



Number and Growth of Students in US Schools in Need of English Instruction

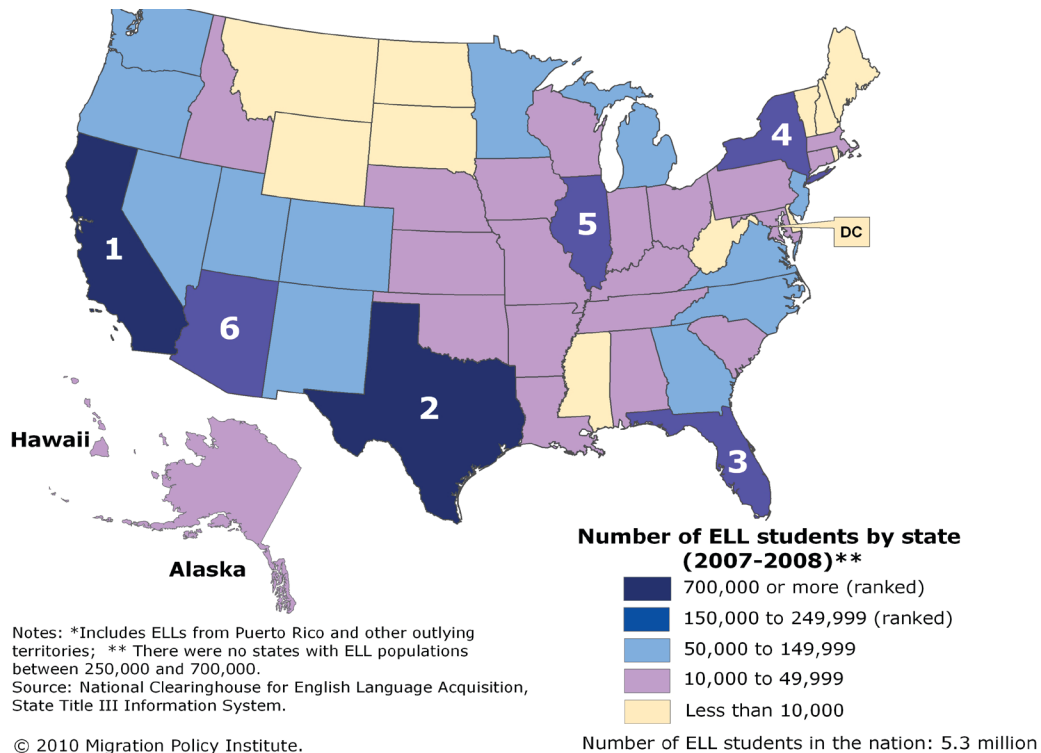
I. Number of English Language Learners

About 49.9 million students were enrolled in US public schools (pre-K to 12th grade) in the 2007-2008 academic year, according to US Department of Education statistics.¹ Of them, 10.7 percent or more than 5.3 million children were English language learners (ELLs).²

II. ELL Students by State

More than one in four of the nation's ELL students (about 1.5 million children) lived in California, the state with the largest number of students in need of English instruction. The size of California's ELL enrollment was greater than the next five states combined: Texas (701,799 ELL students), Florida (234,934), New York (213,000), Illinois (175,454), and Arizona (166,572) (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Map 1. ELL Students by State, 2007-2008



To download this map in high resolution, click [here](#).

Table 1. Top 12 States with the Largest ELL Enrollment, 2007-2008³

State	Total Pre-K-12 Enrollment 2007-2008	ELL Enrollment 2007-2008	% ELLs among all Pre-K-12 Students	ELL Enrollment 1997-1998	% Change in ELL Enrollment from 1997-1998
United States	49,914,453	5,318,164	10.7	3,470,268	53.2
California	6,275,445	1,526,036	24.3	1,406,166	8.5
Texas	4,674,832	701,799	15.0	507,262	38.4
Florida	2,666,811	234,934	8.8	243,766	-3.6
New York	2,765,435	213,000	7.7	219,868	-3.1
Illinois	2,112,805	175,454	8.3	136,186	28.8
Arizona	1,087,447	166,572	15.3	112,522	48.0
Nevada	429,362	134,377	31.3	30,425	341.7
North Carolina	1,458,035	106,180	7.3	28,709	269.8
Washington	1,030,247	94,011	9.1	56,921	65.2
Virginia	1,230,857	89,968	7.3	24,876	261.7
Colorado	801,867	82,347	10.3	NA	NA
Georgia	1,649,589	72,613	4.4	20,944	246.7

Note: Colorado has no data on ELLs for 1997-1998.

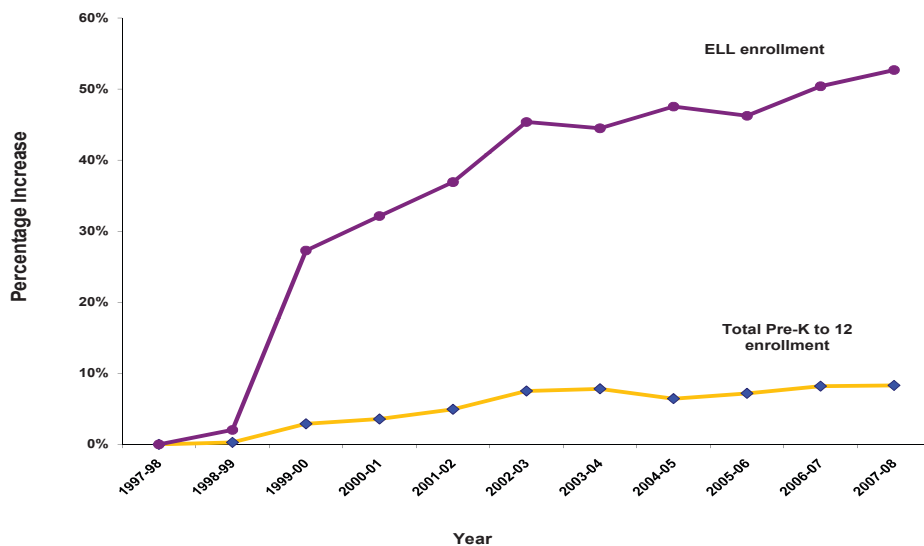
Sources: State Title III Directors and 2007-2008 State Consolidated State Performance Reports (CSPR);

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language (NCELA), State Title III Information System, www.ncele.gwu.edu/t3sis/.

III. Growth in ELL Enrollment

While the number of all pre-K-12 students increased by 8.5 percent, from 46.0 million in 1997-1998 to 49.9 million in 2007-2008, the number of ELL students increased by 53.2 percent (from 3.5 million to 5.3 million) in the same period (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percent Change in US Total and ELL Pre-K-12 Enrollment between 1997-1998 and 2007-2008



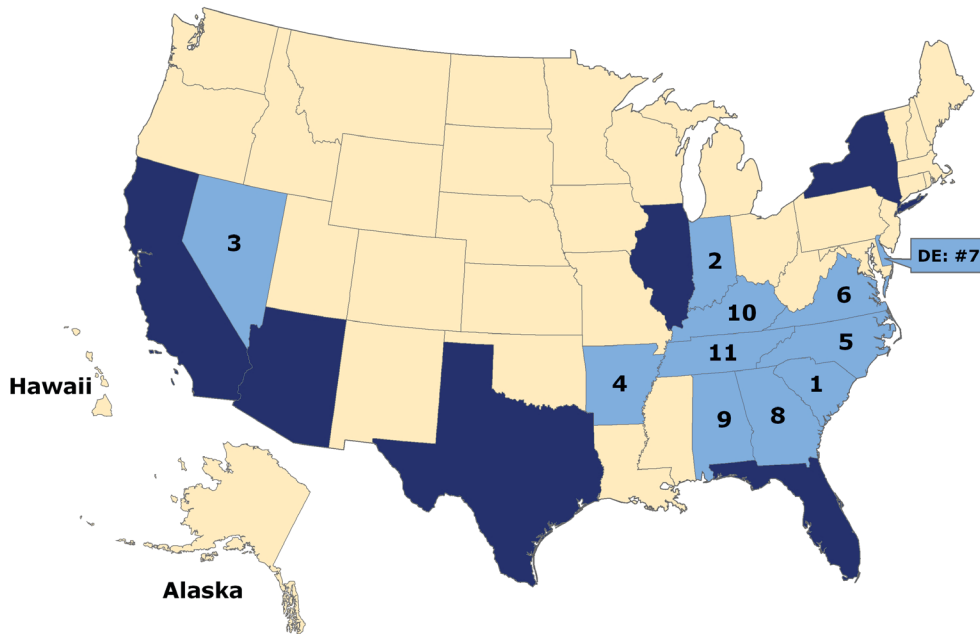
Sources: State Title III Directors and 2007-08 State CSPR; other years indicated. NCELA, *The Growing Numbers of English Learner Students, 1997/98-2007/08*, www.ncele.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/growingLEP_0708.pdf.

IV. States with Rapid Growth in ELL Enrollment

States with the largest number of ELLs were not the same as those with the fastest growth in ELL students. South Carolina was ranked first in terms of percent growth of its ELL, which grew more than 800 percent between the 1997-1998 and 2007-2008 school years (from 3,077 to 28,548). Indiana's number of ELLs grew by more than 400 percent (from 9,114 to 46,417) during the same period (see Map 2 and Table 2).

Map 2. States with the Largest and Fastest-Growing ELL Enrollment, 1997-1998 to 2007-2008

- States with 150,000 or more ELL students (2007-2008)
- States (ranked) with more than 200 percent ELL growth (1997-1998 to 2007-2008)



Notes: There were no states with the size of ELL population between 250,000 and 700,000.
 Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, State Title III Information System.
 © 2010 Migration Policy Institute.

To download this map in high resolution, click [here](#).

Table 2. Top 12 States with the Fastest-Growing ELL Enrollment from 1997-1998 to 2007-2008

State	Total Pre-K-12 Enrollment 2007-2008	ELL Enrollment 2007-2008	% ELLs among all Pre-K-12 Students	ELL Enrollment 1997-1998	% Change in ELL Enrollment from 1997-1998
United States	49,914,453	5,318,164	10.7	3,470,268	53.2
South Carolina	712,319	28,548	4.0	3,077	827.8
Indiana	1,046,766	46,417	4.4	9,114	409.3
Nevada	429,362	134,377	31.3	30,425	341.7
Arkansas	479,016	26,003	5.4	6,717	287.1
North Carolina	1,458,035	106,180	7.3	28,709	269.8
Virginia	1,230,857	89,968	7.3	24,876	261.7
Delaware	122,574	6,831	5.6	1,957	249.1
Georgia	1,649,589	72,613	4.4	20,944	246.7
Alabama	744,516	19,508	2.6	5,751	239.2
Kentucky	666,225	12,919	1.9	3,878	233.1
Tennessee	964,259	25,449	2.6	8,465	200.6
Ohio	1,827,184	38,026	2.1	13,867	174.2

Note: Two states – Colorado and West Virginia – have no data on ELLs in 1997-1998.

Sources: State Title III Directors and 2007/08 State CSPR; NCELA, State Title III Information System, www.ncelea.gwu.edu/t3sis/.

For more detailed data for the nation and by state, click [here](#).

Endnotes

- 1 All the data presented in this fact sheet are from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language (NCELA), www.ncelea.gwu.edu/t3sis/.
- 2 Definitions of ELLs vary by state. The US pre-K-12 total and ELL enrollment numbers include estimates from Puerto Rico and other outlying territories such as Guam, American Samoa, and the Marshall Islands.
- 3 NCELA-reported ELL data are sometimes different from data reported by individual states. Visit the US Department of Education's Consolidated State Performance Reports page at www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/consolidated/index.html for the state-reported numbers of ELL students.

This Fact Sheet was written by Jeanne Batalova and Margie McHugh as part of the ELL Information Center Fact Sheet series. The ELL Information Center, a project of MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, was launched in 2010 to provide a wide range of easily accessible national and state-level information regarding English Language Learners for educators, policymakers, and others. The ELL Information Center can be found at <http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/ell-information-center>.

For questions or to arrange an interview, please contact Michelle Mittelstadt at 202-266-1910 or mmittelstadt@migrationpolicy.org.

Suggested citation: Batalova, Jeanne and Margie McHugh. 2010. *Number and Growth of Students in US Schools in Need of English Instruction*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

© 2010 Migration Policy Institute
All Rights Reserved.