



# Funding Student Needs

## A Review of State Funding Policies for English Learners and Students From Low-Income Backgrounds

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# Executive Summary

Addressing the needs of all student groups is paramount for ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities and fostering high academic success for all students. Students in the United States come from a diverse range of backgrounds, bringing with them knowledge, experiences, and other assets that inform the way they learn, but may also come with different learning needs that require greater support. Among the student groups that may require such additional support are English learners (ELs) and students from low-income backgrounds.

National testing data show that English learners and students from low-income backgrounds exhibit lower achievement than their peers, and these rates are lower still for students who are both ELs and from low-income backgrounds. This underscores the layered challenges for students who are in both categories and the importance of additional support to help them achieve their potential.

To better assess whether states adequately fund schools based on their students' needs, it is essential to understand (1) different funding approaches to supporting those various needs and (2) research on the dollars required to truly provide the learning opportunities most likely to promote student success. From an analysis of state legislative and policy documents, this report reviews how states' school funding programs currently address the needs of English learners and students from low-income families.

Given the great disparity in wealth and property values in communities and the reliance on local property taxes in education funding, the amount of funding available to schools can vary greatly. States therefore play a critical role in providing adequate and equitable funding to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education.

Previous research finds that increased spending leads to a range of positive and longer-term life outcomes, including higher educational attainment, higher graduation rates, more significant earnings post-graduation, and lower incidences of poverty. Additional funding can help schools organize to provide both social service and academic support to students from low-income families and see more robust growth in outcomes. Increased funding for ELs can help with resources to implement high-quality English language development, which may include bilingual education. These resources may consist of additional supports such as ongoing professional development, smaller class sizes, paraprofessionals, translation services for parents, and support for home-to-school communications.

There are myriad ways that states fund their public K–12 education systems, although most state funding systems fall into one of two categories. Student-based systems (36 states, including the District of Columbia) provide a base amount of money for each student, with additional weights or funds for specific student groups, such as English learners or students from low-income backgrounds. Resource-based systems (nine states) set amounts based on the resources needed, primarily staffing positions, to educate all students. In a resource-based system, the state provides funding to public schools based on a ratio of students to school positions (teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, etc.). Four states have a hybrid system combining some facets of both a student- and resource-based formula, and the remaining two states have unique funding systems.

## Funding for English Learners

We found that for the 2023–24 school year, 49 states provide separate, additional funding for students who are English learners on top of base funding for schools. Thirty-three states funded EL students through an additional weight in their funding formula, with weights ranging from a high of 2.49 (249% additional funding) in Vermont to a low of 0.025 (2.5%) in Utah, with a median weight of 0.25 (25%). Ten states fund their EL programs by providing a dollar amount per student, while three states fund additional staff positions in schools based on the number of EL students they have.

## Funding for Students From Low-Income Backgrounds

We further found that 44 states currently provide unique funding for “at-risk” students. All 44 states classify students from low-income families as at-risk, which is defined in various ways. Almost half of these (21 states) provide additional funding to local education agencies based on the density, or concentration, of low-income/at-risk students enrolled, recognizing that as concentrated poverty increases, the costs of achieving any given level of educational outcomes increase significantly.

## Dual Funding

Our review found that 37 states provide dual funding for students who qualify as both English learners and from low-income families. Students in these states are eligible for additional funds offered to address the learning needs of being both an English learner and qualifying as low-income/at-risk. Thirty-six of these states provide funds that add the unique weights offered for each student group, while one state, New Jersey, adjusts the funding weights for students who meet both criteria.

Establishing the level of funding to meet student needs is typically done through costing studies. A review of five school finance studies conducted between 2016 and 2023 recommended additional funding for ELs and at-risk students by applying weightings to their funding. The studies sought to estimate the funding required to help all students reach state standards, finding that equivalent per-pupil amounts depended on a range of factors that include each state’s educational standards, the relative costs of resources (e.g., teacher salaries) in each state, the particulars of each state’s approach to funding, and the costing method used.

We further identified 11 states that provide dual funding for EL students and students from low-income backgrounds where it was possible to accurately estimate the per-pupil funding amount for each student group. We found great variation both in terms of their joint funding for ELs and low-income/at-risk students and in terms of the proportion allocated to each student group. Total estimated additional funding ranged from \$904 to \$16,161.

Thus, states that are considering how to allocate funds to EL students and those from low-income backgrounds will need to consider their own context in determining how their funding approaches align or misalign with states across the nation. States that have experienced demographic transitions with higher proportions of ELs and students from low-income backgrounds should consider updated costing studies to accurately assess the extent of student need and whether funding formulas are meeting that need. Evaluation of student needs should include consideration of the costs needed to meet state learning standards. Given the different nature of resources needed for ELs and students from low-income backgrounds, states should consider the feasibility of providing dual funding to support these student groups.

# Introduction

Addressing the needs of all student groups is paramount for ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities and fostering high academic success for all students. Students in the United States come from a diverse range of backgrounds, bringing with them knowledge, experiences, and other assets that inform the way they learn, but may also come with different learning needs that require greater support. Understanding and supporting the needs of the whole child can broaden the opportunity for students to reach their full educational potential.<sup>1</sup>

Many different student groups require such additional support. These can include students from low-income backgrounds, English learners (ELs),<sup>2</sup> students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and students in foster care, among others. The unique needs of each should be taken into account in determining the level of funding support. Yet, how states currently provide school funding to support different student groups varies greatly from state to state.

To better assess whether states—50 states and the District of Columbia; hereafter just “states”—are adequately funding schools based on their students’ needs, it is important to understand (1) different funding approaches to supporting those various needs and (2) research on the dollars required to truly provide the learning opportunities most likely to promote student success. In this report, we focus on how appropriating funds beyond the base allocation for schools can support the specific needs of two of the largest student groups in the United States: English learners and students from low-income backgrounds. These are two groups that also have considerable overlap, with a greater proportion of English learners estimated to be from low-income backgrounds than their non-EL peers.<sup>3</sup> Yet, these student groups also have unique learning needs that are compounded for students who fall into both groups (see [Figure 1](#)).

From an analysis of state legislative and policy documents, this report reviews how states’ school funding programs currently address the needs of English learners and students from low-income families. We contextualize these approaches by summarizing findings from six school finance studies across several states that estimate the additional funds needed to support students from these backgrounds. We conclude with considerations for state policymakers in allocating funding to support the needs of these two student groups. While not comprehensive, this policy report allows the reader to better understand how states can provide additional funding to students who qualify as English learners and low-income.

# The Role of the State in U.S. Education Funding

In most states in the United States, schools are funded according to a system built upon local property taxation, with state and federal governments providing additional support. Nationally, the U.S. Census preliminary estimates for the 2022–23 school year show that 42.7% of school funding came from local sources, 44.4% from state sources, and 12.9% from federal sources.<sup>4</sup> The majority of local-source funding—around two thirds—comes from property taxes.<sup>5</sup> As there is great disparity in wealth and property values in communities, the reliance on local property taxes means that school district funding can vary greatly. Coupled with different state policies toward funding, this contributes to resource disparities and uneven educational opportunities within and between states.<sup>6</sup>

States and local communities also differ greatly in terms of the demographic makeup of the student population and thus the level of financial support needed for educational success. For example, the proportion of students who were ELs in the United States in the fall of 2021 was 10.6%, but this varied from as much as 20.2% in Texas to just 0.8% in West Virginia.<sup>7</sup> Even within a state, student demographics can vary widely. For example, though ELs represented 1 in 5 students in Texas in 2021, some districts like Houston (33.4%) and Dallas (46.6%) had much higher percentages of these students.<sup>8</sup> This is important because students who are English learners and/or from low-income families typically require additional supports than their non-EL and more affluent peers in order to meet state academic standards. Given this local variation and the disparities in both funding and needs that exist among communities, states play critical roles in providing adequate and equitable funding to ensure that each and every child has access to a high-quality education.

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## Achievement Gaps

For a variety of reasons, English learners and students from low-income families consistently exhibit lower academic performance compared to their counterparts. This is evident in their graduation rates and scores on assessments like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). For example, the average 4-year high school graduation rate stood at 87% in the 2021–22 school year (the most recent available). However, this rate was significantly lower for students from low-income backgrounds, reaching only 81%; for English learners, the graduation rate was even lower, at 72%.<sup>9</sup>

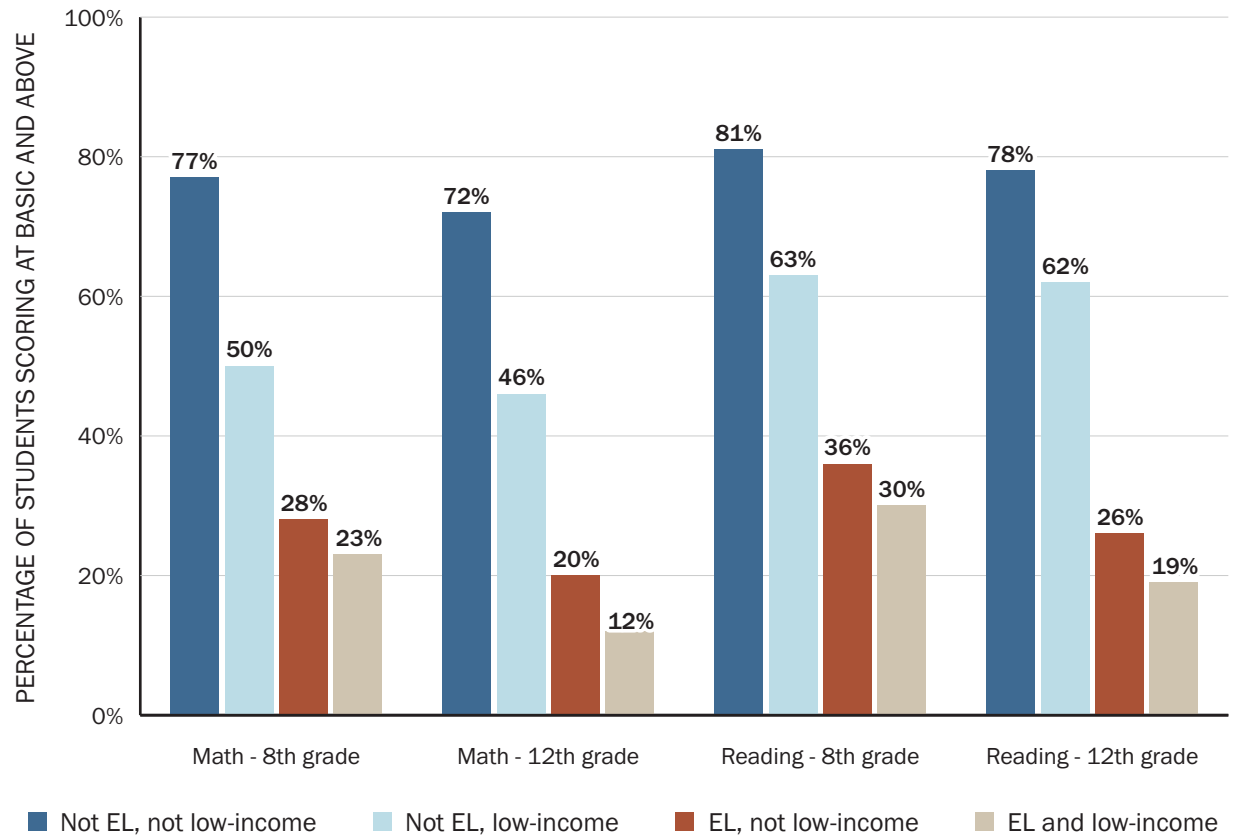
Data also highlight the compounding nature of the educational needs of EL students and those from low-income backgrounds. For example, we examined 2022 NAEP scores for 8th- and 12th-grade students, looking at the proportion of students who scored basic or above on the NAEP reading and math exams.<sup>10</sup> We disaggregated these data to look at potential differences in outcomes for students who were in one of four groups: (1) neither an EL nor from a low-income family; (2) not an EL, but from a low-income family; (3) an EL, but not from a low-income family; or (4) both an EL and from a low-income family.

On both math and reading exams for 8th and 12th grades, EL students and students from low-income backgrounds scored well below their peers. However, students who were both ELs and from low-income backgrounds achieved the lowest among the four groups, with less than one third of those students scoring basic or above in reading and less than one quarter scoring basic or above in math. This underscores the layered challenges for students who are in both categories and the importance of additional supports to help them achieve their potential.

It is important to note that the achievement gap we observe between EL and non-EL students is also partly an artifact of definitions and English proficiency requirements. Once an EL student acquires sufficient English proficiency, they are reclassified and no longer defined as an EL, so they are no longer represented in the EL scores as they improve. In addition, meeting state standards on an English language arts assessment can itself be a criterion for reclassification in some districts. At the same time, new incoming students with limited English proficiency enter the pool of EL students. Therefore, the group of ELs holds onto those students who—by definition—do not typically have sufficient English language proficiency to score well on tests in English.



**Figure 1. National Assessment of Educational Progress:  
Students Scoring at Basic and Above, 2022**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *National Assessment of Educational Progress 2022 math and reading assessments*. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

# How Additional Funding Supports Student Learning

The efficacy of increased school funding is a long-standing debate in education. While early research found mixed results,<sup>11</sup> later studies taking advantage of more rigorous statistical methods better showed the connection between funding and achievement.<sup>12</sup> For example, research analyzing the effects of a wave of state education funding reforms in the 1990s found that these reforms helped improve the equality of funding, increasing spending in districts serving students from low-income neighborhoods; this helped reduce spending gaps between districts serving students from high- and low-income backgrounds in the states in which they were implemented.<sup>13</sup> Further studies of funding efficacy show that increased spending leads to a range of positive educational outcomes and longer-term life outcomes, including higher educational attainment, higher graduation rates, greater earnings post-graduation, and lower incidences of poverty.<sup>14</sup>

Increased spending leads to a range of positive educational outcomes and longer-term life outcomes, including higher educational attainment, higher graduation rates, greater earnings post-graduation, and lower incidences of poverty.

Of particular interest is whether and how increased school funding helps improve educational outcomes for historically underserved student groups, including students from low-income backgrounds. A recent study of the influence of poverty on children's needs summarized the effects this way:

The impact of poverty on children's ability to learn is profound and occurs at an early age. Families living in deep poverty face profound material, social, and emotional hardships: They suffer from food shortages; unemployment; unstable housing; inadequate medical care; electrical shutoffs; and, often, isolation.<sup>15</sup>

The lack of any of these necessities can impact student learning. At the same time, research has found that schools organized to provide food, health care, social service supports, and academic supports to students from low-income backgrounds see stronger growth in outcomes.<sup>16</sup>

A 2015 study of school finance reforms across the country found that not only did increased educational spending lead to a wide range of positive student school and life outcomes, but that these effects were higher for students who were from low-income backgrounds.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, a 2023 study of California's Local Control Funding Formula found that increased funding was causally related to increases in outcomes on state assessments and graduation rates, especially for students from low-income backgrounds and particularly for those districts receiving the additional "concentration grant" funding allocated to districts with large proportions of such students.<sup>18</sup>

More specifically, studies have identified several means through which increased funding can support outcomes for students from low-income backgrounds. These can include in-school strategies, such as hiring more qualified teachers, reducing teacher turnover, reducing class sizes, providing targeted tutoring,

and creating expanded learning time programs that augment instruction before and after school and in the summer.<sup>19</sup> They can also include community partnerships to address basic needs, such as nutrition, health care, and other social services.<sup>20</sup>

English learners are another historically underserved student group, and they comprise over 10% of the U.S. student population, or more than 5 million students.<sup>21</sup> However, as we show later in this report, some states group English learners together with students from low-income backgrounds and other groups into a single “at-risk” category.

English learners have learning and resourcing needs that are distinct from those of other students—and at times, distinct from one another. For example, ELs can be newcomer students—those born outside the United States and who have been in U.S. schools for 3 or fewer years—who are more likely to have lower proficiency than non-newcomer EL students. Newcomers are also more likely to have experienced interruptions to their formal education and face tight timelines to meet graduation requirements.<sup>22</sup> ELs can also include migrant students, the majority of whom are English learners from low-income backgrounds and who must contend with the additional challenges associated with high mobility.<sup>23</sup> English learners also encapsulate long-term English learners, who often have strong oral proficiency but may have challenges with written academic content.

Supporting different kinds of English learners involves a range of additional services and resources. For example, English learners can benefit from both designated English language development (ELD) and integrated ELD, in which ELD is combined with instruction in academic content. In addition, the linguistic assets ELs bring with them to school provide an opportunity to incorporate forms of bilingual education as a mode of instruction. Research suggests that bilingual education, when well-implemented, is associated with stronger academic growth in English language arts and mathematics, as well as higher levels of English language proficiency over the course of students’ education than when students are taught with English immersion programs.<sup>24</sup>

Well-implemented ELD and bilingual programs require specific resources, such as appropriately trained teachers and professional development.<sup>25</sup> Additional resourcing may include things such as smaller class sizes, paraprofessionals, translation services for parents, support for home-to-school communications, and access to bilingual counselors and mental health supports. And as many states incorporate local evaluations into their English learner reclassification process, districts and schools also need to be well-positioned to conduct these assessments.

Thus, the services and supports for the variety of English learners in our educational system require an increased level of resourcing additional to that of students from low-income backgrounds.<sup>26</sup> Increased funding can support the specific needs of English learners by strengthening English language development programs and providing professional development, but also by providing for specialized curricula and assessment and increasing student and family support and engagement.<sup>27</sup>

## Terms Used in This Report

**English learner funding:** Funding to support a student whose home language is not English and who has limited English language proficiency, typically as identified by an appropriate assessment. State statutes may use additional terms, such as “bilingual learner” or “limited English proficient student.”

**Funding for students from low-income backgrounds/at-risk:** The most common definition of “at-risk” funding is that for students who qualify for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. In some states, additional indicators of low income may be used to determine eligibility. (A small number of states—e.g., New Mexico—use “at-risk” as an umbrella term for both English learners and students from low-income backgrounds.)

**Dual funding:** State funding or funding weights to support students both due to their classification as an English learner and for those students who qualify as low-income/at-risk.

**Concentration funding:** A funding system in which the amount received increases based on the proportion or density of qualifying students in a school or district.



## Current State Policies

In an effort to understand the financial support offered to English learners (ELs) and students from low-income backgrounds across all 50 states, we conducted a review of each state's K–12 funding formulas between the spring and early summer of 2024.<sup>28</sup> The primary objective of this review was to ascertain whether states provide additional education funding for ELs and students from low-income backgrounds (often referred to in state legislation as “at-risk”), how they determine the extent of this additional funding, and whether states offer dual funding for students who qualify as both EL and low-income/at-risk.

By systematically examining each state's funding formulas and policies, we aim to gain insights into the extent to which states prioritize and allocate resources to support the unique educational needs of ELs and students from low-income backgrounds/at-risk students. This report also offers states insight into how much *other* states are allocating funds to support the individualized needs of their students. This analysis serves as a foundational step in understanding the landscape of financial support for vulnerable student populations across the United States and can inform states' evolving school funding policies.

### How State Funding Formulas Function

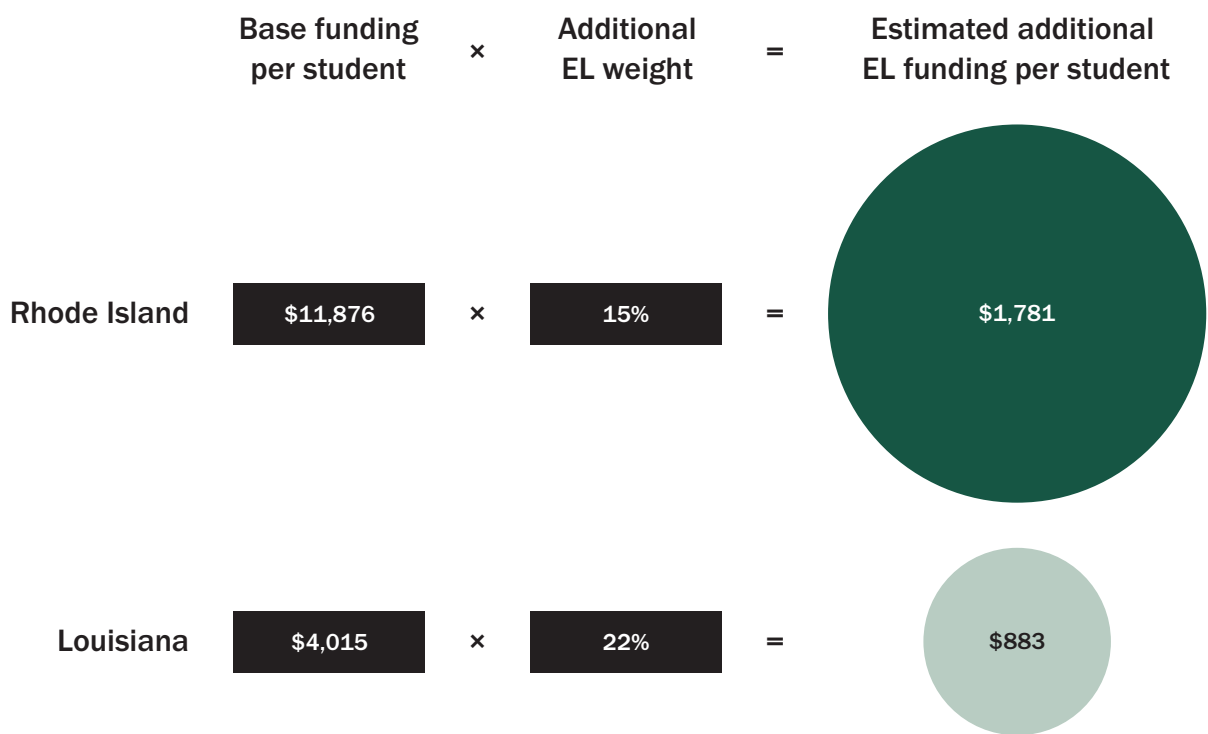
There are many ways states fund their public K–12 schools, but they can be broadly categorized into two primary funding models: student-based and resource-based funding. The main distinction between the two formulas is that student-based funding provides an amount of money for each student in the school—with the possibility of adding additional funds depending on the characteristics of those students—while resource-based funding sets amounts based on the resources needed, primarily staffing positions, to educate all students.

#### Student-Based Funding Formulas

The most common funding model is known as a student-based formula, sometimes called a foundation formula, which was used in some variation by 35 states and the District of Columbia to fund their public schools in 2024.<sup>29</sup> A student-based formula provides a set amount of funding for all students, often referred to as a base or foundation amount. This type of funding usually provides additional weights for specific student groups such as English learners, students from low-income backgrounds/at-risk, and special education students. A weight is an additional amount of funding calculated as a percentage of the base. In some states, weights are also applied for students at different grade levels and in various programs of study. For example, in the 2023–24 school year, Colorado provided a base amount of funding for all students of \$8,076 with an additional weight of 0.08 (8%) for English learners, translating into an additional \$646 per EL student.

Understanding how much additional funding a state provides to high-need students requires knowing both the extra weight the state provides to each student group and the state's base funding amount, which varies widely in each state. For instance, in the 2023–24 school year, Rhode Island provided EL students with an additional weight of 0.15, and Louisiana provided an additional weight of 0.22. While Louisiana's system appears more generous on the surface, because Rhode Island had a base funding amount of \$11,876 and Louisiana had a base amount of \$4,015, Rhode Island's funding system provided \$1,781 additional funding to each EL student (15% of \$11,876) and Louisiana's provided \$883 (22% of \$4,015). (See [Figure 2.](#)) Moreover, some states that use a student-based formula do not have a set base funding amount, making it difficult to analyze how much additional funding they provide to their EL and low-income/at-risk student populations.

**Figure 2. Examples of State Support for English Learner Students, 2023–24**



Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of state funding statutes and bills. (2024). Additional details may be found in the appendix of this report.

**Resource-Based Funding Formulas**

Another method of funding schools is a resource-based system, sometimes called a position allocation system. As of 2023–24, nine states use this type of funding formula.<sup>30</sup> In a resource-based system, the state provides funding to public schools based on a ratio of students to school positions (teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, etc.). For example, the state may fund one teaching position for every 20 students or one principal position for every 300 students. In addition, these funding systems often provide some amount per pupil for expenses like textbooks, technology, or maintenance. Adjustments in school funding are made based on changes to the number of students—and who those students are—within the school. The critical thing to understand is that a student-based formula uses a per-student rate as the driver of funding, while the resource-based formula uses schools as the driver of funding.

Four states have a hybrid system in 2023–24 that combines some facets of both a student-based formula and a resource-based formula.<sup>31</sup> Finally, Vermont and Wisconsin have funding systems that are unique to their state.

In the sections below, we look at which states provide funding for ELs, which states provide funding for students from low-income families (or those defined as at-risk), and which provide dual funding for both. Among these, two states—Illinois and New York—use complex funding systems that vary the amount of additional funding provided to these students across districts.

The complexity of the Illinois and New York systems means that, absent detailed school-level data, it is extremely difficult to determine the specific amount of EL or at-risk funding that these states provide to districts. We thus exclude these two states from any analyses that examine the specific dollar amounts allocated for ELs and students considered low-income/at-risk.

We note, before presenting information on state-level funding, that the complexity of school funding systems makes it difficult to compare how much funding is directly distributed to schools between any two states. Some states provide more money (or a higher proportion) to schools/districts based on their size, wealth, location, or cost of doing business, while others do not. Each formula adjustment can make a massive difference in the state funds truly available to a particular school district. In addition, districts around the country have very different levels of local funding available to them based on their relative wealth, and state laws differentially do and do not limit districts' ability to levy local taxes.

Each formula adjustment can make a massive difference in the state funds truly available to a particular school district.

## English Learner Funding

We found that for 2023–24, 49 states provide separate, additional funding for students who are English learners on top of base funding for schools. Only two states—Mississippi and Montana—do not provide specific funding for ELs. However, each state's approach to funding EL students varies based on its school funding system. We found that:

- Thirty-three states funded EL students through an additional weight in their funding formula.
- Of these 33 states, 21 provided a flat weight to all students who qualify as English learners. Weights ranged from a high of 2.49 (249% additional funding) in Vermont to a low of 0.025 (2.5%) in Utah, with a national median of 0.25 (25%). Nine states had weights in the range of 0.15 to 0.25, and six other states were in the range of 0.45 to 0.60.
- Another 12 states used variable rates for EL funding, with seven states varying their weights based on a student's English proficiency, three states on the percentage or number of EL students in a district, and two (Arizona and the District of Columbia) based on a student's grade level.<sup>32</sup>
- Ten states fund their EL programs by providing a dollar amount per student. In some cases, this dollar amount is part of the state's primary formula. In other cases, it is a categorical program outside the formula.
- Three states (North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington) fund additional staff positions in schools based on the number of EL students they have. Two states (Illinois and New York) use EL counts in each district to determine their base funding amount.
- One state—Georgia—makes use of a hybrid system that provides an extra weight of 0.5892 per EL student and funds additional staffing positions to support EL programs.

## Low-Income/At-Risk Funding

Forty-four states currently provide unique funding for “at-risk” students. All 44 states classify students from low-income families as at-risk, which is defined in various ways. Of these states, 32 states exclusively use low-income measures, while 12 states use a combination of low-income measures and other factors (e.g., students experiencing homelessness, in foster care, unaccompanied, migrant students, and low parental education).<sup>33</sup> The most common definition of “at-risk” is students from low-income backgrounds who qualify for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program or another federal poverty program. Of these:

- Thirty-two states offer some form of extra weight in their formula for students who are considered “at-risk.”
- Seven states provide a specific dollar amount of funding per identified at-risk student.
- North Carolina and Virginia provide additional staffing and budgets based on the number of students from low-income families.
- Washington provides additional staffing based on each district’s at-risk student count.
- Two states (Illinois and New York) use at-risk counts in each district to determine their base funding amount.

Among these 44 states, nearly half (22 states) provide additional funding to local education agencies based on the density, or concentration, of low-income/at-risk students enrolled. This approach recognizes that as concentrated poverty increases, the costs of achieving any given level of educational outcomes increase significantly.<sup>34</sup> For example, Arkansas provides districts additional funding based on the density of their population of students from low-income backgrounds—defined as those eligible for free or reduced-price meals.<sup>35</sup> [Table 1](#) shows how this state’s at-risk density program works.

**Table 1. Arkansas At-Risk Funding Program**

Percentage of district student population identified as FRPM-eligible	Additional funding per FRPM-eligible student
Fewer than 70%	\$538
70% but less than 90%	\$1,076
90% or more	\$1,613

Note: FRPM = Free or reduced-price meals.

Source: Arkansas school funding legislation. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-2305(b)(4)(A) (2023).



## Dual Funding States

Our review found that 37 states provide dual funding for students who qualify as both English learners and being from low-income families. Thus, students in these states are eligible for additional funds offered to address the learning needs of being both an English learner and qualifying as at-risk/low-income. The remainder apply a weighting for one or the other category. In California, both categories are eligible for weighted funding at 0.20, but a single student can only receive one weighting (known as an unduplicated count). For those that apply both weights:

- Thirty-six of these states provide funds that add the unique weights offered for each student group. For example, in Oklahoma, a 0.25 weight is applied for English learner students, and an additional 0.30 weight is applied for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals; in Oregon, a 0.25 weight for students from low-income backgrounds is added to a 0.50 weight for students with limited English proficiency. In each case, the weights are applied separately.
- One state, New Jersey, adjusts the funding weights for students who meet both criteria. New Jersey provides EL students with a weight of 0.50 and funds at-risk students with an additional weight of between 0.47 and 0.57 (based on their school's concentration rate). However, if a student qualifies as both EL and at-risk, their at-risk weight is augmented with an additional EL weight of 0.125 for a total weight of between 0.595 and 0.695—greater than just the at-risk weight but less than the sum of the EL and at-risk weights. New Jersey's approach stemmed from a commissioned school finance study that found that there was some overlap in the resources used for “at-risk-only students and bilingual-only students,” and thus “the combination weight reflects only those resources in excess of those specified for at-risk-only students.”<sup>36</sup>

# The Cost of Educating English Learner and Low-Income/At-Risk Students

Establishing the level of funding to meet student need is typically done through costing studies. A 2012 analysis of costing studies found that the level of funding in many states is insufficient to meet student need.<sup>37</sup> The research also highlighted the need “to better account for the diverse and complex needs” of ELs.

More recent studies have sought to do so. For example, Vermont’s legislature examined the implications of changing the EL pupil weight to “reflect the cost of providing different levels of educational services for students with different levels of English proficiency,” acknowledging that some ELs, such as newcomer students and those with limited or interrupted formal education, require a greater level of funding support.<sup>38</sup> Their study also found that greater per-pupil funding was needed in those districts with fewer ELs.

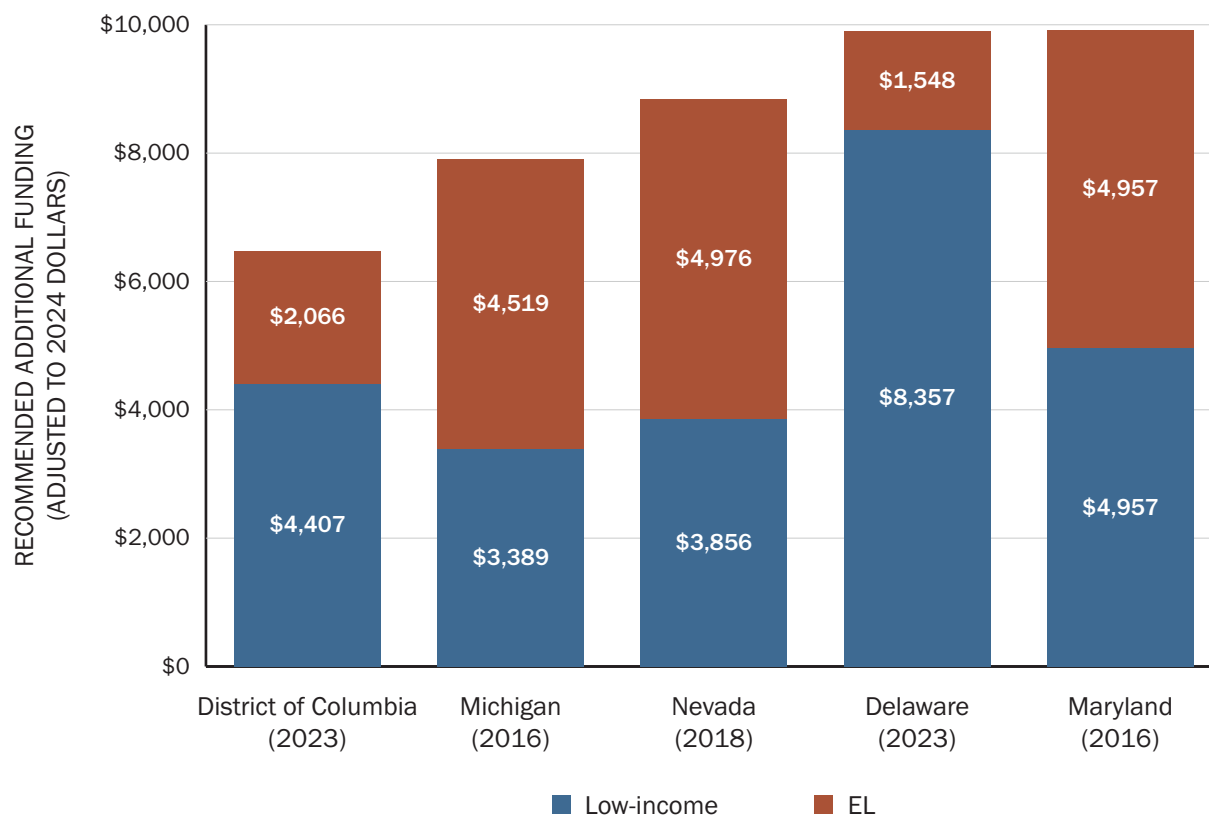
## Determining the Cost to Adequately Educate Students

To provide some context around what costs it would take to adequately educate English learners and students from low-income/at-risk backgrounds, we reviewed five school finance studies from Delaware,<sup>39</sup> the District of Columbia,<sup>40</sup> Maryland,<sup>41</sup> Michigan,<sup>42</sup> and Nevada.<sup>43</sup> All studies, conducted between 2016 and 2023, recommended additional funding for ELs and at-risk students by applying weightings to their funding.

The recommended weights for EL students ranged from 0.15 (District of Columbia) to 0.40 (Michigan and Nevada), and for low-income/at-risk students ranged from 0.30 (Michigan) to 0.81 (Delaware). We multiplied these weights by each study’s recommended base amount and then adjusted these amounts for inflation,<sup>44</sup> showing that in 2024 dollars, the funding recommendations ranged from \$1,548 (Delaware) to \$4,976 (Nevada) for EL students and from \$3,389 (Michigan) to \$8,357 (Delaware) for at-risk students. For students who are both EL and at-risk, the studies would recommend between \$6,473 (District of Columbia) and \$9,914 (Maryland). (See [Figure 3.](#))

The costing studies above sought to estimate the funding required to help all students reach state standards. The equivalent per-pupil amounts generated across the five studies varied depending on a range of factors that include each state’s educational standards, the relative costs of resources (e.g., teacher salaries) in each state, the particulars of each state’s approach to funding, and the costing method used. However, each study sought to account for the elevated cost of educating students from low-income backgrounds and who are English learners.

**Figure 3. Recommended Additional Funding for English Learner and Low-Income/At-Risk Students**



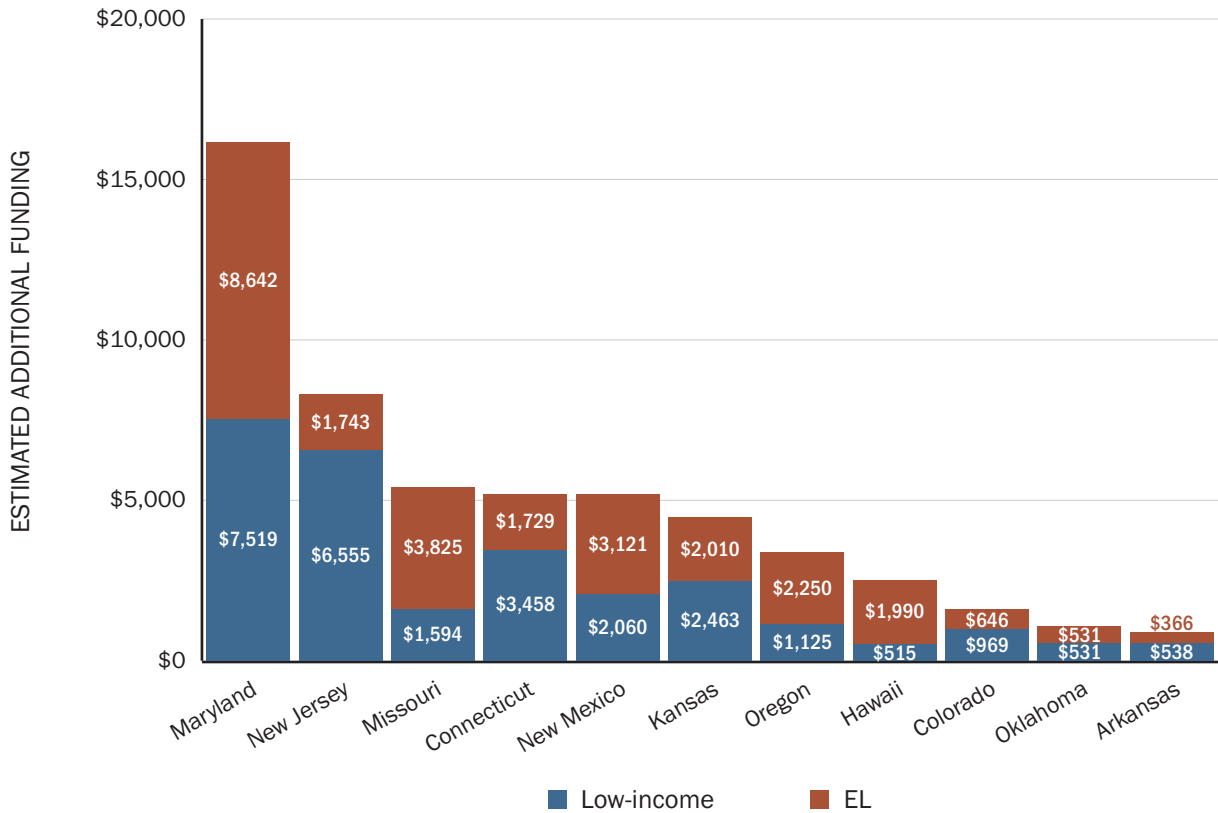
Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of state education financing studies. (2024).

## State Funding Levels

In most states, it is impossible to determine the concrete amount of additional funding provided to EL students and students from low-income backgrounds on a per-pupil basis. This is due to the complexity of state funding formulas, which can include a large number of variables, including a district's size, need, and even geographic location. In contrast, when a state has a student-based funding system that uses the same foundation funding amount for each student and has a single weight for EL students and a single weight for students from low-income backgrounds, estimating how much additional funding they provide to each student group is possible. LPI identified 11 states that provide dual funding for EL students and students from low-income backgrounds in which it was possible to accurately estimate the per-pupil funding amount for each student group (see [Figure 4](#)). Across these 11 states, additional funding ranges from \$904 per pupil in Arkansas to \$16,161 in New Jersey. It should be noted that the amount of financing that Maryland provides to their dual needs students (\$16,161) exceeds even what their state's 2016 adequacy study recommended (\$9,914). The only other state whose dual funding amount meets or exceeds the funding recommendations from recent school finance studies ([Figure 3](#)) is New Jersey at \$8,298 (\$1,743 for EL students and \$6,555 for students from low-income backgrounds).

There is great variation—even across these 11 states—both in terms of their joint funding for ELs and low-income/at-risk students and in terms of the proportion allocated to each student group. States that are considering how to allocate funds to EL students and those from low-income backgrounds should consider whether funds are adequate to support the full range of student needs. States may need to undertake additional research to determine these costs.

**Figure 4. Estimated Additional Funding for English Learner and Low-Income/At-Risk Students in States With Transparent Student Group Allocation**



Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of state funding statutes and bills. (2024). Additional details may be found in the appendix of this report. Because of its unique nature, funding amounts from the District of Columbia were not included in this table.



## Conclusion

English learners and students from low-income backgrounds represent a significant proportion of students in the United States. Each arrives at school with experiences that can serve as assets in their education but also requires additional resources to help them achieve their educational potential. The United States varies significantly from state to state in how it funds students from these two groups, resulting in an inequitable system nationwide. Yet prior research finds that increased funding leads to more positive learning outcomes for students, with the greatest gains for disadvantaged students. There is growing evidence that when states change funding formulas to increase resources with more equitable distribution, there are significant increases in student learning outcomes.<sup>45</sup>

Our analysis of school funding formulas and policy indicates that nearly all states provide additional funding for ELs and students from low-income backgrounds, and a majority of states provide both types of funding for students who meet both criteria to address the distinct needs of these two student groups. In the states where we could accurately calculate these additional costs, they ranged considerably—from just over \$1,000 to over \$16,000 for students who are members of both groups. Yet, this policy has not been universally adopted. In slightly more than one quarter of states (14 states), there is not supplemental funding available to support students for both English language services and low-income supports. These findings suggest that finding ways to allocate additional resources toward students for each of their unique learning needs will better allow schools to develop programs and offer the specialized instruction and engagement to best support students toward improved educational outcomes.

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Despite our ability to assess how much states allocate to support ELs and students from low-income backgrounds, it is difficult to determine whether these funds are sufficient to support students' learning needs. Therefore, states, in particular those that have experienced demographic transitions with higher proportions of ELs and students from low-income backgrounds, should consider updated costing studies to accurately assess the extent of student need and whether funding formulas are meeting that need. Evaluation of student need should include consideration of the costs needed to meet state learning standards. In particular, given the different nature of resources needed for ELs and students from low-income backgrounds, states should consider the feasibility of providing dual funding to support these student groups.

## Appendix: Funding and Policy Tables

The following tables provide an overview of state funding policies that impact EL and at-risk students. The information comes from state legislation and data provided by the Education Commission of the States.

**Table A1. Overview of State Funding Policies, FY 2023–24**

State	EL funding (49 states)	At-risk funding (44 states)	Provides dual funding (37 states)	Notes
Alabama	X	X	X	
Alaska	X			
Arizona	X	X		
Arkansas	X	X	X	
California	X	X		
Colorado	X	X	X	
Connecticut	X	X	X	
Delaware	X	X	X	
District of Columbia	X	X	X	
Florida	X			
Georgia	X			
Hawaii	X	X	X	
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X	X	X	The state provides indirect funding for EL and at-risk students.
Indiana	X	X	X	
Iowa	X	X	X	
Kansas	X	X	X	
Kentucky	X	X	X	

State	EL funding (49 states)	At-risk funding (44 states)	Provides dual funding (37 states)	Notes
Louisiana	X	X		
Maine	X	X	X	
Maryland	X	X	X	
Massachusetts	X	X	X	
Michigan	X	X	X	
Minnesota	X	X	X	
Mississippi		X		
Missouri	X	X	X	
Montana		X		
Nebraska	X	X	X	
Nevada	X	X		
New Hampshire	X	X	X	
New Jersey	X	X	X	Dual students receive the full at-risk and an additional EL weight of 0.1250.
New Mexico	X	X	X	
New York	X	X	X	The state provides indirect funding for EL and at-risk students.
North Carolina	X	X	X	
North Dakota	X	X	X	
Ohio	X	X	X	
Oklahoma	X	X	X	
Oregon	X	X	X	

State	EL funding (49 states)	At-risk funding (44 states)	Provides dual funding (37 states)	Notes
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	
Rhode Island	X	X	X	
South Carolina	X	X	X	
South Dakota	X			
Tennessee	X	X	X	
Texas	X	X	X	
Utah	X	X	X	
Vermont	X	X	X	
Virginia	X	X	X	
Washington	X	X	X	
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin <sup>a</sup>	X			
Wyoming	X	X		

<sup>a</sup> Wisconsin has an at-risk funding program in statute (Wis. Stat. Ann. § 121.136). However, this program was not funded in the 2023–24 school year.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of state legislative and policy documents. (2024).

**Table A2. State Funding Policies in Detail, FY 2023–24**

State	Primary funding model <sup>a</sup>	Base funding (if applicable) <sup>b</sup>	Estimated state K–12 funding per-pupil ADA <sup>c</sup>
Alabama	Resource-based	NA	\$8,515
Alaska	Student-based	\$5,960	\$13,723
Arizona	Student-based	\$4,914.71	\$8,303
Arkansas	Student-based	\$7,618	\$6,548
California	Student-based	TK–3: \$10,951 Grades 4–6: \$10,069 Grades 7–8: \$10,367 Grades 9–12: \$12,327	\$11,541
Colorado	Student-based	\$8,076.41	\$7,594
Connecticut	Student-based	\$11,525	\$8,387
Delaware	Resource-based	NA	\$14,384
District of Columbia	Student-based	PreK (3): \$17,482 PreK (4)–K: \$16,960 Grades 1–5: \$13,046 Grades 6–8: \$14,090 Grades 9–12: \$15,916	\$29,727
Florida	Student-based	\$5,139.73	\$6,366
Georgia	Hybrid	\$3,022.47	\$6,961
Hawaii	Student-based	\$5,152.82	\$21,420
Idaho	Resource-based	NA	\$7,540
Illinois	Hybrid	NA	\$10,291
Indiana	Student-based	\$6,590	\$10,263
Iowa	Student-based	\$6,749	\$10,354
Kansas	Student-based	\$5,088	\$12,795
Kentucky	Student-based	\$4,200	\$8,631

State	Primary funding model <sup>a</sup>	Base funding (if applicable) <sup>b</sup>	Estimated state K–12 funding per-pupil ADA <sup>c</sup>
Louisiana	Student-based	\$4,015	\$7,171
Maine	Hybrid	Varies by district	\$11,737
Maryland	Student-based	\$8,642	\$9,118
Massachusetts	Hybrid	Varies by district	\$10,900
Michigan	Student-based	\$9,608	\$12,497
Minnesota	Student-based	\$7,138	\$13,104
Mississippi	Student-based	\$6,759	\$7,484
Missouri	Student-based	\$6,375	\$4,718
Montana	Student-based	Varies by district	\$7,214
Nebraska	Student-based	Varies by district	\$5,917
Nevada	Student-based	\$8,966	\$4,350
New Hampshire	Student-based	\$4,100	\$6,846
New Jersey	Student-based	\$13,946 <sup>d</sup>	\$12,785
New Mexico	Student-based	\$6,241.55 <sup>e</sup>	\$11,932
New York	Student-based	\$7,821	\$13,910
North Carolina	Resource-based	NA	\$8,687
North Dakota	Student-based	\$10,646	\$9,955
Ohio	Student-based	\$8,242	\$7,522
Oklahoma	Student-based	\$2,122	\$6,641
Oregon	Student-based	\$4,500	\$11,668
Pennsylvania	Student-based	NA	\$8,460
Rhode Island	Student-based	\$11,876	\$11,204
South Carolina	Student-based	\$3,729 <sup>f</sup>	\$8,850
South Dakota	Resource-based	NA	\$5,108



State	Primary funding model <sup>a</sup>	Base funding (if applicable) <sup>b</sup>	Estimated state K–12 funding per-pupil ADA <sup>c</sup>
Tennessee	Student-based	\$6,860	\$5,686
Texas	Student-based	\$6,160	\$6,534
Utah	Student-based	\$4,280	\$7,545
Vermont	Other	NA	\$23,688
Virginia	Resource-based	NA	\$7,531
Washington	Resource-based	NA	\$15,721
West Virginia	Resource-based	NA	\$9,250
Wisconsin	Other	NA	\$9,544
Wyoming	Resource-based	NA	\$13,563

<sup>a</sup> Education Commission of the States. (2024, March). [50-state comparison, K–12 funding 2024, Primary funding model](#) (accessed 08/29/24).

<sup>b</sup> Information for all states except New Jersey, New Mexico, and South Carolina comes from Education Commission of the States. (2024, March). [50-state comparison, K–12 funding 2024, Primary funding model](#) (accessed 08/29/24).

<sup>c</sup> Per-pupil amounts calculated by the Learning Policy Institute using data from National Education Association. (2024, April). [Rankings of the states 2023 and estimates of school statistics 2024](#). Learning Policy Institute divided the estimated revenue and non-revenue receipts in 2023–24 by the estimated public school total fall enrollment for fall 2023.

<sup>d</sup> New Jersey Legislature: Office of Legislative Services. (2024). [Analysis of the New Jersey budget, Department of Education](#) (accessed 08/30/24).

<sup>e</sup> State of New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee. (2024). [2024 post-session review](#) (accessed 09/03/24).

<sup>f</sup> South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. [EFA factor computation](#) (accessed 09/04/24).

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

**Table A3. State EL and At-Risk Funding Programs, FY 2023–24**

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Alabama</b>	Distributed based on EL enrollment. An additional weight of 0.50 is provided to school districts in which the EL percentage exceeds 10%, and a weight of 1.0 is provided to school districts in which the EL percentage exceeds 15% or the current and former EL percentage exceeds 20% of the student population.	\$23.5 million divided by the total number of at-risk students.
<b>Alaska</b>	An additional weight of 0.20 is applied to all schools' average daily membership (combined funding for special education, gifted and talented, and EL services).	
<b>Arizona</b>	An additional 16% funding factor is applied to the K–8 student count, and 27% funding factor is applied to the grade 9–12 student count (combined funding for special education, bilingual pupils, and remedial).	An additional 2.2% of base funding.
<b>Arkansas</b>	\$366 per student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$538 for less than 70%</li><li>• \$1,076 for 70%–90%</li><li>• \$1,613 for more than 90%</li></ul>
<b>California</b>	An additional 20% of base funding.	An additional 20% of base funding. Additional weight of 0.65 if greater than 55% of enrollment.
<b>Colorado</b>	An additional 8% of base funding.	An additional 12% of base funding. There is additional concentration funding for districts whose percentage of at-risk students exceeds the statewide average.
<b>Connecticut</b>	An additional 25% of base funding.	An additional 30% of base funding.

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Delaware</b>	\$45 million divided by the total number of at-risk and EL students.	\$45 million divided by the total number of at-risk and EL students.
<b>District of Columbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PreK–5: An additional 50% of base funding.</li> <li>• Grades 6–12: An additional 75% of base funding.</li> </ul>	An additional 24% of base funding is provided for all at-risk students, plus an additional 6% for high school students who are behind grade level. The district also provides an additional 7% in funding for students enrolled in schools where 40%–69.9% of their students are at-risk and 14% in additional funding if their school's at-risk population is at least 70%.
<b>Florida</b>	An additional 20.8% of base funding. (Note: This amount is within the appropriations bill and can change annually.)	
<b>Georgia</b>	An additional 58.92% of base funding. The state uses a teacher ratio for these students of 1:7, instead of 1:23, which is the base.	
<b>Hawaii</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully English proficient: An additional weight of 0.065 (\$331.66).</li> <li>• Limited English proficient: An additional weight of 0.194 (\$994.97).</li> <li>• Non-English proficient: An additional weight of 0.389 (\$1,989.94).</li> </ul>	Additional funding 10% (equal to \$511.81).
<b>Idaho</b>	Total funding: \$4.82 million (2023–24), with \$4.37 million distributed on a per-pupil basis and \$450,000 through a competitive grant.	
<b>Illinois</b>	EL students factor into determining a district's adequacy amount.	At-risk students factor into determining the district's adequacy amount.

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Indiana</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilingual-bicultural (competitive) grant: A maximum of \$300 per student.</li> <li>• Non-English-speaking program (entitlement) grant: \$550 for students at levels 1 and 2 of WIDA Consortium ACCESS assessment, or \$383 per student at levels 3 and 4, or level 5 of the Tier A form of WIDA Consortium ACCESS assessment.</li> </ul>	Calculated by multiplying the complexity index by \$3,983 for 2023 (\$4,024 for 2024) and multiplied by the school corporation's average daily membership.
<b>Iowa</b>	An additional 26% in base funding for "intensive student" (not proficient) or 21% for "intermediate student" (approaching proficient).	Additional funding of 0.48% per pupil for students in grades 1–6 who are eligible for FRPM; 0.156% for all pupils in the district.
<b>Kansas</b>	<p>The greater amount of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTE enrollment in approved programs of bilingual education receive an additional 39.5% of base funding or</li> <li>• The number of students enrolled in approved programs of bilingual education receive an additional 18.5% in base funding.</li> </ul>	An additional 48.4% of base funding.
<b>Kentucky</b>	An additional 9.6% of base funding.	Average daily membership is multiplied by 15% of the Guarantee Base Per-Pupil Funding Amount.
<b>Louisiana</b>	An additional 22% of base funding.	An additional 22% of base funding.

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Maine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools with 15 or fewer ELs receive an additional weight of 70% per student.</li> <li>• Schools with 16–250 ELs receive an additional weight of 50% per student.</li> <li>• Schools with 251 or more ELs receive an additional weight of 52.5% per student.</li> </ul>	A district receives 0.15 in additional eligible school administrative units per at-risk student.
<b>Maryland</b>	<p>An additional 100% of base funding, where “English learner per-pupil amount” means the following proportions of the target per-pupil foundation amount:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FY 2022: 100%</li> <li>• FY 2023: 100%</li> <li>• FY 2024: 100%</li> <li>• FY 2025: 102%</li> <li>• FY 2026: 98%</li> <li>• FY 2027: 94%</li> <li>• FY 2028: 92%</li> <li>• FY 2029: 91%</li> <li>• FY 2030: 89%</li> <li>• FY 2031: 88%</li> <li>• FY 2032: 86%</li> <li>• FY 2033 and each fiscal year thereafter: 85%</li> </ul>	<p>Additional base funding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FY 2022, 91%</li> <li>• FY 2023, 89%</li> <li>• FY 2024, 87%</li> </ul> <p>Reducing to 73% by 2033.</p>
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<p>Additional dollar amounts by grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2,537 for ELs in PreK–5</li> <li>• \$2,721 for ELs in grades 6–8</li> <li>• \$3,266 for ELs in grades 9–12 and vocational schools</li> </ul>	Provides additional dollar amount based on percentage of students identified as low-income in 12 different levels. Ranging from \$3,519 per pupil for districts with 5.99% or less at-risk students to \$8,798 per pupil for districts with 80% or more at-risk students.

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
Michigan	<p>The state funds a dollar amount per EL based on WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS composite scores as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1,476 for students with a composite score between 1.0 and 1.9</li> <li>• \$1,019 for students with a composite score between 2.0 and 2.9</li> <li>• \$167 for students with a composite score between 3.0 and 3.9</li> </ul> <p>The state appropriated \$39.8 million (2023–24).</p>	<p>The weight is determined by the opportunity index, which is determined by the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0%–19%: Additional weight of at least 35% but less than 36%</li> <li>• 20%–43%: Additional weight of at least 36% but less than 37.5%</li> <li>• 44%–58%: Additional weight of at least 37.5% but less than 39%</li> <li>• 59%–72%: Additional weight of at least 39% but less than 42%</li> <li>• 73%–84%: Additional weight of at least 42% but less than 47%</li> <li>• 85% or greater: Additional weight of 47%. The state appropriated \$952 million (2023–24)</li> </ul>
Minnesota	<p>Districts receive EL revenue based on the number and concentration of ELs enrolled as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1,228 multiplied by the greater of 20 or the adjusted average daily membership of eligible ELs and</li> <li>• \$436 times the EL pupil units calculated based on the EL concentration percentage (percentage of EL students divided by 11.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Compensatory education revenue is calculated at the school level based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of free lunch students and half the number of reduced-price lunch students</li> <li>• The concentration of poverty in the school (lesser of 1 or percentage of the above number divided by 80)</li> <li>• A weighting factor of 0.6.</li> </ul> <p>Seven selected districts receive an additional amount.</p>
Mississippi		An additional 5% of base funding.



State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Missouri</b>	An additional 60% of base funding for each limited English proficiency (LEP) student above the LEP threshold. (The LEP threshold is the average LEP percentage of the middle 90% of districts by ADA. For FY 2023–24, the LEP threshold was 2.29%.)	An additional 25% of base funding for each student above the FRL threshold. (The FRL threshold is essentially the average FRL percentage of the middle 90% of districts by ADA. For FY 2023–24, the FRL threshold is 30.95%.)
<b>Montana</b>		For FY 2023–24, the program received \$6,032,369. These funds are then distributed to districts based on federal Title I distributions.
<b>Nebraska</b>	<p>The lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maximum amount designated by the district or</li> <li>• The statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student multiplied by 0.25, then multiplied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of LEP students, if the number is 12 or more</li> <li>- 12, if the number of LEP students is 1 to 12</li> <li>- Zero, if the number of LEP students is less than 1</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maximum amount designated by the district or</li> <li>• The sum of the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student multiplied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0.0375, then multiplied by the poverty students, for districts with 5%–10%</li> <li>- 0.0750, then multiplied by the poverty students, for districts with 10%–15%</li> <li>- 0.1125, then multiplied by the poverty students, for districts with 15%–20%</li> <li>- 0.1500, then multiplied by the poverty students, for districts with 20%–25%</li> <li>- 0.1875, then multiplied by the poverty students, for districts with 25%–30%</li> <li>- 0.2250, then multiplied by the poverty students, for districts with more than 30%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Nevada</b>	An additional 45% of base funding.	An additional 35% of base funding.

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>New Hampshire</b>	\$800, which is the 2015 amount (\$697.77) adjusted for the average annual change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, Northeast Region.	Adequate Education Aid: Additional dollar amount of \$2,300 (2023–24) and \$2,346 (2024–25).
<b>New Jersey</b>	An additional 50% of base funding.	Additional funding of 47%–57% by concentration of at-risk pupils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If less than 20% of resident enrollment, the at-risk funding shall equal 47%.</li> <li>• If 20%–59% of resident enrollment, the at-risk funding shall equal the district's <math>[(\text{at-risk \%} - 0.20) \times 0.25] + 0.47</math>.</li> <li>• If 60% or more of resident enrollment, the at-risk funding shall equal 57%.</li> </ul>
<b>New Mexico</b>	An additional 50% of base funding.	An additional 33% of base funding.
<b>New York</b>	EL student enrollment is one of the components of the state's funding formula.	At-risk student enrollment is one of the components of the state's funding formula.
<b>North Carolina</b>	Base of a teacher assistant (\$43,530). The remainder is based 50% on the number of funded LEP students (\$517.29) and 50% on an LEA's concentration of LEP students (\$3,692.29).	\$101.83 per average daily membership, and \$493.18 per student from a low-income family. LEAs will receive a minimum of \$324,684 under this program.
<b>North Dakota</b>	Additional funding depends on a student's English proficiency (on a 6-level scale): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 1 (lowest): 40%</li> <li>• Level 2 (2nd lowest): 28%</li> <li>• Level 3 (3rd lowest): 7%, with a maximum of 3 years in Level 3</li> </ul>	Additional weight of 2.5% per FRPM student.

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Ohio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional base funding of 21.04% for ELs enrolled in U.S. schools for the first 180 school days.</li> <li>• Additional funding of 15.77% for ELs enrolled in U.S. schools for more than 180 school days and have not scored proficient on the assessment.</li> <li>• Additional funding of 10.53% for ELs who score proficient on the assessment for the 2 years following that assessment.</li> </ul>	\$422 x (the district's economically disadvantaged index) x the number of students who are economically disadvantaged.
<b>Oklahoma</b>	An additional 25% of base funding.	An additional 30% of base funding.
<b>Oregon</b>	An additional 50% of base funding.	An additional 25% of base funding.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	An additional 60% of base funding.	<p>The acute poverty weight of 0.6 applies to students whose household income falls in the 0%–99% range of the federal poverty level.</p> <p>The poverty weight factor of 0.3 is for students whose household income is between 100% and 184% of the federal poverty level.</p>
<b>Rhode Island</b>	An additional 15% of base funding.	An additional 40% of base funding.
<b>South Carolina</b>	An additional 20% of base funding.	An additional 50% of base funding.
<b>South Dakota</b>	Each EL student counts for an additional 25% when calculating resources for the LEA.	
<b>Tennessee</b>	<p>Additional base funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EL Tier 1 (ULN 2): 20%</li> <li>• EL Tier 2 (ULN 4): 60%</li> <li>• EL Tier 3 (ULN 5): 70%</li> </ul>	<p>An additional 25% of base funding.</p> <p>Concentrated poverty factor of additional 0.05.</p>

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Texas</b>	<p>Additional base funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEP students: 10%</li> <li>• LEP students in a bilingual/dual language immersion program: 15%</li> <li>• Native English students in a bilingual/dual language immersion program: 5%</li> </ul>	<p>Provides the following additional funding in 5 tiers representing relative severity of economic disadvantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tier 1: 22.5%</li> <li>• Tier 2: 23.75%</li> <li>• Tier 3: 25.0%</li> <li>• Tier 4: 26.25%</li> <li>• Tier 5: 27.5%</li> </ul>
<b>Utah</b>	An additional 2.5% of base funding.	An additional 7.5% of base funding.
<b>Vermont</b>	Additional funding for “long-term membership” is 249%.	An additional 103% of base funding.
<b>Virginia</b>	An appropriation to support 20 professional instructional positions per 1,000 students for whom English is a second language. Local match for state funds required.	<p>There are both standards of quality (SOQ) formula funds and non-SOQ funds for at-risk students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional funds: 1.0%–36% based on concentration</li> <li>• 1 hour of remedial instruction</li> <li>• Others: class size reduction, algebra readiness</li> </ul>
<b>Washington</b>	Funding is for transitional bilingual education. “The minimum allocation for each level of prototypical school shall provide resources to provide, on a statewide average, 4.7780 hours per week in extra instruction for students in grades K–6 and 6.7780 hours per week in extra instruction for students in grades seven through 12, with 15 transitional bilingual instruction program students per teacher.”	The minimum allocation is sufficient for each level of prototypical school resources to provide, on a statewide average, 2.3975 hours per week in extra instruction with a class size of 15 learning assistance program students per teacher.
<b>West Virginia</b>	Funds are subject to appropriations by the legislature, and counties must apply for funds.	

State	EL funding amount	At-risk funding amount
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Reimbursement based on appropriations for districts operating a bilingual-bicultural program. A total of \$250,000 is also divided among districts with at least 15 LEP students. Funded at \$10.1 million in 2023–24.	
<b>Wyoming</b>	An additional 100% of base funding.	An additional 100% of base funding.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of state legislative and policy documents. (2024).

# Endnotes

1. Learning Policy Institute. (2022). *Whole child policy toolkit*. <https://doi.org/10.54300/785.225>
2. Students who are learners of English are also known in various contexts and legislative documents as multilingual learners or English language learners.
3. In California, for example, 85% of ELs are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to 58% of their non-EL peers. California Department of Education. *Annual enrollment data, 2022–23*. DataQuest. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=00&aggllevel=state&year=2022-23> (accessed 08/25/2024); see also Quintero, D., & Hansen, M. (2021, January 14). As we tackle school segregation, don't forget about English Learner students. *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/as-we-tackle-school-segregation-dont-forget-about-english-learner-students> (accessed 08/25/24).
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32. States with a variable weight based on students' proficiency levels (or) were Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, and Tennessee. States in which the weight depended on the district percentage of English learner enrollment were Alabama, Maine, Minnesota, and Missouri.

33. For example, Tennessee uses the term “economically disadvantaged,” defined as those eligible for direct certification under the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 1751–1769) (usually through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] program), as well as students who are identified as experiencing homelessness, are in foster care, are unaccompanied, or are migrant students.
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35. Free or reduced-price meals is as defined under the National School Lunch Act 42 U.S.C. § 1751. Arkansas school funding legislation uses the term “national school lunch student.” See Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-2305(b)(4)(A) & § 6-20-2303(14)(A).
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