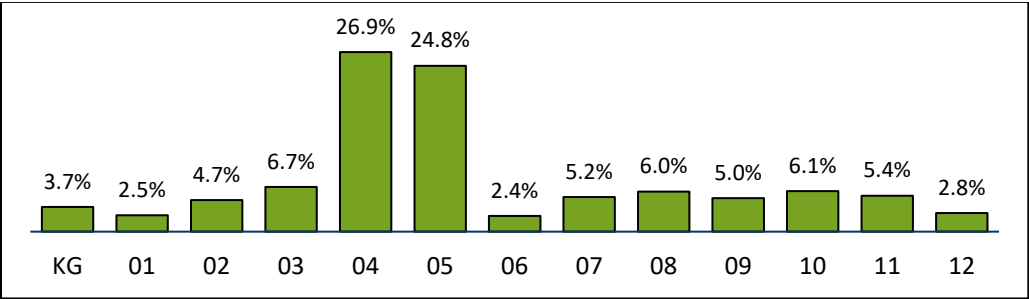
*Low Incidence Disabilities: for the purpose of this report, Low Incidence Disabilities include Severe/Profound Developmental/Cognitive Disorders, Deaf-Blind, Traumatic Brain Injury, Blind/Visual Impairments, Physical Impairments and Severe Multiple Impairments.

Source: MDE Enrollment Data

Assessment of English Language Proficiency

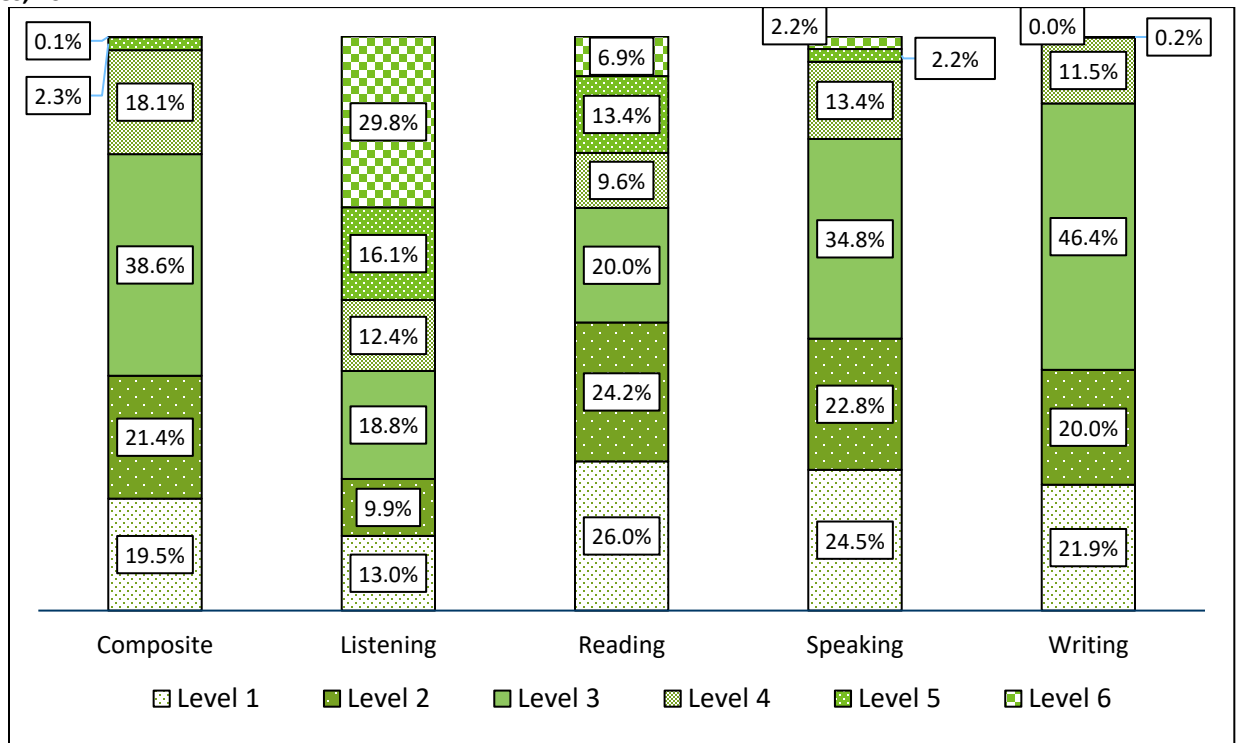
English learners assess for English language proficiency (ELP) on an annual basis by taking the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Results of the assessment, as seen in Figure 19, show that English learners are most likely to test proficient in grades 4 and 5. Figures 19 to 21 are sourced from MDE Data Reports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

Figure 19. Percentage of English Learners Assessing Proficient on the WIDA ACCESS, by Grade Level, 2024



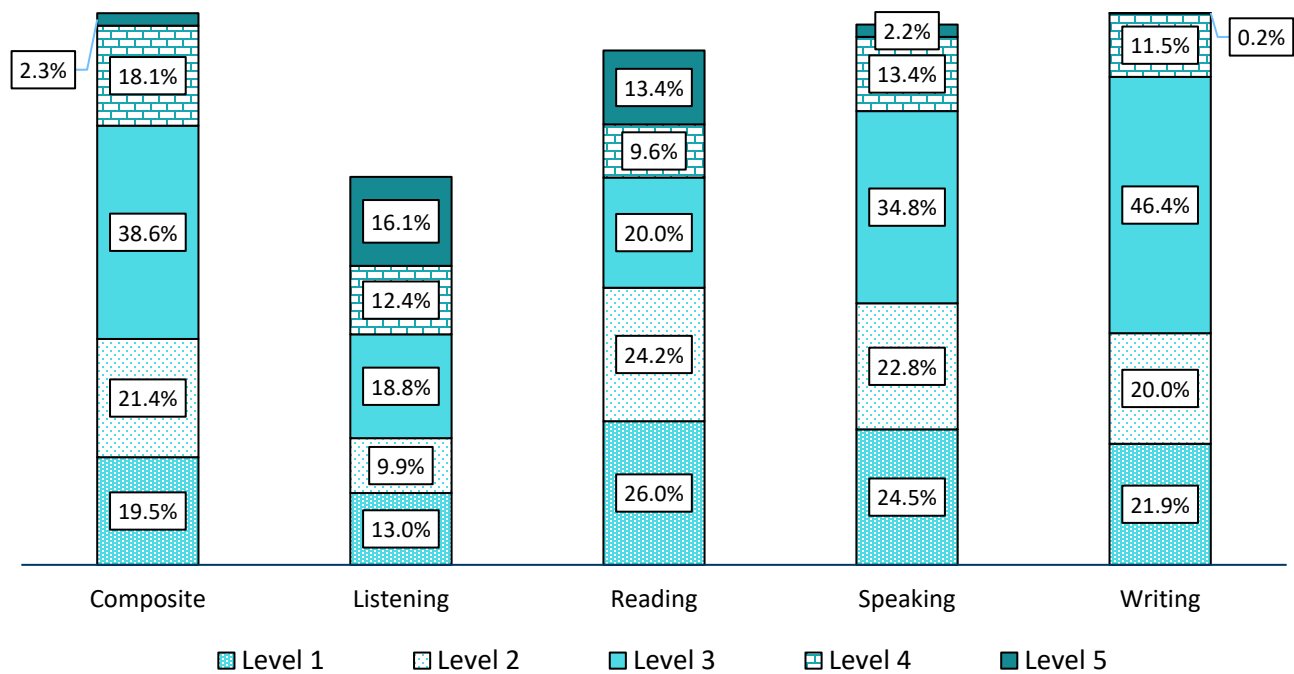
The distribution of ELs at each of the proficiency levels on ACCESS are displayed for the overall composite and each domain in Figure 20. Students typically progress to higher proficiency levels in listening, which is reflected in the significantly larger percentages of students at proficiency levels 5 and 6 as compared to the other domains. Typically, the productive domains of speaking or writing are the most difficult for students to master.

Figure 20. Percent Distribution of Students at Each Proficiency Level on WIDA ACCESS, K–12 Composite and Domain Scores, 2024



The Alternate ACCESS is given to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, with levels ranging from 1-5 for the overall composite and most domains. As seen in Figure 21, most students score in level 3 for the overall composite, listening, and speaking. More students score in level 1 for reading, followed by levels 2 and 3.

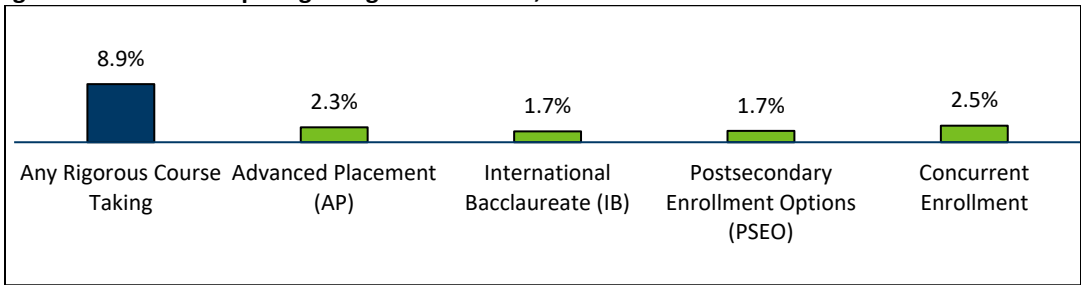
Figure 21. Percent Distribution of Students at Each Proficiency Level on WIDA ALT-ACCESS, 1-12 Composite and Domain Scores, 2024



Academic Achievement

Figure 22 shows the percentage of English learners 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 fairly 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 taken.

Figure 22. English Learners Participating in Rigorous Courses, 2024



Source: MDE PSEO, Concurrent and Minnesota Common Course Catalogue Data

In 2023, the majority of current English learners did not meet standards on the statewide mathematics assessments (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)), while that was not the case for former ELs and never ELs. Figure 23 shows that current English learners are much less likely to meet or exceed standards than former ELs and never ELs. Figure 24 shows that all groups had slight improvements in percent proficient between 2021 and 2024. However, because many students did not

complete the tests in 2021, caution should be taken when interpreting the changes between years. The following figures, 23 through 31, are sourced from MDE Assessment Data.

Figure 23. Math Achievement Levels by English Learner Designations on Statewide Assessments, 2024

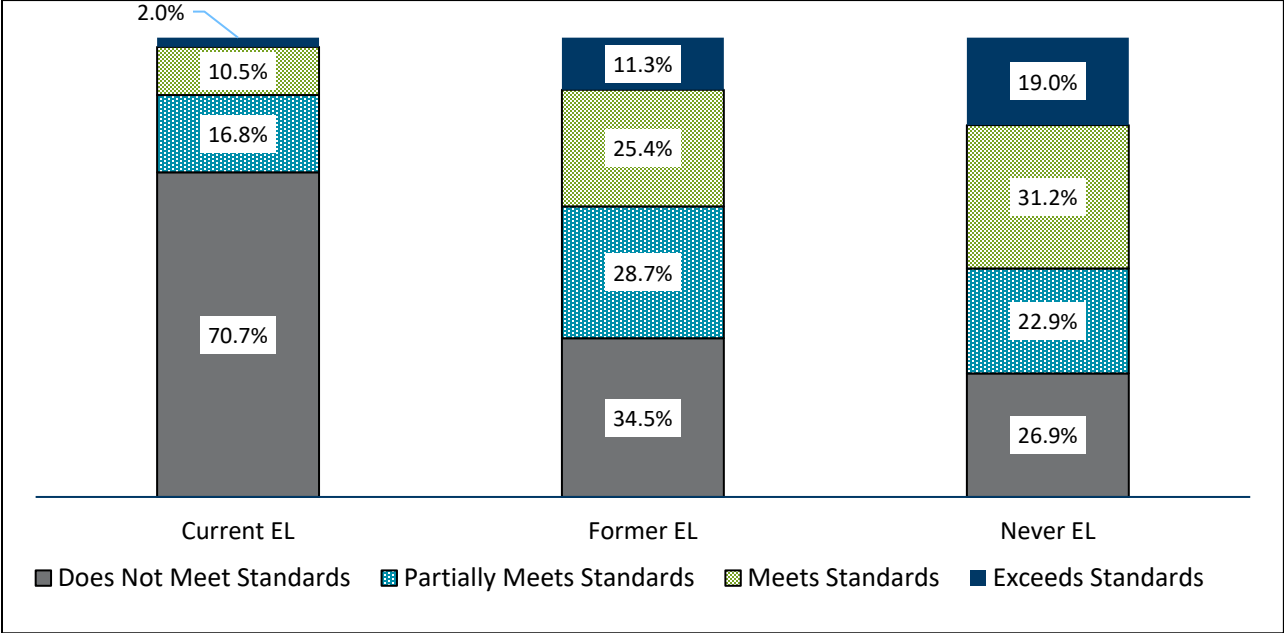
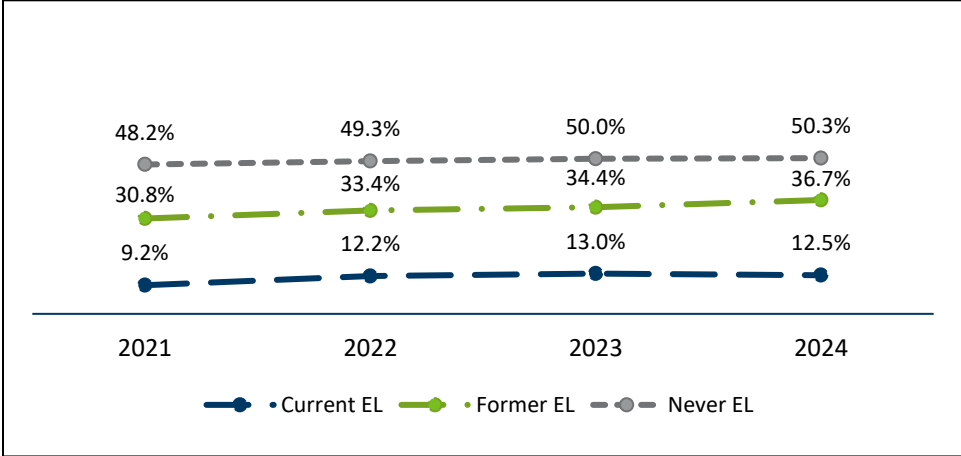


Figure 24. Math Percent Proficient by English Learner Designation on Statewide Assessments, 2021 to 2024



Achievement on the reading statewide assessments shows a similar pattern of results as in math. Figure 25 shows that former ELs and never ELs tend to perform similarly, while much fewer current ELs meet standards with fewer than 1% exceeding standards. Figure 26 shows that proficiency rates have continued to decline slightly for current ELs since 2022.

Figure 25. Reading Achievement Levels by English Learner Designation on Statewide Assessments, 2024

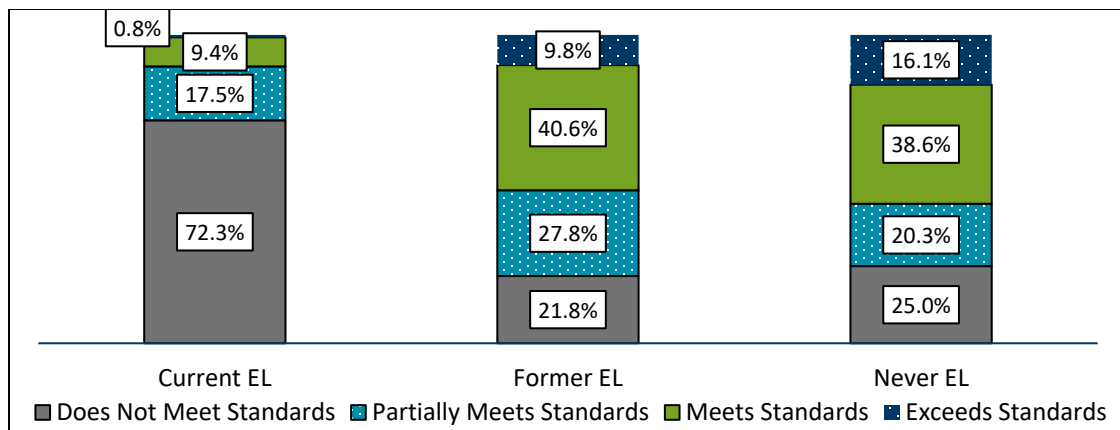
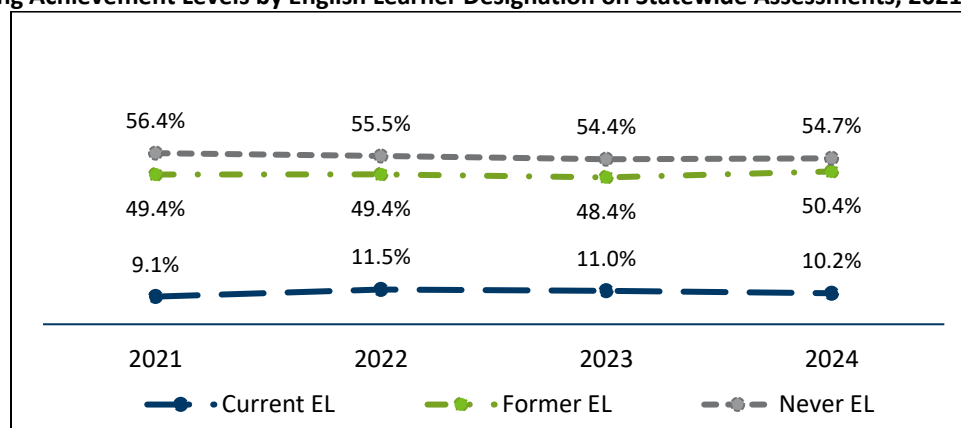


Figure 26. Reading Achievement Levels by English Learner Designation on Statewide Assessments, 2021 to 2024



Achievement on the science statewide assessments highlights how few current English learners are proficient, with former ELs and never ELs looking more similar. Figure 27 shows the data broken down by achievement level and Figure 28 shows the proficiency rates of current ELs, former ELs and never ELs over time.

Figure 27. Science Achievement Levels by English Learner Designation on Statewide Assessments, 2024

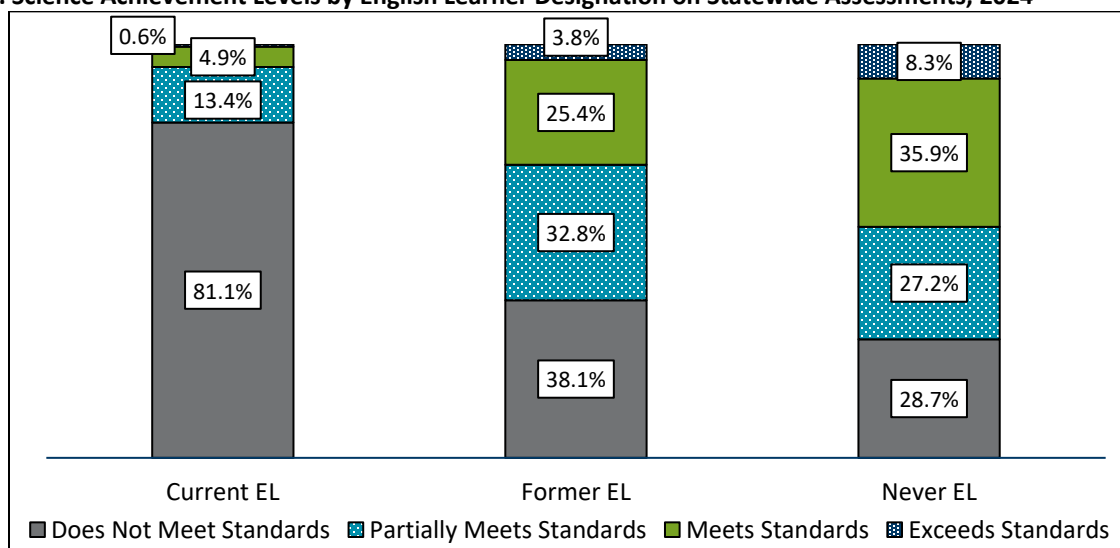
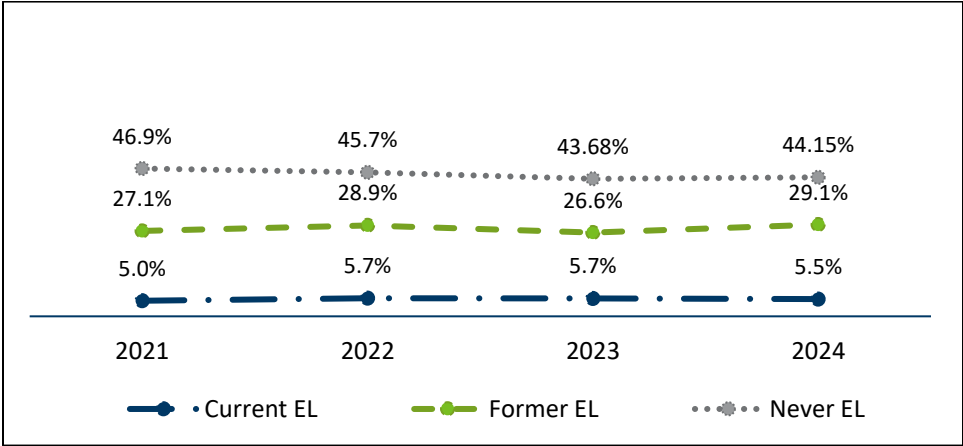


Figure 28. Science Achievement Levels by English Learner Designation on Statewide Assessments, 2021 to 2024



Students who are identified as eligible for English learner and Special Education services are referred to as “dual-identified” students. Figure 29 shows that the percentage of dual-identified students proficient in math and reading than those not receiving Special Education services. However, dual-identified students score higher in science than those not receiving Special Education services.

Figure 29. Percent of Dual-identified and not Dual-identified Students Proficient in Math, Reading and Science, 2024

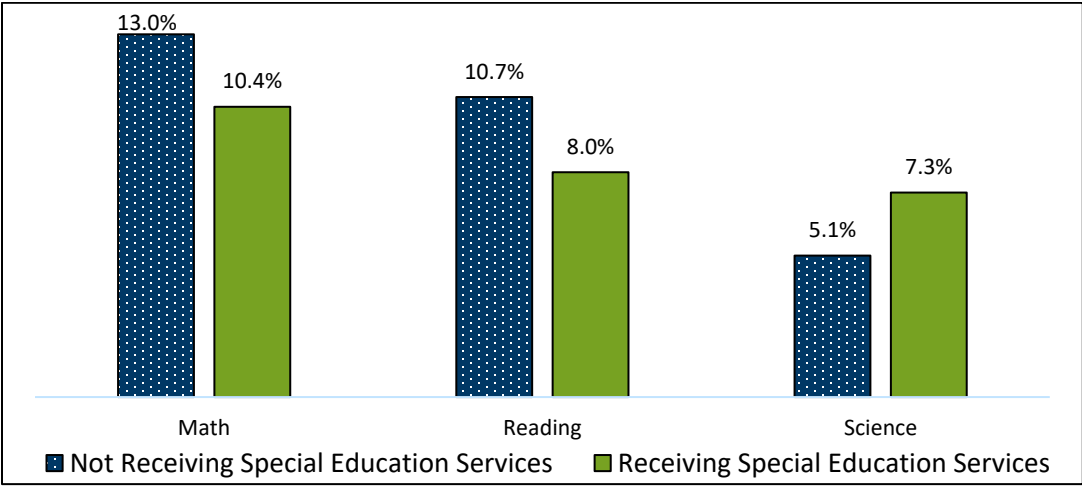
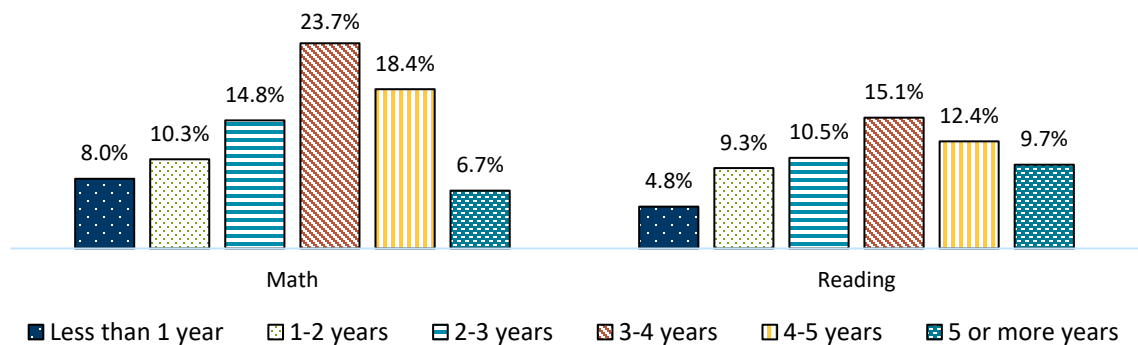


Figure 30 shows how the amount of time English learners were enrolled in Minnesota public schools corresponds to proficiency in math and reading, demonstrating that English learners demonstrate proficiency in math sooner than reading (in English).

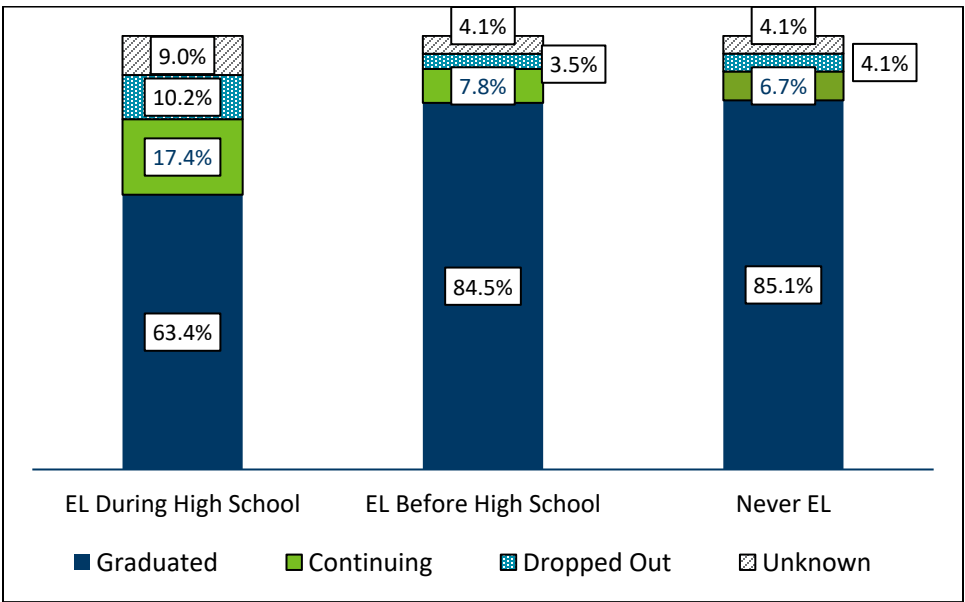
Figure 30. Length of Time Enrolled and Proficiency in Math and Reading, 2024



English Learners' Graduation Rate

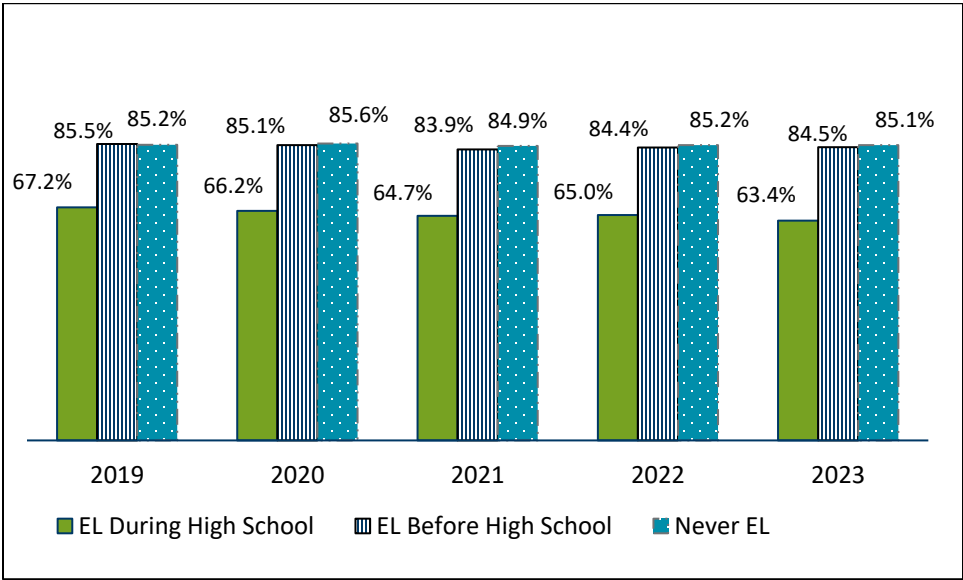
The four-year graduation rate is a graduation rate based on a cohort of first-time grade nine students plus transfers into the cohort within the four-year period, minus transfers out of the cohort within the four-year period. Figure 31 demonstrates that having been an English learner prior to high school increases the rate of graduation as compared to students who were identified in high school. For more information on the graduation rate, please visit the MDE [Accountability Indicators webpage](#). All data for figures in this section are sourced from MDE Graduation and Enrollment Data.

Figure 31. 4-Year Graduation Rate by English Learner Designation, 2023



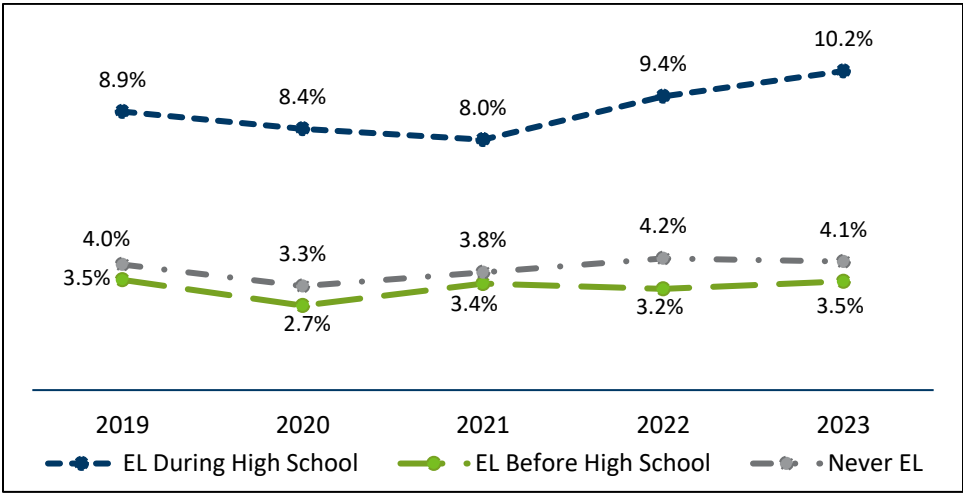
Graduation, dropout, and continuing trends for 2017–21 are depicted in Figures 31, 32, and 33. All figures show that students who were English learners before high school have similar graduation outcomes to students who were never English learners. Students who were English learners in high school are less likely to graduate in four years (Figure 33) and are more likely to continue into year five (Figure 34).

Figure 32. Four-Year Graduation Trends by English Learner Designation, 2019–23



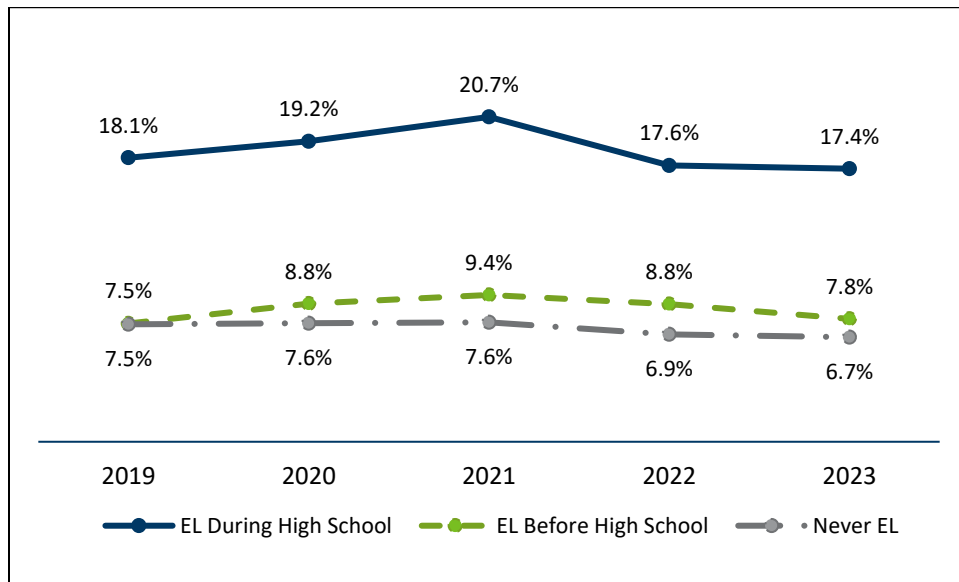
While students who are English learners in high school are more likely to continue for additional education beyond their fourth year of high school, they are also more likely to drop out, and dropout rates have risen between 2021 and 2023 (Figure 33). Figure 33 also shows that students who were EL before high school are less likely to drop out than students who were never ELs.

Figure 33. Four-Year Drop-out Trends by English Learner Designation, 2019–23



Since 2019, students who were identified English learners during high school have remained enrolled into a fifth year at higher rates than those identified English learners before high school. Students who were never ELs remain in school to complete graduation requirements at only a slightly lower rate than English learners identified prior to high school.

Figure 34. Four-Year Continuing Trends by English Learner Designation, 2019–23



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