During school year (SY) 2017–18, over 5 million English learners (ELs) were enrolled in U.S. schools in grades K–12. Four states had an EL population that was above 12% of total student enrollment; California had the highest percentage, with over 20% of K–12 students classified as ELs.


**Percentage Point Increases in Student Enrollment of English Learners by State:**

- Illinois: 5.1
- South Carolina: 5.3
- Arkansas: 5.7
- Virginia: 5.9
- Nevada: 5.9
- Maryland: 6.4
- Kansas: 7.1
- Delaware: 7.3

The number of ELs enrolled in K–12 grew by more than 1,000,000 from SY 2000–01 to SY 2017–18. Delaware had the highest increase in EL student population as a percentage of total enrollment where the number of ELs grew by over 10,000 students, or by 7.3%.


**Percentage Point Decreases in Student Enrollment of English Learners by State:**

- Arizona: -6.9
- California: -5.3
- New Mexico: -5.1
- Montana: -2.8
- Alaska: -2.4
- District of Columbia: -1.6
- Idaho: -1.4
- Utah: -1.1

Eight states experienced a decline in EL population between SYs 2000–01 and 2017–18. The state with the greatest decrease of EL student population was Arizona where the number of ELs fell by over 43,000 students, or by 6.9%.

English Language Proficiency Assessment Results for English Learners in Title III-Supported Language Instruction Educational Programs: School Year 2017–18

During SY 2017–18, over 4 million ELs in the U.S.\(^1\) and Puerto Rico participated in a state English language proficiency (ELP) assessment. Approximately 14% of ELs attained proficiency in English (based on the ELP cutoff scores), about 27% made progress,\(^2\) and about 34% of ELs did not make progress or attain proficiency. Puerto Rico and Colorado had the highest percentage of EL students who attained proficiency, with 26.3% and 25.2%, respectively. Montana was the state with the smallest percentage at only 1.5% of ELs who attained proficiency.

Author calculations: Percentage of students who attained proficiency, made progress, or did not make progress equals the number of students who attained proficiency, made progress, or did not make progress (respectively) divided by the number of students who participated times 100.

Note: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires that student assessment results be reported for the subgroup of students with disabilities.


Student Proficiency Rate on State Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, and Science Assessments: School Year 2017–18

During SY 2017–18, ELs had the highest proficiency rate on math state assessments (25.4%) and the lowest on science state assessments (17.1%).


Author calculations: The number of ELs and all students proficient by subject equals the percentage proficient by state times the number of students tested by state. Student proficiency rate in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science equals the total number of students in the 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico who scored proficient divided by the total number of students tested times 100.

Note: Maryland, New Mexico, Vermont, and Virginia did not provide EL and all student proficiency data and were not included in the calculations. Maryland and Vermont did not provide MFEL student proficiency data and were not included in the calculations.

\(^1\) California and Vermont did not provide EL ELP data and were not included in the calculations.

\(^2\) Attained proficiency and making progress are defined in the State Consolidated Application. The states’ definitions of “making progress” can include students who “attained proficiency.” Therefore, students could be reported at the state educational agency, local educational agency, and school levels as both “making progress” and “attained proficiency.”