



# Office of English Language Acquisition

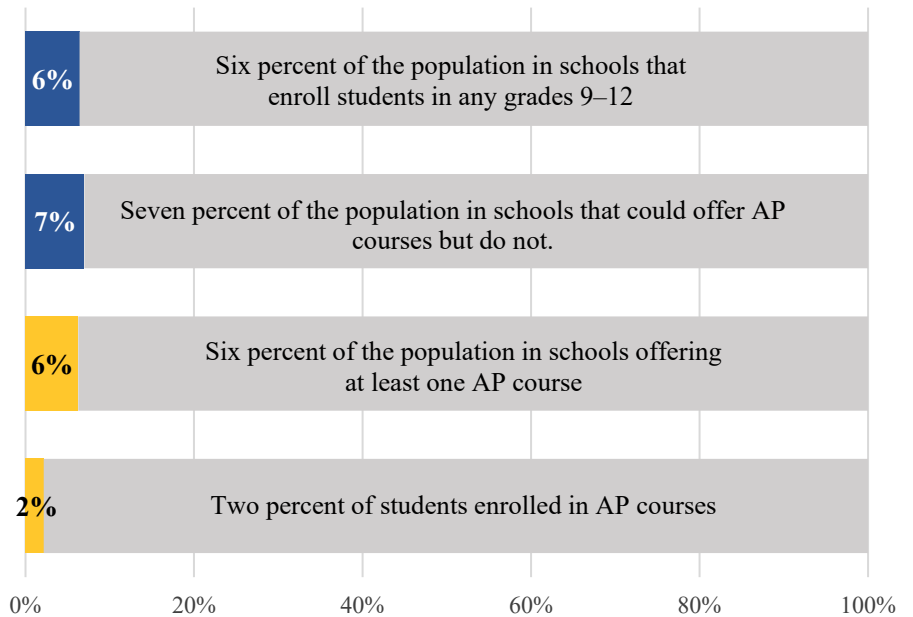
## English Learners in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Courses

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a biennial survey required by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights since 1968. This survey collects data on key education and civil rights issues in our nation’s public schools. Using CRDC data, this fact sheet explores English learner (EL) enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP)<sup>1</sup> and International Baccalaureate (IB)<sup>2</sup> courses.

### English Learners as a Percentage of the Population and Advanced Placement Enrollment in Eligible Schools That Do and Do Not Offer Advanced Placement Courses: School Year 2017–18<sup>3</sup>

Nationwide, ELs are less likely than non-ELs to enroll in AP courses. ELs are also slightly overrepresented in schools that do not offer AP courses: They comprise 7% of the student population in such schools, compared to 6% of the population in all schools that serve students in grades nine through 12. When ELs attend schools that offer AP, they are also less likely to enroll in such courses compared to non-ELs, with ELs comprising only 2% of the students who actually enroll in AP courses.

#### English learners comprise...



Across the United States, fewer than one in 10 ELs (7%) enroll in AP courses when their schools offer them compared to more than one in five students (22%) overall.



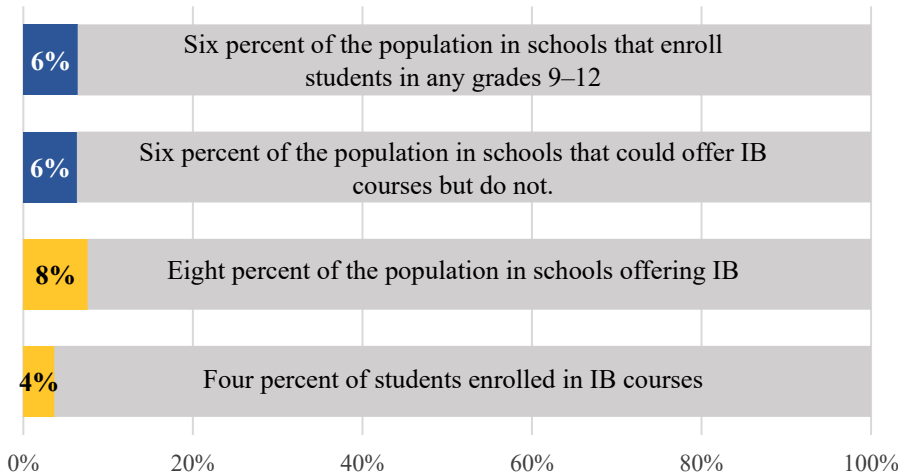
<sup>1</sup> An AP course is an advanced, college-level course sponsored by the College Board and designed for students who achieve a specified level of academic performance. Upon successful completion of the course and a standardized AP exam, a student may be qualified to receive college credit and/or placement into advanced college courses.

<sup>2</sup> International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, sponsored by the International Baccalaureate Organization, is designed as an academically challenging and balanced program of education with final examinations that prepare students, usually aged 16 to 19, for success at university and life beyond.

<sup>3</sup> In the CRDC, AP and IB data are collected and reported only for schools with students enrolled in any grade from nine–12, or with ungraded high school-aged students.

# English Learners as a Percentage of the Population in Eligible Schools That Do and Do Not Offer International Baccalaureate Courses: School Year 2017–18

## English learners comprise...

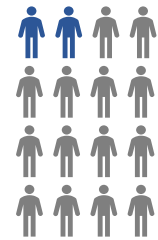


ELs are slightly overrepresented in schools that offer IB courses. They comprise 8% of the student population in such schools, compared to 6% of the population in schools that do not offer IB courses. However, they are underrepresented in IB enrollment since they comprise only 4% of the population of students who take such courses.



English learners

Across the United States, **one in 16 ELs (6%) enroll in IB courses when their schools offer them, compared to one in eight students (12%) overall.**



All Students

Research suggests that EL status often unfairly limits students’ opportunity to access such rigorous courses as AP and IB, creating an inequitable learning environment for this population.<sup>4</sup> Policies, such as course prerequisites, past performance requirements, or reclassification as a prerequisite, may formally prevent ELs from enrolling. Informal barriers can also exist in the form of teachers or staff assuming ELs cannot handle advanced coursework, failing to make EL students aware they are eligible for such courses, or assuming it is inappropriate for teachers of AP or IB courses to provide scaffolds to ensure ELs’ inclusion and participation. The following resources provide information that may support educators in improving ELs’ access to rigorous coursework:

- The National Center for Research on Gifted Education has provided a set of [15 research-based tips](#) to improve the identification of gifted EL students, many of which are also relevant for improving ELs’ identification for and access to rigorous programs like AP and IB.
- The National Research and Development Center to Improve Education for Secondary English Learners has developed [a brief on state, district, and school levers](#) that can improve course access for ELs in secondary grades.

<sup>4</sup> Thompson, K. D. (2017). What blocks the gate? Exploring current and former English learners’ math course-taking in secondary school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(4), 757–798. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217706687>. Umansky, I. M. (2016). Leveled and exclusionary tracking: English learners’ access to academic content in middle school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(6), 1792–1833. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216675404>