

# Oregon Education Investment Board

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Oregon Education Investment Board

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## English Learners in Oregon’s Education System

### Issue Brief

#### INTRODUCTION

To reach Oregon’s education goal of 40-40-20, which seeks to ensure every Oregon student is college and career ready by 2025, it is essential that every Oregon student be consistently connected with the most engaging, supportive, rigorous, and equitable learning environment possible. “Equity is both the means to educational success and an end that benefits us all.”<sup>8</sup>

#### OVERVIEW

Oregon is fortunate to have a growing diversity of speakers of languages other than English<sup>8</sup> across our education system from Pre-K to college (P-20). Between 1997-98 and 2011-12, K-12 students reporting their language of origin as one other than English has risen about 330%.<sup>7</sup> In 2011-12 approximately 123,000 (22%) of Oregon’s 560,000 K-12 students reported their language of origin was one other than English<sup>7</sup> and 59,000 (10%) were identified as developing English Language Proficiency (LEP).<sup>7</sup>

**EL Terms** - There are many terms, often used interchangeably, to refer to students whose first language is one other than English. These terms include, but are not limited to:<sup>2,3,4,6</sup>

EL	English Learners	EOL	English as an Other Language
ELL	English Language Learners	ESL	English as a Second Language
LEP	Limited English Proficient	LTEL	Long-Term English Learners
DLL	Dual Language Learners	EB	Emergent Bilinguals

#### SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS

English Learners in our P-20 education system require supportive educational environments that offer developmental pathways to academic language proficiency, access to rigorous academic content, while simultaneously preserving primary language(s).<sup>3,4,6</sup> *Social English*—the language of everyday conversation—is developed relatively quickly (6 months to 2 years). *Academic English*—the language used in school, the workplace, text, and assessments — however, requires an intentional systemic focus over a longer period of time (5+ years).<sup>3,4,6</sup> In the absence of intentional systemic support, those in the process of developing Academic English are more likely to struggle as they progress through schooling and become at-risk for disengaging or dropping out.<sup>5,6</sup> Across the state, strategies, policies, and funding to support English Learners are receiving attention, yet our system continues to fail English Learners allowing too many to unnecessarily fall behind their peers.<sup>7,8</sup>

**Diversity** - English Learners are a very heterogeneous group leading to a variety of learning needs.<sup>4</sup> Strategies that support some English Learners in certain situations, will not necessarily work for others. Differences among English Learners include, but are not limited to:<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,10</sup>

- Language of origin (cognate/non-cognate), prior exposure to English
- Immigration status, migrant status, socioeconomic status
- Length and consistency of schooling (in primary language/English), age, grade level (pre-K to college), parent and community engagement in education
- Country/region of origin (developed/developing, conflict/peace, rural/urban)

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#### Largest Limited English Proficient (LEP) Language Groups in Oregon K-12 Schools 2011-12<sup>7</sup>

	Percent of LEP Student Enrollment	Number of LEP Students Enrolled	Total Students Enrolled by Language of Origin
Spanish	77.1%	45,160	76,700
Russian	3.8%	2,220	4,900
Vietnamese	3.1%	1,830	4,450
English*	1.7%	990	431,340
Chinese	1.6%	950	2,880
Somali	1.3%	760	910
Arabic	1.0%	570	890
Ukrainian	0.9%	540	1,160

\* Native American/Alaskan Native students may qualify as LEP even though these students have English as their language of origin.

#### 5-Year High School (HS) Cohort Graduation Rate of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students in Oregon 2011-12<sup>7</sup>

	LEP HS Cohort 4,100	Total HS Cohort 47,600
Regular Diploma	60%	72%
Completer Rate	64%	81%
Alternative Certificate	6%	< 1%
Continuing Enrollment	5%	2%
Dropped Out or Completed 5 Years of HS and Did Not Graduate	30%	17%

## PROGRAM MODELS

EL Program Models vary greatly, often with the following key differences:<sup>2,3,4,5,6,10</sup>

- Bilingual** – supports bilingual, bi-literate, bi-cultural development in two languages simultaneously (e.g. dual language immersion, bilingual immersion, 2-way immersion, late-exit, maintenance education)
- Bilingual with transitional support** – supports English acquisition for transfer to English-only classrooms (transitional bilingual, early-exit)
- English-only** – supports developing literacy in English (English language development (ELD)), English as a second language (ESL), sheltered English instruction, structured English immersion (SEI), Pull-out (removes students for separate language instruction), Push-in (provides specialized language instruction within the regular classroom)

Points of view vary on how equitably support ELs. Given the diversity of local populations, it is clear that no one-size-fits-all solution exists. There is general agreement however, that the following considerations must be taken into account when determining best practices:<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,10</sup>

- **Diversity** of the local EL population
- **Support for academic language development and access to academic content** while also preserving first language
- **Accurate and fair identification** (e.g. differentiating between special education or academic under-preparation vs. English Learning needs)
- **Preparation, recruitment, and ongoing development of educators** across the P-20 system (e.g. bilingual/bi-cultural teachers, licensed teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), teachers trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) or Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)
- **Responsibly allocated funding** directly supporting evidence-informed EL programs that meet the needs of the local EL community
- **Proactive community engagement and inclusion**

## MEASURING GROWTH<sup>3,7</sup>

Consistent and comparable data of EL progress across the traditional P-20 education system silos is lacking, leading to challenges in understanding EL growth and providing support. In K-12, English Language Development (ELD) standards outline a pathway of progression to proficiency. Oregon measures ELD via the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA).

Title III of No Child Left Behind provides federal funding for ELs and requires progress reports toward Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO). AMAO data indicates many K-12 Oregon districts serving ELs struggle to reach stated targets (See Table).

## SELECTED REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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3. Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, *2013 State English Learners Alliance Conference*, 2013
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7. Oregon Department of Education, *Statewide Report Card 2011-12, Statewide Report Card 2010-11; ELPA Data, AMAO Data, Data Explorer, Graduation Cohort Media File 2011-12)*
8. Oregon Education Investment Board, *Equity Lens*, April 9<sup>th</sup> 2013
9. Oregon Education Investment Board, *Oregon Learns: Report to the Legislature*, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011
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### Limited English Proficient Students Meeting Reading/Math Standards 2011-12<sup>7</sup>

	Total LEP Students	LEP Met Reading Standard	LEP Met Math Standard
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	6,500	36%	38%
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5,900	40%	41%
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	4,500	21%	24%
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2,900	9%	19%
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2,300	15%	21%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2,000	9%	22%
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1,500	21%	20%

### Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) for Growth in EL's English Language Acquisition by School District (SD) 2011-12<sup>7</sup>

	# of SD Met Target	# of SD Did Not Meet Target	# SDs with Too Few ELs *	# SDs with No ELs **
AMAO 2011-12 Targets				
At least 57% of ELs move up one level of English proficiency	38	80	15	64
At least 17% of ELs reach proficiency	74	52	12	64
At least 26.5% of 5-year ELs reach proficiency	72	45	45	64
ELs met district's EL grade level academic target in Reading and Math	11	62	60	64

*TOTAL # of Oregon School Districts = 197*

\* Too few English Learners in district to report

\*\* District has no EL students

*"...the success of every child and learner in Oregon is directly tied to the prosperity of all Oregonians."*

—Equity Lens, Oregon Education Investment Board, 2013<sup>8</sup>

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