



GRADE BOOK: HOW IS DELAWARE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM SERVING ENGLISH LEARNERS?

For English learners (ELs), large academic achievement gaps, limited English proficiency growth, and significantly under-resourced schools are deep-set systemic issues in desperate need of attention.

"When I moved here I knew I wanted to go to college but I wasn't aware of my options. I didn't know about AP or honors classes, or the necessity of the SAT. No one was guiding me. A lot of my EL peers started skipping school. They feel lost, and I don't blame them. It's challenging. Our EL teacher was really helpful, but they can't teach 1:1, and our school means well but just doesn't have a lot of resources."

- Delaware English learner



Grade Book: ELs in the Delaware education system

Academic Content			
Category	Description	English Learners	Native English Speakers
3rd grade Smarter Balanced (2017)	Percentage of students proficient in third grade reading and math	Reading: 32% Math: 40%	Reading: 55% Math: 56%
8th grade Smarter Balanced (2017)	Percentage of students proficient in eighth grade reading and math	Reading: 8% Math: 10%	Reading: 54% Math: 40%

College and Career Readiness			
Category	Description	English Learners	Native English Speakers
SAT (2017)	Percentage of high school students proficient in reading, writing, and math	Reading and Writing: 6% Math: <5%	Reading and Writing: 54% Math: 30%
Graduation rates (2016)	Percentage of students who graduate high school in four years	72%	Statewide: 85%
College remediation (Class of 2015)	Percent of students who enroll in college who may not be able to take credit bearing course-work until completing remedial courses	49%	41%

English Language Proficiency			
Category	Description	English Learners	
English language proficiency growth (2017)	Students meeting individual goal set based on their baseline proficiency and grade	41%	
	Amount of progress made toward individual student goal	68% average	

Social and Emotional Learning	
Teacher comments:	<p>"Many English learner students feel isolated in their classes because of the language barrier. This impacts not only academics, but his self-esteem. Makes it more attractive to drop out of school. There should be supports, so where is the disconnect?"</p> <p>- Delaware Spanish teacher</p> <p>"One English learner student I worked with had depression. Because he didn't speak English, no one diagnosed him. They just thought he was shy. He attempted suicide. The mother works two jobs and blamed herself, but the truth is that existing services were not enough, and also not tailored to unique needs of students."</p> <p>- Delaware school counselor</p>

Pop Quiz: Funding for English Learners

Questions:

1. Who is responsible for funding the major needs of English Learners? The state/districts or the federal government?
2. Most education funding in Delaware comes from the state. How much state funding does Delaware allocate for educating English learners?
3. How much federal funding does Delaware receive for EL students?

Answers:

1. **Districts and charters are expected to use state and local funds to meet their civil rights obligations to EL and immigrant students** such as providing teacher salaries; translation and interpretation services; and identifying, monitoring and evaluating EL students. **Federal funds can only be used for supplemental activities** such as upgrading EL educational programs, providing educator professional development, or offering community programs such as family literacy services.
2. **\$0. Delaware is 1 of 4 states that provides zero state education funding per English learner student.** The state formerly allocated a small amount of money but has since eliminated that allocation.
3. Federal EL funding makes up .05% of all funding in Delaware education (\$2.05 billion). Only about \$1 million in federal funding come to Delaware each year for approximately 10,000 EL students, though not every student receives funding. **If allocated evenly that would be about \$100/student—the cost of a textbook or a couple of hours of tutoring.**

Sources:

- Data provided by the Delaware Department of Education for 2014-2015 School Year, as reported by districts;
- 2015-2016 School Year Delaware Consolidated State Performance Report for federal grants;
- U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing, August 2016

ELs are severely under-resourced, including a lack of sustained funding and chronic teacher shortage.

"EL teachers work hard, to the best of their ability, but many are splitting time between multiple schools and only seeing kids a few hours a week. We could do so much more for these students."

- Delaware English learner teacher

"In addition to needing more certified EL teachers, we are required to provide translation services yet are constantly on the hunt for interpreters and funds to pay them. It's a huge hurdle."

- Delaware district leader

"Student express feeling ignored in school. But the teachers also feel frustrated with the system that puts kids who don't speak English in a situation without resources. I know teachers feel they have to choose between slowing the whole class because of these two kids, or move ahead without them."

- Delaware school counselor

Study Guide: Certified Teachers of English Learners

Delaware requires that all content-area teachers (e.g. math, history) be certified in their subject, which nearly all are. The state also requires that EL-only instructors have an EL-specific certificate. Yet, available federal data, state data, and local anecdotes indicate that in reality, many ELs do not have access to certified teachers:

- The state reports that **25% of all EL students do not have access to a certified EL teacher.** The remaining **75% of ELs have an of average ratio of 1:38 certified teachers to EL students** (though there is no guarantee they receive services from the certified teacher).
- Yet federal reports show a ratio of **1:115 certified teachers to EL students** in EL programs receiving federal funding.
- Delaware **is suffering from a 14-year EL teacher shortage (and counting)** according to the U.S. Department of Education nationwide listing of teacher shortage areas.

Coming up: What can Delaware learn from other states and the research about how we can support EL students?

Visit <http://bit.ly/ELsInDE> for more information on ELs in Delaware including previous fact sheets and sources for this fact sheet.

