



**English Learner
Education
in Minnesota**
2020-21 Report



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 education programs so that multilingual learners, including students with English learner status, attain academic language proficiency and achieve state academic content standards.

This report contains information regarding English learner demographics and achievement. In addition to including statutory and regulatory references pertaining to English learners, it also reports on available funding. It describes the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) support of local education agencies (LEAs) in implementing effective language instruction educational programs to ensure ELs are able to reach their academic potential. Additionally, it reports information about state and federal funds available to support ELs in Minnesota. We thank you for your continued efforts to collaborate with others to implement effective systems and programs across schools and districts that truly improve education outcomes and opportunities for all English learners in equitable ways!

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Minnesota Multilingual Learner Education Strategic Framework

The Minnesota Department of Education (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 local education agencies [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 2017 Minnesota Statutes, section 124D. 59, subdivision 2, an English learner is “a pupil in kindergarten through grade 12 or a prekindergarten student enrolled in an approved voluntary prekindergarten program under section 124D.151 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; 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

An immigrant student is defined as a student who:

1. a child who is aged 3 through 21;
2. was not born in any state or any U.S. territory;
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); and,
4. while most immigrant students in Minnesota are also English learners, students who are not ELs can also be identified for funding and support.

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)

An 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)

Students with limited or interrupted formal education make up a specific group of ELs. Signed into law in 2014, the Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act formally defined this group of ELs in state law and requires the MDE to report on the acquisition of English and academic progress of SLIFE. The Minnesota LEAPS Act, under 2017 Minnesota Statutes, section 124D. 59, subdivision 2a, allows for an EL to include “an English learner with an interrupted formal education who meets three of the following five requirements:

1. comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English, or usually speaks a language other than English;
2. enters school in the United States after grade 6;
3. has at least two years less schooling than the English learner's peers;
4. functions at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; and,
5. may be preliterate in the English learner's native language.

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, reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), delineated more specifically the responsibilities of LEAs and state education agencies (SEAs) to ensure that ELs become proficient in English and meet the same challenging state academic standards as expected of their English-only peers.

The reauthorization of the ESEA to ESSA is an opportunity for creating additional growth towards proficiency of the Minnesota English learner as well as creating opportunities to meaningfully include and support English learners. In the past, Minnesota did not mandate statewide EL entry and exit criteria or procedures. However, as part of ESSA, section 3111(b)(2)(A), implementation, all states are required to develop and implement standardized entry and exit criteria and procedures. In collaboration with stakeholders, Minnesota has developed standardized entry and exit criteria and procedures that all Minnesota LEAs must follow.

State Laws

[Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.30](#) Improper Classification of Pupils: No LEA shall classify its pupils with reference to race, color, social position, or nationality, nor separate its pupils into different schools or departments upon any of such grounds

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 124D.58 and 124D.59](#) Education for English Learners Act and Definitions: Defines an English learner, essential instructional personnel, English as a second language program, bilingual education program, primary language, parent, and educational program for English learners

[Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.60](#) Rights of Parents: Outlines requirements for parent notification of enrollment of any pupil in an instructional program for English learners, parental right to withdraw from the program, and parent involvement in the program

[Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.61](#) General Requirements for Programs: Outlines general requirements for programs for English learners including identification and reclassification criteria, full participation in programs and services, and professional development for teachers working with ELs.

[Minnesota Statutes, section 124B.363](#) Technical Assistance: Names the Commissioner as responsible for supporting districts and postsecondary institutions that train teachers

[Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.65](#) English learner (EL) Programs Aid: Outlines LEA EL revenue, and participation of nonpublic school pupils

[Minnesota Rule 3501.1200](#) Scope and Purpose: Outlines the purpose of standards that govern the instruction of English learners. The state of Minnesota's standards for English language development are the current standards developed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium

[Minnesota Rule 3501.1210](#) English Language Development Standards: Outlines the language development standards: social and instructional language, the language of language arts, the language of mathematics, the language of science, and the language of social studies

[Minnesota Rule 8710.4150](#) Teachers of Bilingual/Bicultural Education: Defines scope of practice, demonstration of oral and written proficiency, subject matter standard as part of the licensure requirements for teachers providing bilingual/bicultural education

[Minnesota Rule 8710.4400](#) Teachers of English as a Second Language: Defines scope of practice, licensure requirements, subject matter standard as part of the licensure requirements for a teacher of English as a second language

[2014 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 272 – H.F. No. 2397, Article 1](#): The Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act was passed in Minnesota in 2014. The law revises many state statutes to add an increased emphasis to support English learners. The law is embedded into many existing statutes including areas such as early childhood, curriculum and instruction, adult education, and teacher licensing. The statute adds a definition and accountability reporting for Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). The statute also adds a provision for LEAs to institute bilingual and multilingual seals to students who demonstrate certain levels of language proficiency in native and world languages

Federal Laws

[Title III Part A](#) – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by ESSA: the purpose of the Title III program is to ensure that ELs and immigrant children and youth attain English proficiency and achieve at high levels in academic attainment subjects so that they can meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards all children are expected to meet. To achieve this goal, LEAs receiving supplemental Title III funds are expected to:

- provide effective language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) for ELs and immigrant students,
- provide meaningful professional development activities to ESL and Bilingual Education (BE) staff, as well as all staff who work with ELs, and
- promote participation of parents, family and community members of English learners in the LIEP.

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#): Title VI prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance. The Title VI regulatory requirements have been interpreted to prohibit denial of equal access to education because of a language minority student's limited proficiency in English.

[Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974](#): This civil rights statute prohibits states which receive federal funding from denying equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin. The statute specifically prohibits states from denying equal educational opportunity to students learning English by the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs. [20 U.S.C. §1203(f)]

Supreme Court Cases Related to English Learner Education

In addition to the Minnesota state law and Title III federal law, several other key Supreme Court cases listed below enforce English learners' access to equitable educational opportunities.

[Lau versus Nichols](#): Lau versus Nichols was a class-action suit brought by parents of non-English-proficient Chinese students against the San Francisco Unified School District. In 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that identical education does not constitute equal education under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The court ruled that the LEA must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by the non-English-speaking Chinese students in the LEA. [414 U.S. 563 (1974)]

Castañeda versus Pickard: On June 23, 1981, the Fifth Circuit Court issued a decision that is the seminal post-Lau decision concerning education of language minority students. The case established a three-part test to evaluate the adequacy of an LEAs program for EL students:

1. is the program based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is considered by experts as a legitimate experimental strategy;
2. are the programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively; and,
3. does the LEA evaluate its programs and make adjustments where needed to ensure language barriers are actually being overcome.

[648 Federal Report, 2nd Series 989 (5th Circuit, 1981)]

Plyler versus Doe: This 1982 U.S. Supreme Court case overturned an attempt by a Texas LEA to exact tuition money from students whose U.S. citizenship could not be confirmed. The LEA had alleged it was unfair to children who were citizens and legal residents to share resources—and, presumably, receive fewer of the resources—with children who were illegal residents, and was requiring all students to either prove their legal status in the United States or, if they could not, pay tuition. The High Court ruled that a state does not have the right to deny a free public education to undocumented immigrant children on the basis that it was not the state education agency’s business to essentially create immigration policy, nor could it be proven that “legal” children suffered a poorer education as a result of including “illegal” peers. [457 U.S. 202 (1982)]

The May 25 Memorandum: On May 25, 1970, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, issued a policy statement stating, in part, that "where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national-origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by an LEA, the LEA must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open the instructional program to the students." The statement purpose was to clarify an LEA’s responsibilities with respect to national-origin-minority children. In addition, “School districts have the responsibility to adequately notify national origin-minority-group parents of school activities which are called to the attention of other parents. Such notice, in order to be adequate, may have to be provided in a language other than English.”

COVID-19 Pandemic and English Learners

During distance learning, states have been required to inform districts and charter schools of allowable adjustments to procedures to continue to identify and serve multilingual learners through proficiency and exit from English learner programming. Guidance is found on the MDE website at the following pages: [English Learner Education](#); [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#); [COVID-19 Updates](#); and [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources](#).

Minnesota joined the WIDA Consortium (formerly known as World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) in 2011. 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 42 states and territories and 500 international schools worldwide.

Minnesota adopted the WIDA English language development (ELD) standards in rule in January of 2012. Minnesota uses the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the annual state English language proficiency assessment. ACCESS has a companion English language proficiency “screener.” The WIDA Screener is used for identification purposes with incoming students who use or understand one or more other language in addition to English. The Kindergarten WIDA Screener will be available for use in Minnesota beginning in July of 2021.

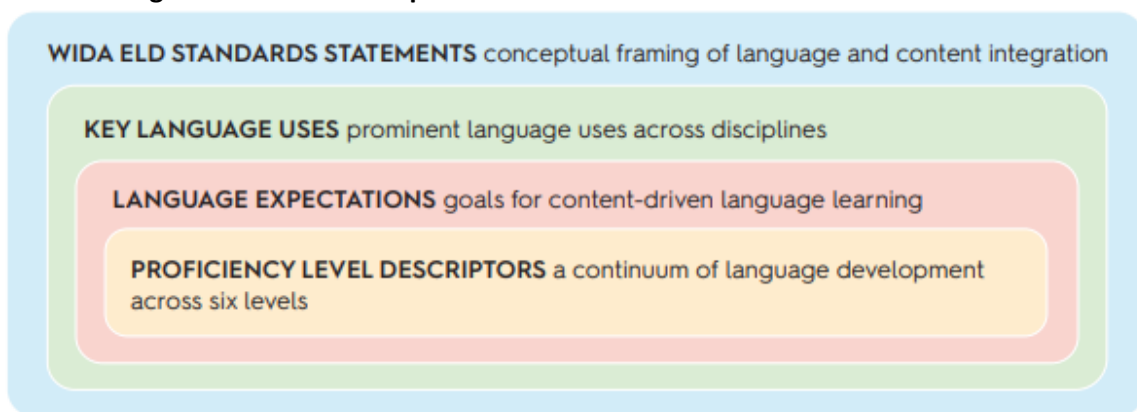
The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an assessment of ELD for students with English learner status in grades 1-12 who also have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. The ESEA, as amended by ESSA (2015), requires that all students identified as ELs be assessed annually for English language proficiency, including students who receive special education services.

The four components of Minnesota’s (WIDA) ELD Standards Framework are grounded in four big ideas. Like the Can Do Philosophy, they support the design of standards-based instruction that is student-centered, culturally and linguistically sustaining, and responsive to the strengths and needs of diverse multilingual learners.

The 2020 edition of the K-12 English Language Development Standards Framework was launched on the WIDA website in December of 2020. Highlights of the 2020 edition of the K-12 ELD standards framework include:

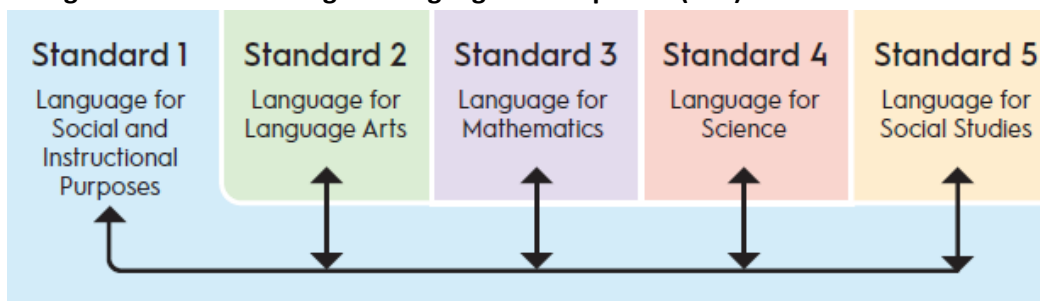
- **Four Big Ideas** anchor the standards and are interwoven throughout the document:
 - Equity of opportunity and access
 - Integration of content and language
 - Collaboration among stakeholders
 - Functional approach to language development
- A **robust standards framework** supports equity and provides a coherent approach to language development (see figures 1 and 2 below);

Figure 1. The Four Components of Minnesota’s ELD Standards Framework



Source: [WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](#) (page 23)

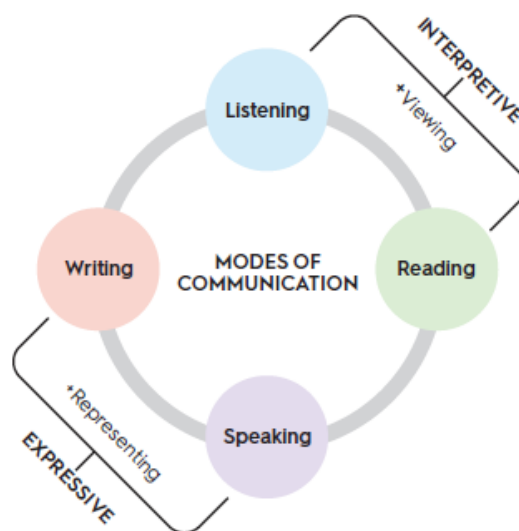
Figure 2: Minnesota English Language Development (ELD) Standards Statements



Source: [WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](#) (page 25)

- The **Key Language Uses** (see page 26 of the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)) are used to prioritize and organize the integration of content and language instruction. The key language uses are genre families – categories of texts that share specific characteristics, such as purpose, organization, or other similar patterns. This shift represents an increased emphasis on genre-centered pedagogy (teaching that highlights genres as a way of organizing language use) that provides a natural focus for collaboration between content and language educators. The four cross-disciplinary language uses identified for the 2020 edition are: **Narrate, Inform, Explain and Argue**. These serve as an organizing point for unit-level language expectations.
- **Language expectations** (See figure 3 below) are unit-level goals for content-driven language instruction, adding specificity to the ELD standards statements and key language uses. Each language expectation includes a reference code identifying the academic content area and grade-level cluster, a key language use, and the communication mode: interpretive (listening, reading, and viewing) or expressive (speaking, writing, and representing).

Figure 3: Minnesota English Language Development (ELD) Standards Statements



Source: [WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](#) (page 25)

- **Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)** (see pages 31-34 of the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)) describe multilingual learners’ growth across levels of English language proficiency. PLDs illustrate use of language toward the end of each language proficiency level through to proficiency. Educators use the PLDs to scaffold learning and resources across all levels of language proficiency.
- **Grade-level cluster materials** (beginning on page 39 of the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)) represent the WIDA ELD Standards Framework in action.
- **A sample collaborative planning process** for content-language integration offers a jump-off point for curricular conversations
- **Six grade-level clusters** (K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12) and six proficiency levels correspond with those of ACCESS for ELLs Online

Rollout and Implementation of the 2020 K-12 ELD Standards Framework in Minnesota

MDE staff will be working with Minnesota educators to update the English Language Development Standards Implementation Guide, which Provides guidance and support to educators implementing the WIDA ELD Standards.

2020-21: Schools and districts engage in professional development efforts to build awareness at school & district levels. Consider ways to align and coordinate your ELD standards implementation work with the implementation of other Minnesota standards, including physical education, arts, science and language arts.

2021-22: Planning, preparation, continued professional development and initial implementation. Consider ways to align and coordinate K-12 ELD standards implementation work with the implementation of other Minnesota standards, including physical education, arts, science and language arts.

2022-23: Approaching full implementation by ELD teachers with efforts to inform integrated language and content instruction across the school-day and alignment with other Minnesota content standards.

2023-24: Ongoing implementation efforts-coincides with implementation of the Minnesota science standards (leverage opportunities for collaboration in standards implementation efforts) and the Minnesota Language Arts standards.

2024-25: Ongoing implementation efforts-coincides with implementation of the Minnesota science standards (leverage opportunities for collaboration in standards implementation efforts) and the Minnesota Language Arts standards.

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 students' academic language by building on the inherent resources of multilingual learners and accentuating the positive efforts of educators. Following are resources available to Minnesotans:

[MDE English Language Development Standards Page](#)

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework: A Collaborative Approach eWorkshop (4 hours)

This eWorkshop explores ways to use the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition to support multilingual learners' achievement and language development. Each module engages participants in components of the WIDA

Standards Framework and contains prompts for educators to discuss the module topic in local settings. Ideally, groups of educators commit to engaging in the modules individually and to meeting on a bi/weekly basis to discuss the modules.

[How MN District Staff Can Access WIDA eLearning Courses](#)

[WIDA eLearning Courses](#)

[English Language Development Standards Implementation \(2012\)](#) *Provides guidance and support to educators as they implement the WIDA ELD Standards.*

[2020 Edition Introduction Video](#)

[Promotional Flyer](#)

[Power Point Slides](#)

[Q&A Webinar Schedule](#)

[Q&A Webinar Recording Introduction to the 2020 Edition: Big Ideas and the WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)

[WIDA Professional Learning](#)

Essential Actions Handbook: [A Handbook for Implementing WIDA’s Framework for English Language Development Standards](#). The purpose of this handbook is to promote collaboration, mutual understanding, and use of language development standards among all educators who work with English learners. The Essential Actions, derived from current theory and research, provide a rationale for each component and element of WIDA’s standards framework. They may be used in conjunction with WIDA’s 2020 standards books or independently, once staff have familiarity with the components and elements.

[WIDA’s CAN DO Philosophy](#) embraces inclusion and equity and focuses attention on expanding students' academic language by building on the inherent resources of multilingual learners and accentuating the positive efforts of educators.

Language is a powerful force that helps shape our individual and collective identities. Language is an important resource and multilingual learners are valued contributors to learning communities. The Principles of Language Development acknowledge the diverse linguistic resources our students draw from and the unique pathways they follow throughout the process of learning English. The Principles of Language Development were drafted by WIDA staff and enhanced by the WIDA standards expert panel, a group of researchers and practitioners in the field of academic language from across the U.S.

[Guiding Principles of Language Development](#) (13 languages)

[Illustrated Guiding Principles of Language Development](#)

[Collaboration: Working Together to Serve Multilingual Learners](#)

[Educación en el mundo actual](#) (English)

[Educación en el mundo actual](#) (Spanish)

Funding For English Learner Education

State Funding

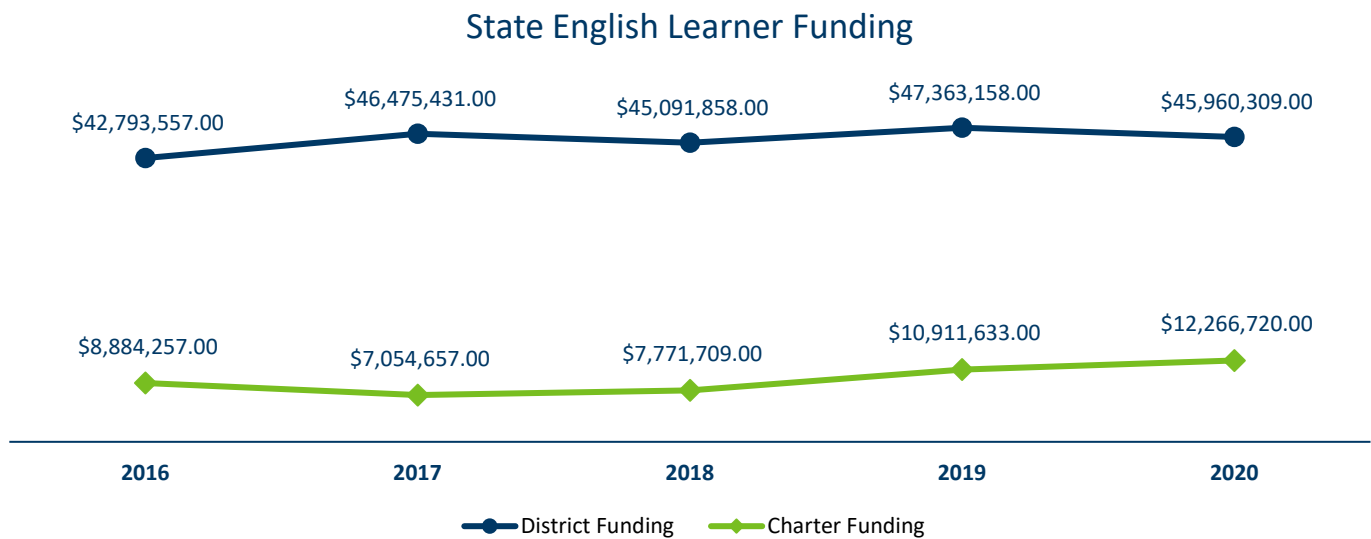
The primary responsibility in meeting the needs of English Learners (ELs) lies with the local education agency (LEA). Hence, in addition to the revenue that every Minnesota child in public education generates, English learners also generate supplementary state aid. Furthermore, a variety of state and federal resources are available to supplement (but not supplant) local resources. Funding sources that can be used for quality EL programming include: general education revenue, state EL funding, compensatory funding, transition revenue, Title I funding and others.

State EL funding is allocated to students who:

- have been identified as English learners by state definition (Minnesota Statutes, 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 4 shows a slight decrease in funds to districts and a slight increase in funds to charter schools, which aligns with enrollment numbers.

FIGURE 4. ACTUAL STATE EL FUNDING in dollars



Minnesota Funding Reports, August 2020

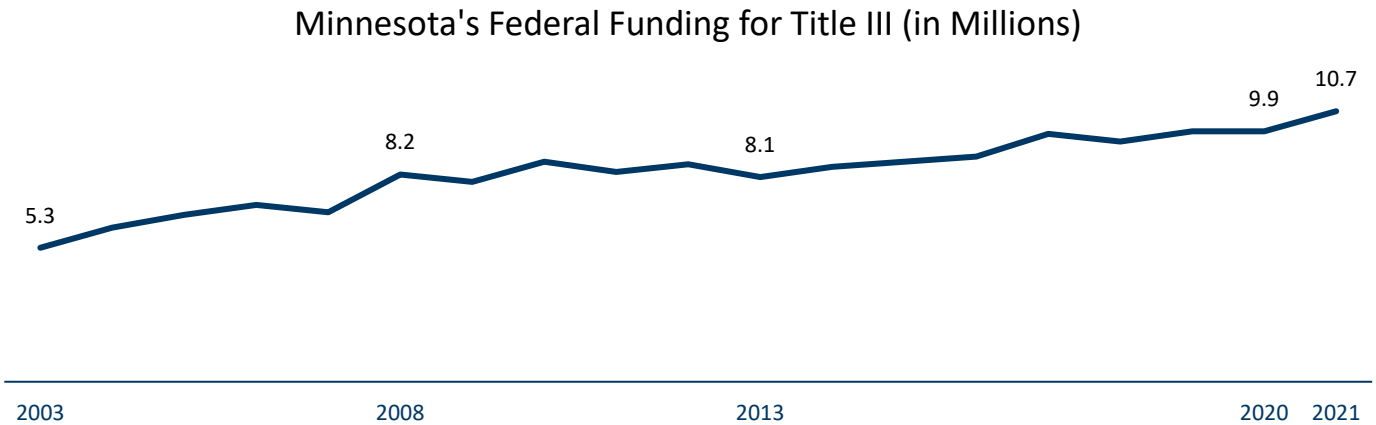
Federal Funding

Title III, a component of the Elementary and Secondary Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is another source of funding to supplement the resources of a local educational agency (LEA) in providing quality education to ELs and immigrant students, parent, family and community engagement, as well as professional development for staff working with English learners. The federal government awards Title III grants to states based on their respective EL and immigrant student enrollments, and the states, in turn, distribute the funds to LEAs based on their EL enrollments and immigrant counts. Figure 5 shows how Title III funding amounts for Minnesota have increased from \$5.3 million in 2003 to \$9.9 million in 2020, with a projected \$10.7 million for 2021. In order to be eligible for Title III funds, an LEA must generate a minimum of \$10,000. An LEA that does not meet the threshold may join other LEAs and form a consortium to reach the \$10,000 requirement in order to apply for funding. Additionally, from the Title III

allotment, the state education agency must set aside a certain percentage of the grant for LEAs highly impacted by a significant increase of immigrant children and allocate the remaining funds to eligible LEAs.

Title I, for the purpose of improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, allocates federal funding to LEAs with a high percentage of students from low-income families. ELs are eligible on the same basis as all students to receive Title I services. LEAs need to consider the allocation of Title I funds and how best to coordinate services to meet all student needs.

Figure 5. Minnesota’s Federal EL Education Funding 2003 to 2020



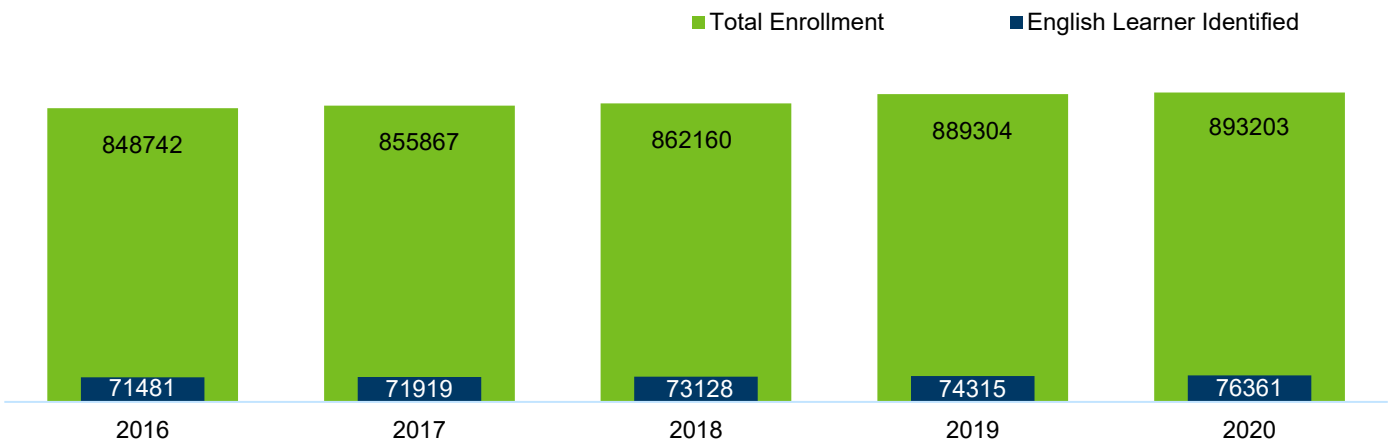
Source: [United States Department of Education](#)

English Learners in Minnesota

In 2020, 893,203 K-12 students were enrolled in Minnesota public schools with 76,361 students, or 8.5 percent identified as English learners, 2.30 percent up from 2019. Figure 6 displays fall enrollment data from 2015-2016 through 2019-2020. The data indicates enrollment of ELs has remained fairly consistent since 2016 in the percentage of students identified as ELs. Figure 7 shows the distribution of Minnesota ELs across the grade levels. As indicated in the graph, the number of ELs in primary grades is much higher than in secondary grades.

Figure 6. Total PreK-12 and English Learner Enrollment in Minnesota Public Schools, 2016-2020

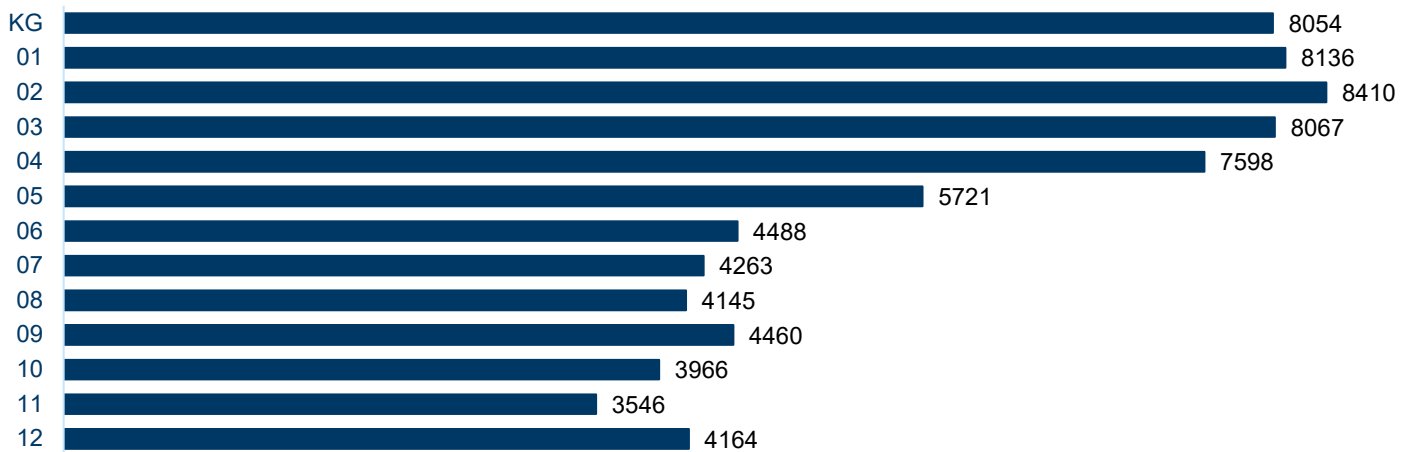
Identified English Learners have continued to rise at a faster rate than total enrollment



Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2016-2020 Fall EL Enrollment

Figure 7. Distribution of K-12 Students Identified as ELs Enrolled in Minnesota Public Schools by Grade, 2019-2020

More students are identified as English learners in the lower grades

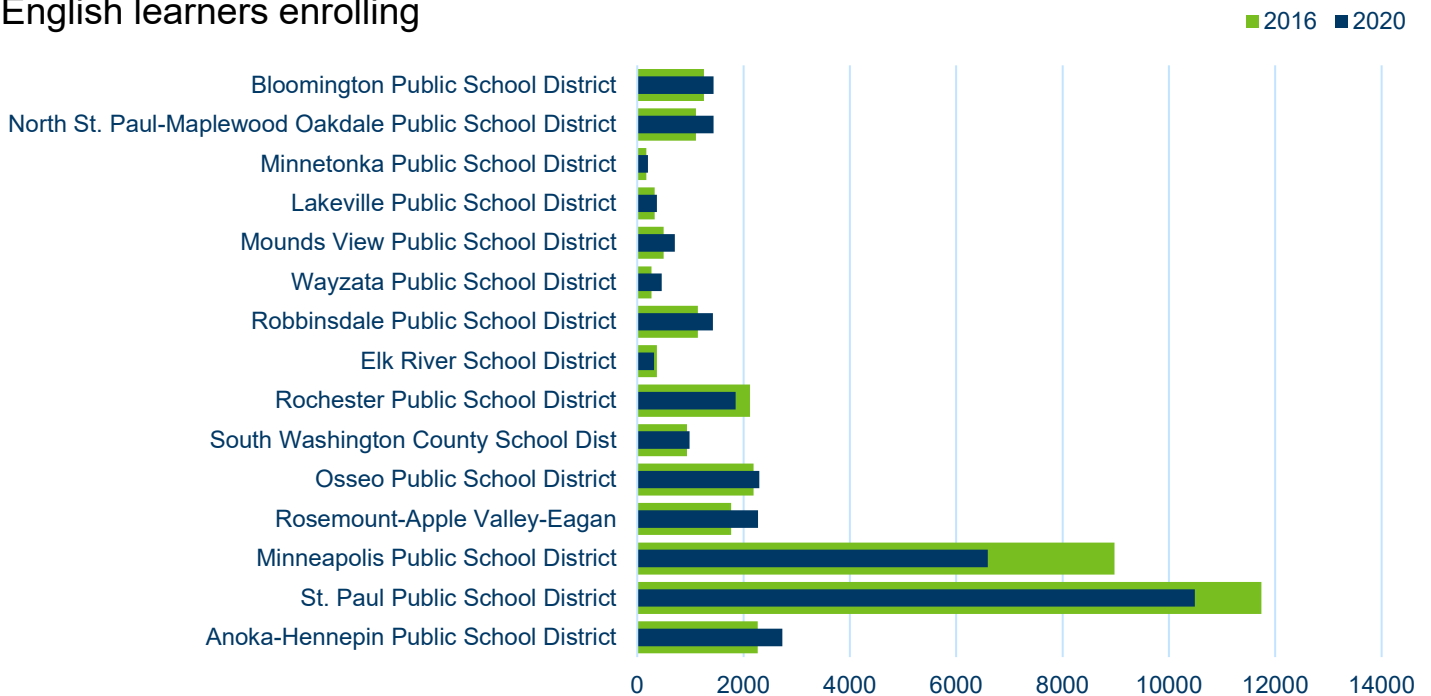


Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2019-2020 Fall EL Enrollment

Figure 8 illustrates the growth in the number of ELs within the largest 15 school LEAs across the state looking at data from 2016 and 2020. Eleven LEAs showed increased numbers of ELs (Bloomington, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale, Minnetonka, Lakeville, Mounds View, Wayzata, Robbinsdale, South Washington County, Osseo, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, and Anoka-Hennepin). The largest increases in these two years were in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan and Anoka-Hennepin school districts. Of the 15 LEAs, four display a decrease of ELs between 2016 and 2020 (Elk River, Rochester, Minneapolis, and St. Paul).

Figure 8. English Learner Enrollment in the Largest 15 Minnesota Public School Districts

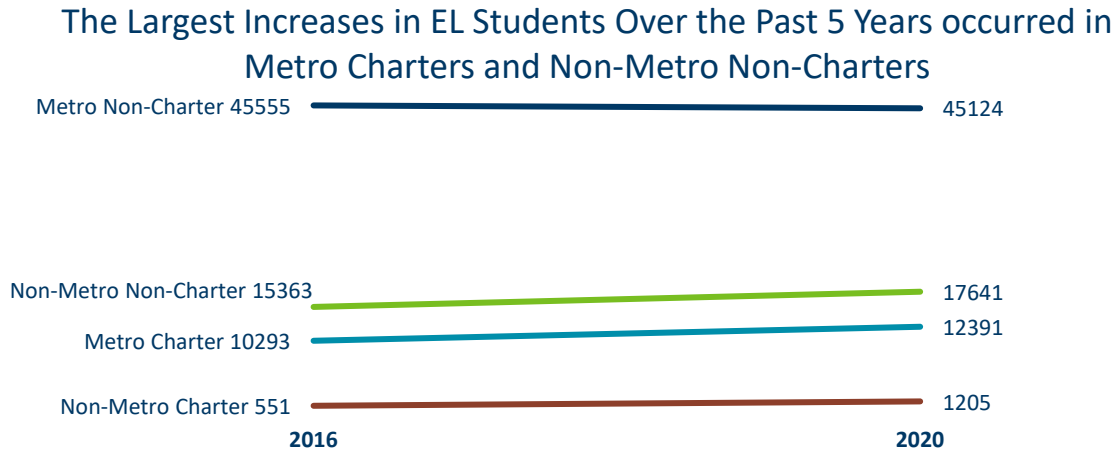
Many large school districts in Minnesota have seen increases in English learners enrolling



Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 EL Enrollment

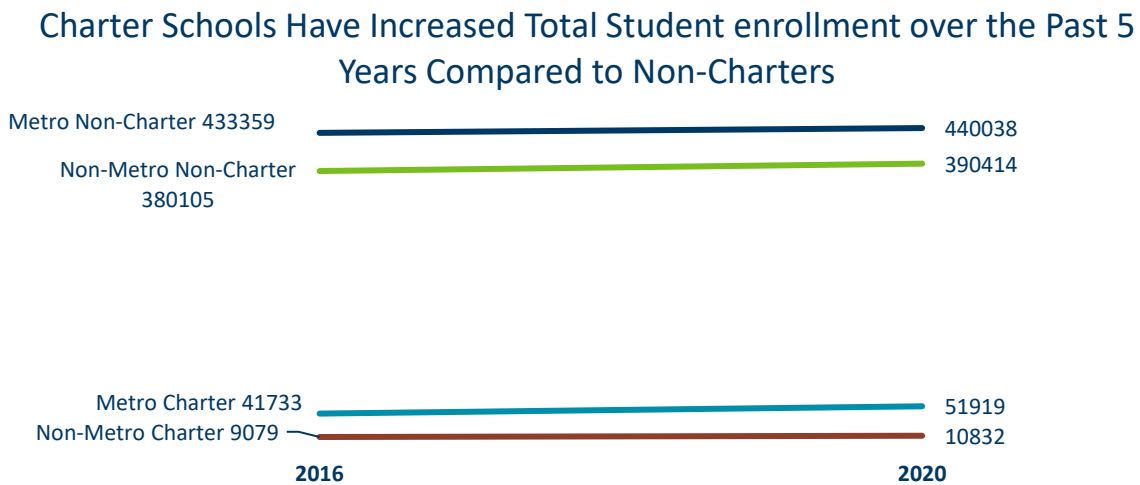
Figures 9.1-9.3 show that charters in the 7-County Metro area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties) experienced increases in ELs over the past five years.

Figure 9.1. Minnesota K-12 EL Enrollment Comparing 7-County Metro Area and Non-Metro School Enrollment



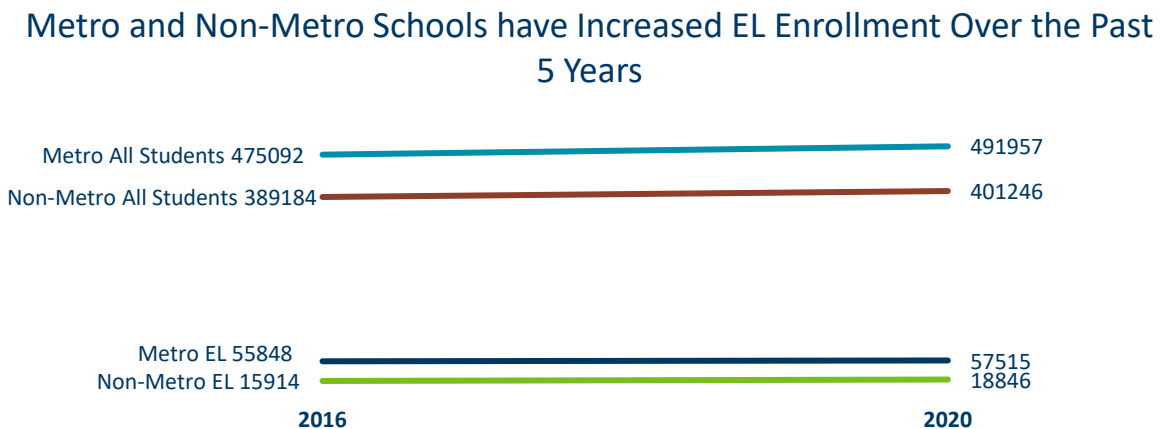
Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 EL Enrollment

Figure 9.2. Minnesota K-12 Total Enrollment Comparing 7-County Metro Area and Non-Metro School Enrollment



Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 Enrollment

Figure 9.3. Minnesota K-12 Enrollment Comparing 7-County Metro Area and Non-Metro School Enrollment



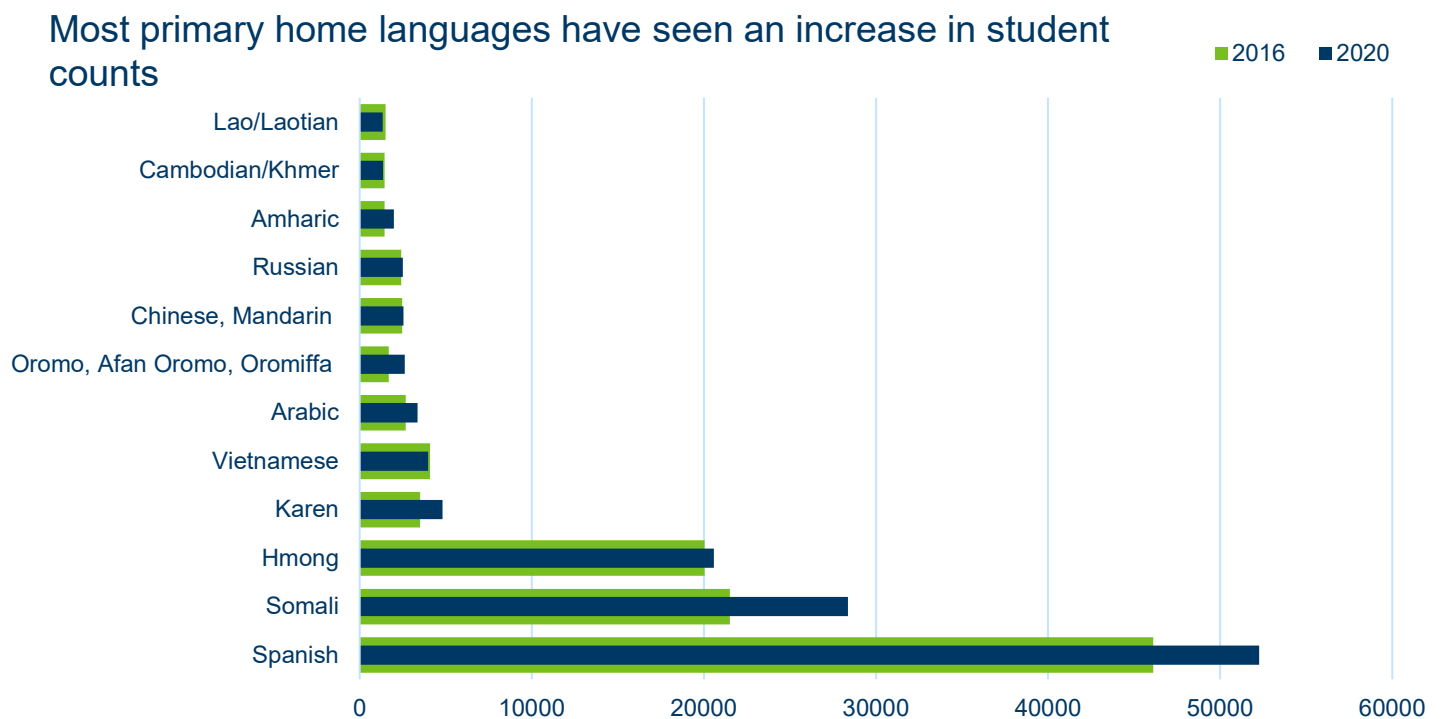
Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 EL Enrollment

Primary Home Languages

In 2019-2020, 339 different home languages were reported for 893,203 students in the Minnesota Automated Student Reporting System (MARSS), compared to the 300 home languages reported for 2018-2019, an increase of 39 languages. Of the 145,816 students in Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) or School Readiness Plus (SRP) to grade 12 who were reported to have a home language other than English for 2019-2020, 76,361 students or 8.5 percent of the total enrollment were identified as English learners.

Figure 10 provides information on the top 12 primary languages other than English. From school years 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, Amharic, Afan Oromo/Oromo/Oromiffa, Arabic, Karen language, inclusive of Pwo Karen and S’gaw Karen, Somali and Spanish languages continue to increase at significant rates. Spanish continues to be the largest reported home language other than English, followed by Somali and Hmong. Somali language has increased at the greatest rate since 2015-2016.

Figure 10. Minnesota's Top 12 Languages Other than English



Source: Minnesota Department of Education, Data Reports and Analytics

Figure 11 represents the fall 2019 distribution of the top 12 primary home languages other than English reported for 10 selected Minnesota counties. Hennepin County has the largest number of students whose home language is other than English (38,718). This accounts for 27 percent of all students with home languages other than English statewide. The most common home language in Hennepin County is Spanish (16,926, 44 percent of all home language other than English in the county) followed by Somali (10,881, 28 percent) and Hmong (5,247, 14 percent). The second largest population of home languages other than English is found in Ramsey County (30,067). This number accounts for 21 percent of all home language other than English statewide. Of those languages represented, Ramsey County’s most common language other than English is Hmong (11,856, 39 percent of all home language other than English in the county) followed by Spanish (6,755, 22 percent), Somali (4,866, 16 percent) and Karen (3,924, 13 percent). The third largest county with home languages other than English is Dakota County (11,129), accounting for 8 percent of students

with home languages other than English statewide. The two most common languages spoken in the county are Spanish (5,689, 51 percent) and Somali (2,438, 22 percent).

Spanish (40,728, 53 percent) is by far the most common home language other than English spoken statewide. The largest concentration of Spanish speakers is found in Hennepin County (16,926), which is 42 percent of all students whose home language is Spanish statewide. The second largest concentration is found in Ramsey county (6,755), which is almost a little over one-third of that of the Hennepin county. The third largest concentration of Spanish speakers is found at Dakota Country (5,689). Following Spanish, Somali is the second most common home language other than English (24,694, 32 percent). The largest concentration of Somali language speakers is found in Hennepin County (10,881, 44 percent); the second largest concentration is found in Ramsey County (4,866), and the third, in Stearns County (3,011). The third most common home language other than English is Hmong (20,089, 26 percent). The largest concentration of Hmong speakers is found in Ramsey County (11,856, 59 percent); the second largest concentration is found in Hennepin County (5,247), which is only 44 percent of that of Ramsey County.

The fourth most common language other than English is Karen (4,100), and 96 percent of Karen-speaking students can be found in Ramsey County. The fifth most common language is Vietnamese (3,714), with 35 percent of Vietnamese-speaking students found in Hennepin County (1,284). The other languages in the order of greatest to least are: Arabic (2,982), Oromo (2,576), Mandarin (2,238), Russian (2,184), and Amharic (1,941).

Figure 11. The Number of Students for the Top 12 Primary Languages Other than English in Selected Minnesota Counties

	Anoka-Hennepin	Carver	Dakota	Hennepin	Nobles	Olmsted	Ramsey	Scott	Stearns	Washington	Total
Amharic	169	<10	594	374	44	40	478	29	<10	213	1941
Arabic	870	24	338	643	<10	465	375	57	46	164	2982
Chinese, Mandarin	109	57	340	809	<10	249	295	77	36	266	2238
Hmong	1204	13	240	5247	<10	96	11856	18	0	1415	20089
Karen (Pwo, S'gaw)	0	0	12	0	152	0	3924	<10	0	12	4100
Khmer, Cambodian	23	33	249	194	0	354	130	229	17	72	1301
Lao, Laotian	75	30	136	487	66	136	38	121	47	23	1159
Oromo	454	<10	158	912	25	12	822	26	36	131	2576
Russian	307	61	351	961	0	37	69	351	<10	47	2184
Somali	1033	191	2434	10881	0	1218	4866	700	3011	360	24694
Spanish	3180	868	5689	16926	1921	1295	6755	1547	1096	1451	40728
Vietnamese	475	47	588	1284	<10	190	459	309	106	256	3714
Total	7899	1324	11129	38718	2208	4092	30067	3464	4395	4410	

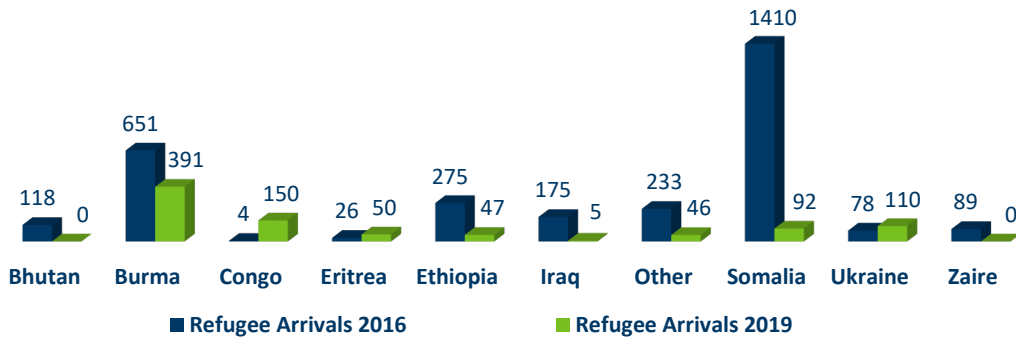
Source: Minnesota Department of Education 2019-2020 Fall Primary Home Language Totals

Refugees in Minnesota

Overall, fewer refugees arrived in Minnesota between 2016 and 2019. According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services' (DHS) website's [Primary Refugee Arrivals to Minnesota by Nationality table](#), the number of primary arrivals between 2005 and 2019 is 33,189. These are recent refugees who have come directly to Minnesota from another country. Based the [DHS Refugee Arrival Map](#), there were 46 primary arrivals from Central and South American countries between 2005 and 2019: 13 from Cuba between 2009 and 2015, 29 from El Salvador between 2015 and 2019, three from Colombia in 2007 and one from Paraguay in 2017. In 2019, refugees arrived primarily from Burma (391), the Congo (150), Ukraine (110), Somalia (92), Eritrea (50) and Ethiopia (47), as shown in figure 12 below (current year data is not yet available). There were increases in the number of refugee arrivals between 2016 and 2019 in the Congo (from 4 to 150 and Eritrea (from 26 to 50). Significant decreases from 2016 to 2019 were seen in arrivals from countries

including Bhutan (118 to zero), Burma (651 to 391), Ethiopia (275 to 47), Iraq (175 to 5), Zaire (89 to zero) most notably in Somalia (1,410 to 92). All other country’s refugee arrivals decreased from 233 to 46.

Figure 12. Primary Refugee Arrivals, Minnesota 2016 and 2019



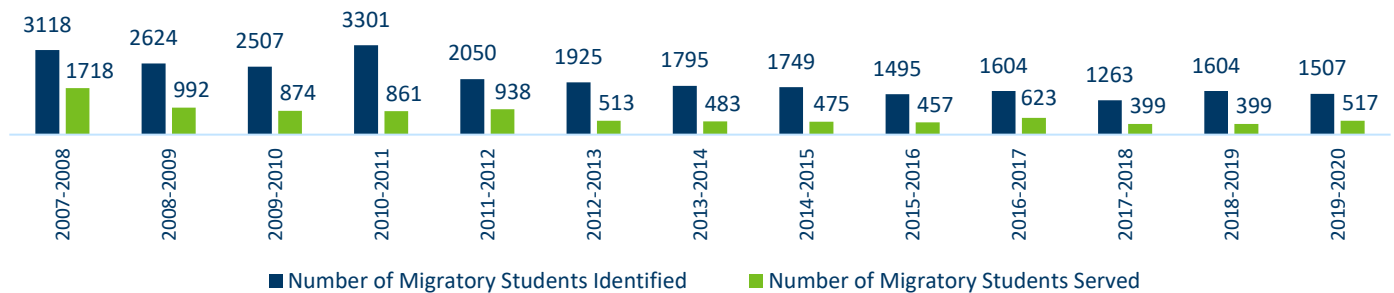
Source: [Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2016 and 2019](#)

Migratory Students

Migratory children (see [definition](#)) are eligible to participate in a summer migrant education program (MEP) and receive resources during the part of the school year in which they are enrolled in a Minnesota school. Migrant education programming in Minnesota ensures that migratory children fully benefit from the same free public education provided to other children. As shown in figure 13, 1,507 migrant children, ages 3 through 21, were identified in Minnesota as eligible for migrant services during the 2019-2020 school year, and 517 were served in the summer of 2019-2020, an increase from the previous two years, despite distance learning challenges.

Migratory children and families face unique language, social and academic challenges due to high mobility. As a result of moving to seek agricultural work, they may experience challenges such as unaffordable housing, low wages, limited resources to purchase nutritious foods, lack of affordable health and dental care and/or over-/under-immunization, health hazards (e.g., exposure to pesticides and other occupational harm), barriers to appropriate academic placement, and difficulty with credit accrual. Minnesota districts and charter schools designate a migrant liaison to advocate for migratory children and families and ensure their needs are met, including both educational and support services, as well as receipt of other services they qualify for (e.g., free meals, EL instruction, etc.). Migrant liaisons also make referrals to appropriate resources, access student records, facilitate inter- and intrastate coordination with homebase districts, and support identification. Currently, the Migrant Liaison contact list on the MDE-ORG website lists 256 migrant liaisons within districts across the state, and many have received additional “Certified” status through training with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council.

Figure 13. Eligible Migrant Children in Minnesota between 2007-2008 and 2019-2020, comparing the 12-month count to the count of students served (preliminary data)



Source: [Minnesota Department of Education Consolidated State Performance Reports \(2007-2019\)](#)

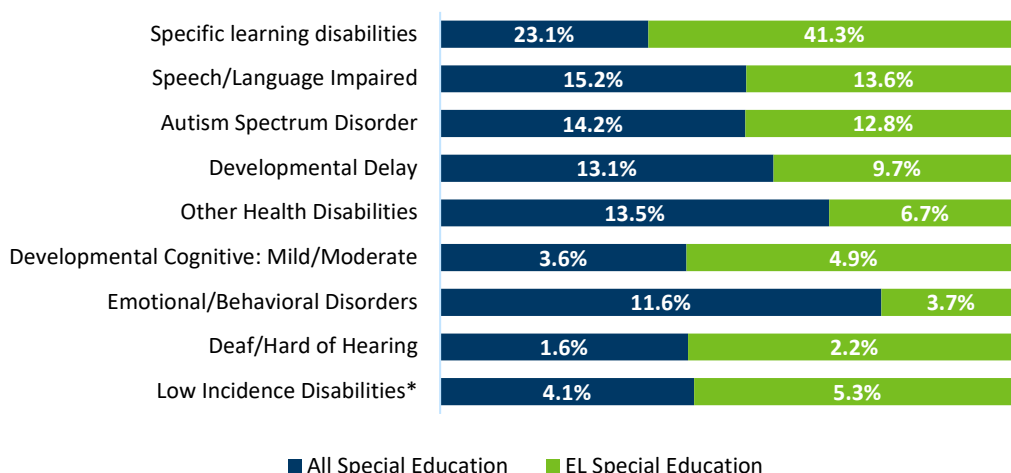
English Learners and Special Education

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 suspected of a disability. EL status must not be cause for delay of identification, evaluation or special education services. Likewise, being identified for special education services is not a cause for removal from English learner services, regardless of disability or severity, unless the child has demonstrated proficiency in English. Appropriate accommodations, consistent with the student’s individualized education program (IEP), must be made during testing. When severe disability exists, an adaptive exam is given (see Alternate ACCESS for ELLs on the WIDA™ website). It is important to include EL staff who are familiar with the student’s English language needs both when evaluating the student to determine eligibility for special education and also when developing the IEP. When assessing need for special education services, teams assess the student in the language or languages that best show what he/she can do “academically, developmentally and functionally [CFR 300.304 (c) (ii)]. In addition, teams consider “the language needs of the child as those needs relate to the child’s IEP” when developing annual goals and planning services [CFR 300.324 (a)(2)(ii)]. 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 14 shows the distribution of Minnesota ELs and all students with disabilities. The disability type reported with the greatest number of students having specific learning disabilities, with 5,472 (41.3 percent of the total) being ELs, followed by speech/language impairment at 1,804 (or 13.6 percent), autism spectrum disorder at 1,693 (12.8 percent), and developmental delay at 1,284 (9.7 percent), each seeing an increase. In addition, in 2020, English learners made up 6.7 percent (883) of those identified with other health disabilities, 3.7 percent of those with emotional/behavioral disorders (486), 4.9 percent (644) of those having developmental cognitive (mild/moderate) disorders, and 2.2 percent (293) of deaf/hard of hearing students. English learners made up 5.3 percent of all students identified for low incidence disabilities*.

Figure 14. Distribution of ELs and all students with Disabilities, 2020

2020 Students Receiving Special Education Services



*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.

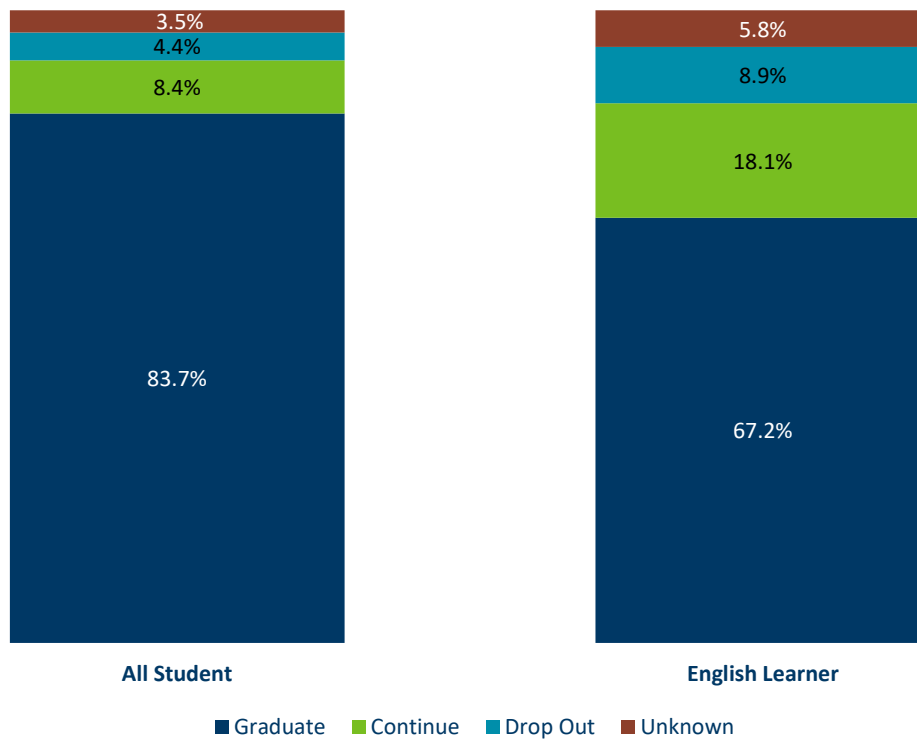
Source: Minnesota Department of Education, August 2020

English Learners' Graduation Rate

The Four-year graduation rate is a graduation rate based on a cohort of first time 9th grade students plus transfers into the cohort within the four-year period, minus transfers out of the cohort within the four-year period. Based on these calculations, figure 15 shows that graduation rates for English learners are increasing at a faster pace than for all students: 67.2 percent of English learners graduate from Minnesota schools a 1.7 percent increase from last year, 18.1 percent are continuing students, and 8.9 percent drop out of school (a decrease of .2 percent from last year). For all students, 83.7 percent graduate (a .5 percent increase), 8.4 percent continue, and 4.4 percent drop out. For more information on the graduation rate, please visit the Minnesota Department of Education [Data Reports and Analytics webpage](#).

Figure 15. Comparison of English Learners' and All Students' 4-Year Graduation Rate

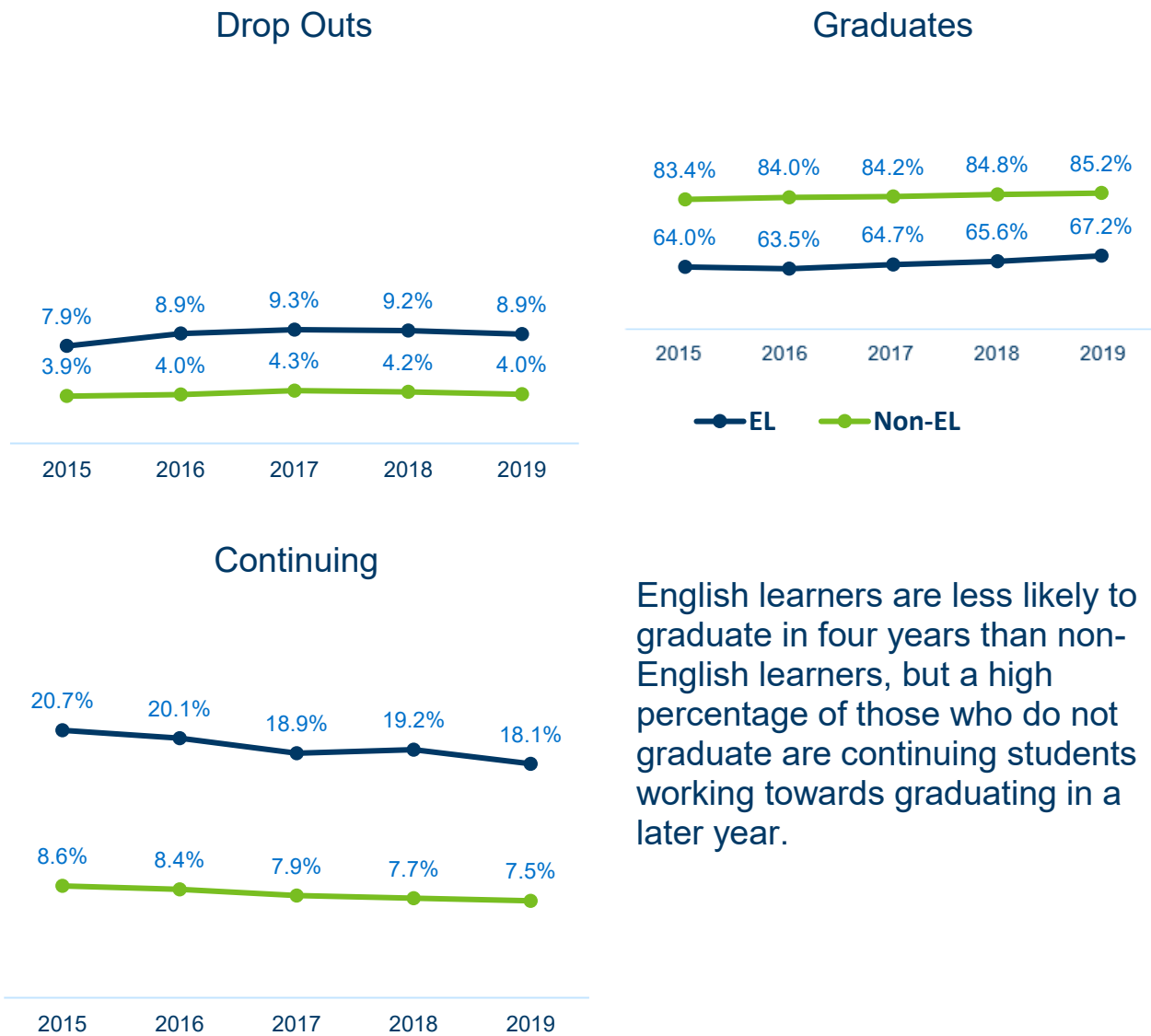
English learners are more likely to take more than four years to graduate or drop out



Source: Minnesota Report Card August 2020

Graduation, dropout, and continuing trends for 2015-2019 are depicted in Figure 16. From 2015-2019, the dropout rate for non-ELs slightly rose by .1 percent, whereas that for ELs rose by 1.4 percent from 2015-2017 and appears to be on the decline in the past two years. The drop-out rate for ELS is still below the 2017 rate of 9.3 percent. The graduation rate for ELs increased by 3.2 percent to over 67 percent since 2015. While English learners do not graduate in four years at the same rate as non-EL students, a much higher percentage of English learners than non-ELs continue to work toward graduation (18.1 percent for ELs and 7.5 percent for non-ELs). However, the rate of continuing for both ELs and non-ELs has been trending down since 2015.

Figure 16. Minnesota Drop Out, Graduation and Continuing Trends for 4-Year Graduation Cohort Comparing ELs and Non-ELs 2014-2018



English learners are less likely to graduate in four years than non-English learners, but a high percentage of those who do not graduate are continuing students working towards graduating in a later year.

Source: Minnesota Report Card August 2019

MDE English Learner Education Contacts

Title/Role	Phone and Email
English Learner Education	651-582-8579 mde.el@state.mn.us
Statewide Testing	651-582-8674 mde.testing@state.mn.us
Adult Basic Education (GED)	651-582-8594 mde.abe@state.mn.us
MARSS Reporting	651-582-8456 marss@state.mn.us
World Languages	651-582-8579 mde.worldlang@state.mn.us
Migrant Education Program	651-582-8579 mde.migrant@state.mn.us
Special Education – Diverse Populations	651-582-8616 mde.special-ed@state.mn.us