

A REPORT TO CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

MEASURES CHANGE

THE Demography AND Literacy OF Adolescent English Learners

BY Jeanne Batalova, Michael Fix, AND Julie Murray



NATIONAL CENTER ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY

A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York

MEASURES OF CHANGE

THE DEMOGRAPHY AND
LITERACY OF ADOLESCENT
ENGLISH LEARNERS

*Jeanne Batalova,
Michael Fix,
and Julie Murray*



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EL	English Learner
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
FEP	Fluent English Proficient
LEP	Limited English Proficient
NAEP	National Center for Education Statistics
NCELA	National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
Non-LEP	Non-Limited English Proficient
PUMS	Public Use Microdata Series

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act marked a turn in the nation's approach to educating children who do not speak English well, many of whom are immigrants or the children of immigrants. NCLB placed new responsibilities on schools and states to teach children English, make sure they attain academic proficiency, and ultimately, succeed in school. At the same time, at the dawn of the 21st century, the population of students who did not speak English well grew to record highs, and changes in the labor market signaled that high-skilled students would be in ever-growing demand in a knowledge-based economy. Taken together, these developments—the new mandates of NCLB, the growing diversity of America's students, the increasing demand for a skilled workforce, and knowledge of English as a prerequisite for full civic participation in the society—raise a number of important questions: Who are immigrant students and students who do not speak English well? Where are they from? What is their family background (social, economic, linguistic, etc.)? How well do they do in school? Do their literacy levels prepare them to take part in higher education and a skilled workforce?

This report attempts to answer these questions by:

1. Developing a profile of limited English proficient (LEP) students in US schools with a particular focus on LEP adolescents. Results are based on data from the Department of Education and the US Census 5 percent Public-Use Microdata Samples (PUMS); they are reported for the country as a whole and for four study states: California, Illinois, Colorado, and North Carolina;
2. Exploring the literacy achievements of English language learners (ELLs) in the 8th grade. The analysis uses results from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Known as the nation's report card, NAEP is a standardized test administered in all states at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels. Our report analyzes reading and math results of 8th graders at the national level and for our four study states;
3. Detailing results from 2005 statewide standardized reading and math tests for 8th grade students in our four study states. These data provide a second indicator of ELL literacy achievement.
4. Describing state identification, testing, and accommodation policies for ELL students in the four study states, thereby documenting wide variation in state policies and suggesting one potential reason for disparate ELL outcomes on the NAEP and state achievement tests.

Key Terms

English Language Learner and Limited English Proficient Students

Throughout the report we use two terms interchangeably to describe our population of interest: English language learner (ELL) and limited English proficient (LEP) students. While some states and districts use the term ELL, LEP is defined and used in the NCLB legislation. The law describes LEP students as: “. . . ages 3 to 21, enrolled in elementary or secondary education, often born outside the United States or speaking a language other than English in their homes, and not having sufficient mastery of English to meet state standards and excel in an English-language classroom.” (NCLB Act of 2002)¹

Academic Proficiency

The definition of proficiency in core academic areas varies. In general, both the NAEP and state reading and math tests use the “proficient” designation to indicate whether children’s actual performance on a test meets the standards set for them, either by the NAEP or the individual state. These standards are based on what children should know and be able to do.

Adolescents

For the purposes of this report, we define adolescents as students currently enrolled in grades 6–12 (for the demographic profile) and as students in grade 8 (for the NAEP and state report card analysis).

Key Findings

Demographic Profile

- *LEP population growth outpaces the general student population.* Between 1995 and 2005, the LEP enrollment in public schools nationwide grew by 56 percent; the entire student population grew by only 2.6 percent.
- *LEP population growth varies dramatically by state, with “new growth” states for immigrants experiencing much higher increases in the LEP population.* LEP enrollment growth between 1995 and 2005 ranged from 26 percent in California, a state with a long history of receiving immigrants, to 372 percent in North Carolina, a state only recently experiencing sharp gains in its immigrant population.
- *According to the 2000 Census, California adolescents are more likely to be LEP or linguistically isolated than students nationwide or students residing in the other three study states.* Almost 12 percent of adolescent students in California are LEP, surpassing the national share of LEP adolescents. According to 2000 Census data, LEP children made up 5 percent of all students in grades 6–12. The share in Colorado was 4 percent; in

1. US Department of Education. Available at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>.

Illinois, 5 percent, and North Carolina, 3 percent. The share of students in grades 6–12 living in linguistically isolated families (i.e., households in which no one over 14 speaks English very well) was three times higher in California than for the nation as a whole: 9 versus 3 percent.

- *Fifty-seven percent of LEP adolescents nationwide are US born.* Up to 27 percent of all LEP adolescents are members of the second generation, and 30 percent are third generation, meaning that many students educated exclusively in US schools still cannot speak English well. The high numbers of US-born LEP students are present at the state level, even in our study states that do not have large Puerto Rican populations (a group often recognized for its third-generation LEP population).
- *Seventy percent of LEP students in grades 6–12 speak Spanish.* The next largest language group is Vietnamese, which accounts for only 3 percent of the total LEP student population in grades 6–12.

Indicators of Literacy Achievement by LEP Students

Available data on literacy achievement do not easily lend themselves to measuring the progress of LEP students. While the analysis in this report employs results from NAEP and state standardized tests, both sources of data have one or more shortcomings with regard to the LEP population. The NAEP has a small LEP sample. Moreover, although NAEP encourages all participating schools to apply the same standards for including the LEP population in testing, eventually it is up to the school staff to decide who takes the NAEP. Therefore, results are only suggestive of achievement patterns. Similarly, results from state achievement tests are based on different instruments and testing procedures, as well as differing policies for identifying LEP students. While results on statewide standardized tests in reading and math allow us to compare the LEP to non-LEP populations within each state, state variation limits the meaning and power of cross-state comparisons.

Despite these limitations, several important findings emerge from our analysis of NAEP and state testing data:

- *National NAEP data suggest that only a small percent of LEP 8th grade students were proficient in reading (4 percent) and in math (6 percent).* At the same time, 71 percent of LEP test takers on the NAEP scored below “basic” on the reading test. This trend persists at the state level and at the national level for the math test, as well.
- *LEP performance on state standardized reading and math tests varies dramatically from state to state and foretells future challenges in meeting NCLB requirements.* In 2005, while the share of LEP students meeting California’s reading proficiency standards was 6 percent, 53 percent of LEP students met North Carolina’s standards for reading proficiency. Similarly in math, 10 percent of LEP students were proficient in California, while 62 percent were proficient in North Carolina. Reading and math scores for LEP students in Illinois and Colorado fell between those of California and North Carolina. These ranges do not necessarily indicate more or less stringent standards: State testing choices and policies for identifying, educating, and including LEP students in standardized tests vary. What these generally low scores do indicate, however,

is that states and districts face large challenges under NCLB, which requires that all LEP children be proficient in reading and math by 2014.

- *Data suggest a wide and largely uniform performance gap between LEP and non-LEP 8th grade students taking the NAEP.* Nationally, LEP students trailed non-LEP students by 39 points in reading and 36 points in math on a 500-point scale. In each of the four study states, non-LEP students on average scored above “basic,” while LEP students on average scored below “basic.”
- *Wide achievement gaps exist between LEP and non-LEP adolescents on statewide standardized tests.*² Even though the states set their own definitions of the LEP population and proficiency standards, the gap between LEP and non-LEP students persists across all states.
- *The scores of former LEP students*³ *on the NAEP and state tests are roughly equal to those of non-LEP students in math and reading.* Analysis of the nation-level NAEP results and California state tests indicate that former LEP adolescents significantly outperform their LEP counterparts and score close to their non-LEP counterparts in both reading and math.

LEP Identification, Instruction, and Testing Variations across States

Our compendium of state LEP policies in Appendix A for California, Colorado, Illinois, and North Carolina reveals several critical dimensions of variation across states, which may affect measurements of LEP literacy. They include:

- The English proficiency test chosen to identify LEP students and monitor their progress in English-language acquisition;
- The type of language instruction available;
- The type of tests used to assess the academic progress of LEP students; and
- The type of accommodations available to LEP students on state standardized tests such as extended time or the use of dictionaries.

Recommendations

The data and analyses reported here lead us to a number of recommendations that bear on further study of adolescent ELLs in schools.

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2. Since Illinois publicly releases information on LEP and all students, we can only say that LEP students were far less likely than the student population as a whole (not just non-LEP students) to be proficient in math and reading in this state.
 3. Former LEP students are those who either achieve the required English proficiency after receiving language instruction services or who were deemed “fluent English proficient” upon initial enrollment at school.

1. Reexamine whether Census data accurately capture the LEP population.

It is important to carefully examine how well Census data capture the LEP population, since these data will shape future research efforts and school funding. One advantage of having a uniform definition of the LEP population provided by Census data is that it provides comparability over time and place. This advantage means that future researchers may turn to it for analyses. Additionally, Census data on the number of LEP students have been used to determine the allocation of the majority of federal Title III grants, which specifically target the development of LEP and migrant children.⁴ Three areas bear future investigation.⁵

Recommendation: Studies of the correlation between reported Census responses to questions that capture English-language proficiency and actual speaking ability should be updated with a special focus on the student population. They should directly address whether those children who are reported to speak English “well” should be classified as LEP or whether they are in fact closer in ability to those people who speak “very well.” Further, research should explore whether language responses on population surveys are good proxies for reading and writing ability, since new language proficiency standards in US schools place greater emphasis on these skills.

2. Examine how varying state exclusion rates of ELL students affect NAEP results.

States vary in their policies and practices as to which LEP students participate in the NAEP testing. Little is known about the impact of such practices on reported results. Thus, while the NAEP provides the only nationally representative data that allow us to make comparisons of the results across states, their power in portraying the LEP population is weaker than for the student population as a whole.

Recommendation: Concerns about participation suggest that future research should systematically examine state exclusion policies and practices regarding LEP students and determine whether and to what degree they influence test results.

3. Explore the literacy trajectories of former LEP students.

It is clear that there is a gap between LEP and non-LEP students in their academic attainment. One promising area of research may be to examine how well *former* LEP students are doing compared to monolingual English students and what accounts for their comparatively strong outcomes on standardized test.

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4. Beginning in 2004, the American Community Survey (ACS) was used for this purpose, but this annual population survey keeps the same definition of LEP as the Census.
 5. The American Community Survey, introduced to replace the decennial census as of 2010, collects data from a sample of three million households each year. With regard to the LEP population, ACS has essentially replicated the decennial census questions. Therefore, our recommendations are pertinent to the analysis of ACS data.

Recommendation: Currently, the NAEP only provides data on former LEP students for a limited number of states, and thus there is no way to conduct a cross-state analysis comparing their progress with that of English-only students. Title III reports submitted by states contain information on how well former Title-III LEP students are doing, so this type of information is already collected. It may make sense to explore adding a representative sample of former LEP students to the NAEP data for all states.

4. Document how states vary in their testing and monitoring practices for ELL students whose parents opt out of language instruction services.

According to NCLB, parents can choose to decline language instruction programs for their children. Even if they do so, students in each of the four study states in this report are still considered to be ELLs and are provided with extra help, tutoring, and accommodations on state assessments. Schools also assess the students' annual progress in learning English, and school officials report the results to students and parents.

Recommendation: We are not aware of any studies that closely examine state variations in testing and monitoring ELL students whose parents opt out of language instruction, nor do we know of any that examine how widespread opting out is. Future research should thoroughly examine state policies and practices regarding the monitoring of students who opt out. It might also explore why parents opt out, how many of them do it, and the impact that declining services has on a child's educational progress.

5. Leverage the research opportunities that multi-state English proficiency tests offer for analyzing ELL outcomes.

Direct state-to-state comparisons of ELL students' progress in learning English are limited in their value for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that outcomes are based on different tests in each state. However, many states have entered multi-state consortia that will share proficiency tests.

Recommendation: Once standardized assessments are in place, there are several cross-state analyses that would be very useful, depending on the amount of information available about students, including: (1) the level of English proficiency with which ELL students begin school; (2) the average length of time that students are designated as ELLs; and (3) the rate of progress that states make in improving English proficiency for ELLs over time.

6. More broadly, following a recent report to Carnegie Corporation on ELL literacy, we recommend:

- *state adoption of a common definition of LEP status;*
- *expanded study of ELL performance in schools, disaggregating results in ways that capture the heterogeneity of the population (by generation, time in the United States, interrupted schooling, literacy in the native language, e.g.); and*
- *increased support for longitudinal studies that capture the differing trajectories of ELLs and former ELLs in US schools (Short and Fitzsimmons 2007).*

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A Focus on the Literacy of LEP Adolescents: NCLB and the US Economy

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002, one of the most sweeping pieces of federal education legislation ever enacted, seeks to fundamentally change the way US students are taught and evaluated (Murray, Fix, and Zimmermann 2007). It requires every state to adopt, develop, and implement a statewide standards-based accountability system, conduct annual assessments of student progress, and ensure that all students are meeting academic content standards by 2014. One of the stated goals of NCLB is to close the achievement gap and to ensure that disadvantaged groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, and disabled students achieve adequate academic proficiency. In addition, states have to ensure that their LEP students become proficient in English and develop high levels of academic attainment like their English-speaking peers. These new mandates are especially important given the recent growth and diversification of the US foreign-born population and the presence in elementary and secondary public schools of 5.1 million children who have difficulties with the English language.

Economic opportunities for today's students are also changing. The knowledge-based US economy is predicted to generate jobs that rely on a skilled and educated workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2004). Growth rates are projected to be higher for occupations that rely on an educated workforce (an associate's degree or higher) than for occupations that require no education or training (Hecker 2001). In addition, education pays. Numerous studies show an ever increasing rate of return—in terms of wages—for each additional year of post secondary education. Regardless of one's gender, full-time workers with a bachelor's or higher degree are paid almost twice as much as those with a high school diploma (Horrigan 2004). The corollary of this wage premium is the penalty paid by those who fail to complete high school. Language skills are also critical to full civic participation within the society.

Taken together, these developments—the new mandates of NCLB, the growing diversity of US students, the increasing demand for a skilled workforce, and knowledge of English as a prerequisite for being a full member of US society—raise a number of important questions. These include: Who are immigrant students and students who do not speak English well? Where are they from? What is their family background (social, economic, linguistic, etc.)?

How well do they do in school? Are they developing the literacy needed to take part in higher education and a skilled workforce?

Scope of the Report and Data Sources

This report attempts to answer these questions by creating a demographic profile of English learners and by examining their literacy levels, as measured by their reading and math performance on state and federal standardized tests. We undertake four types of analyses:

1. *We develop a profile of LEP students in US schools with a special focus on LEP adolescents. Our results are based on data from the Department of Education and the US Census 5 percent PUMS; they are reported for the country as a whole and for four study states: California, Illinois, Colorado, and North Carolina.*

In Chapter II we provide a general discussion of total PK–12 and LEP enrollment trends based on data from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA). We also present a profile of the demographic and social characteristics of LEP students using 2000 US Census data. We draw on a recent Urban Institute analysis of the LEP population, focusing on adolescents in grades 6–12, comparing their characteristics across the states (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005). We also address the advantages and challenges of using Census data to analyze the LEP population.

2. *We explore the literacy achievements of LEP 8th graders by using the 2005 NAEP results in reading and math.*

In Chapter III we analyze 2005 NAEP data to compare results of 8th graders in mathematics and reading by English-proficiency levels (i.e., LEP, non-LEP and, when possible, former LEP students) and by state. Our goal is to determine whether these students meet national literacy goals, using NAEP scores as a proxy for reading, writing, and comprehension skills. We also examine how LEP and non-LEP students differ in NAEP outcomes, and document state variation in student achievement.

The NAEP offers a standardized assessment across states and is the only nationally representative assessment of students' knowledge in eight subject areas (reading, writing, science, US history, civics, math, geography, and the arts). In addition to providing a brief description of the NAEP data, we discuss some of the data's limits.

3. *We provide a second indicator of LEP literacy by analyzing the 2005 results from statewide reading and math tests administered to 8th graders in our four study states.*

In Chapter IV we analyze State Report Cards from four states to show how LEP, non-LEP, and, to the extent possible, former LEP 8th graders are faring with respect to state goals in reading and math. These assessments and outcomes are used to evaluate state progress under NCLB.

We chose to analyze data both from the NAEP and the state achievement tests to develop multiple indicators of student performance in the states and to demonstrate relative performance of LEP and non-LEP students with regard to national and state literacy goals. A word of caution: The data from these datasets are not directly comparable as they vary substantially in the structure and content of the tests, proficiency standards in math and reading, and in their administration (McCombs et al. 2004). We discuss data comparability in more detail in the respective chapters.

4. *We describe state identification, testing, and accommodation policies for LEP students in the four study states, exploring the variation in state policies and reasons for the range of LEP results on the NAEP and state achievement tests.*

In Appendix A, we briefly discuss state-level procedures for identifying the LEP population and provide a sketch of each state's language instruction programs that help students attain English proficiency and academic content knowledge. We also describe state tests for English proficiency and content areas as well as the testing accommodations offered to LEP students taking state achievement tests. Our analysis involved examining each state's education department Web sites in addition to the *Biennial Evaluation Report to Congress on the Implementation of Title III*, prepared by the US Department of Education (US Department of Education 2005). In some cases, we also interviewed state project managers to increase our understanding and access to data.

The Concept of Literacy

There is no straightforward and simple definition of literacy since it varies by time, space, and can be linked with one's social and economic position. In a review of literacy definitions, one researcher points to differing definitions of literacy, ranging "from the ability to encode and decode written symbols to the ability to interpret events and experiences in a social and political context" (Roberts 1994).

Given such varying definitions, how does one measure literacy? One typology includes three ways in which literacy can be captured: self-reported information (e.g., self-descriptions on the Census), surrogate indicators (e.g., when a parent answers for a child), and direct measures, such as standardized tests (Wiley 1994). Direct assessments are generally considered the most reliable approach (Wiley 1994). In our exploration of literacy, we use a definition that is related to both the content on standardized achievement tests in reading and mathematics and student performance on those tests. While testing is not a perfect proxy for measuring literacy (i.e., tests may include a cultural bias or they may not represent daily life experiences), testing provides the best information available often. (See RAND's *Achieving State and National Literacy Goals, a Long Uphill Road* [McCombs et al. 2004]).

We have also included math scores as a measure of literacy rates. Most math tests, including the ones this report considers, do not explicitly measure concepts like reading or

writing ability. But studies have shown a correlation between math scores and language proficiency. One looked at math questions from the NAEP and parallel questions written in simplified language and found that LEP students, like students in low-level and average math classes, performed significantly better on the simplified version (Abedi and Lord 2001). Accordingly, we use math test results as a way to strengthen our measurement of literacy.

Our discussion focuses on English literacy. While information on students' literacy in other languages is not available, one study of adults identified as Chicano found that literacy levels increased from 52 percent to 74 percent when Spanish literacy was considered in addition to English literacy (Macias 1988 as cited in Wiley 1994). While such an analysis is not currently possible for our population of interest, we note the limitations of the definition here with the hope that future data collection might expand to include bilingual measures of literacy.

On the one hand, there are inherent difficulties in making judgments about schools and their instructional methods when using data on the literacy of LEP students, who by definition, are not literate in English. At the same time, the use of these data reflects a new set of expectations that demand high levels of achievement from LEP and non-LEP students alike. It could be argued that assessment of literacy-building policies and outcomes should focus on former LEP students. However, as we discuss in our recommendations, data on this population remain scarce.

Population Focus

In this report we focus on adolescent students, whom we define as those currently enrolled in grades 6–12. Our specific focus is on students in 8th grade, since they provide a snapshot of the performance levels of students during critical middle school years when their future academic trajectories are being shaped. Low-performing students in this grade are at a higher risk of eventually dropping out of school once they are legally permitted to do so. National data indicate that dropout rates show a steep decline after the 10th grade (Brown et al. 1995 as cited in Scanlon and Mellard 2002). This means that once students are old enough to drop out of school, they usually do it quickly, rather than waiting until later in high school.

Throughout the report, we use three terms to describe our population of interest: English language learner (ELL), English learner (EL), and limited English proficient (LEP) students. For our purposes here, the terms refer to the same population. LEP is the term adopted by NCLB, which defines LEP students as being: “. . . ages 3 to 21, enrolled in elementary or secondary education, often born outside the United States or speaking a language other than English in their homes, and not having sufficient mastery of English to meet state standards and excel in an English-language classroom” (NCLB Act of 2002).

States vary in how they define their LEP population. Some states define LEP students as those who would be eligible for language instruction services (e.g., English as a Second Language or ESL). Others may define LEP students as those who are receiving these language instruction services *and* who do not meet a certain English-proficiency level. Some states do not use the term LEP, preferring the term English language learner or ELL.

To the extent possible, we provide definitions and terms used by the states to describe their populations of students who do not speak English well. We caution, however, that state-to-state variations may be largely attributable to definitional differences.

Selecting Four States for Analysis: California, Illinois, Colorado, and North Carolina

Issues surrounding LEP literacy are especially relevant for states with a significant number of students from immigrant families and for states that have seen substantial growth in this population. This report focuses on LEP adolescents from four states: California, Illinois, Colorado, and North Carolina. The first two are traditional immigrant-receiving states with a large number of students from immigrant families. The second two are among the states that experienced a substantial growth in the numbers of children of immigrants (and the LEP population in general) in the last 10 to 15 years (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005). Thus, our demographic and achievement data capture the current range of the immigrant flow—both the growth in traditional destinations and the rapid rise of new ones. We also selected these particular states because they have comparatively complete, detailed, and easily accessible data on the literacy achievement of ELL adolescents.

CHAPTER II

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF LEP STUDENTS

According to the Department of Education, about 48.9 million students were enrolled in US public schools (PK–12) in the 2004–2005 academic year. About 5.1 million, or 10.5 percent, of these students were identified as ELL (based on definitions and numbers reported by states).⁶ Figure 1 shows the numerical distribution of ELL students enrolled in the 2004–2005 academic year by state.

As Figure 1 indicates, California and Illinois are among traditional immigrant states that report having large numbers of ELL students in PK–12 grades: Almost 1.6 million ELL students are enrolled in public schools in California (the highest in the nation) and nearly 193,000 ELLs are in Illinois (NCELA, State Data, 2006). In 2004–2005, North Carolina reported having about 70,000 ELLs and Colorado reported having more than 90,000 ELLs.

Figure 2 demonstrates a rapid growth in ELL enrollment between 1994–1995 and 2004–2005 that occurred alongside a modest increase in the total enrollment.

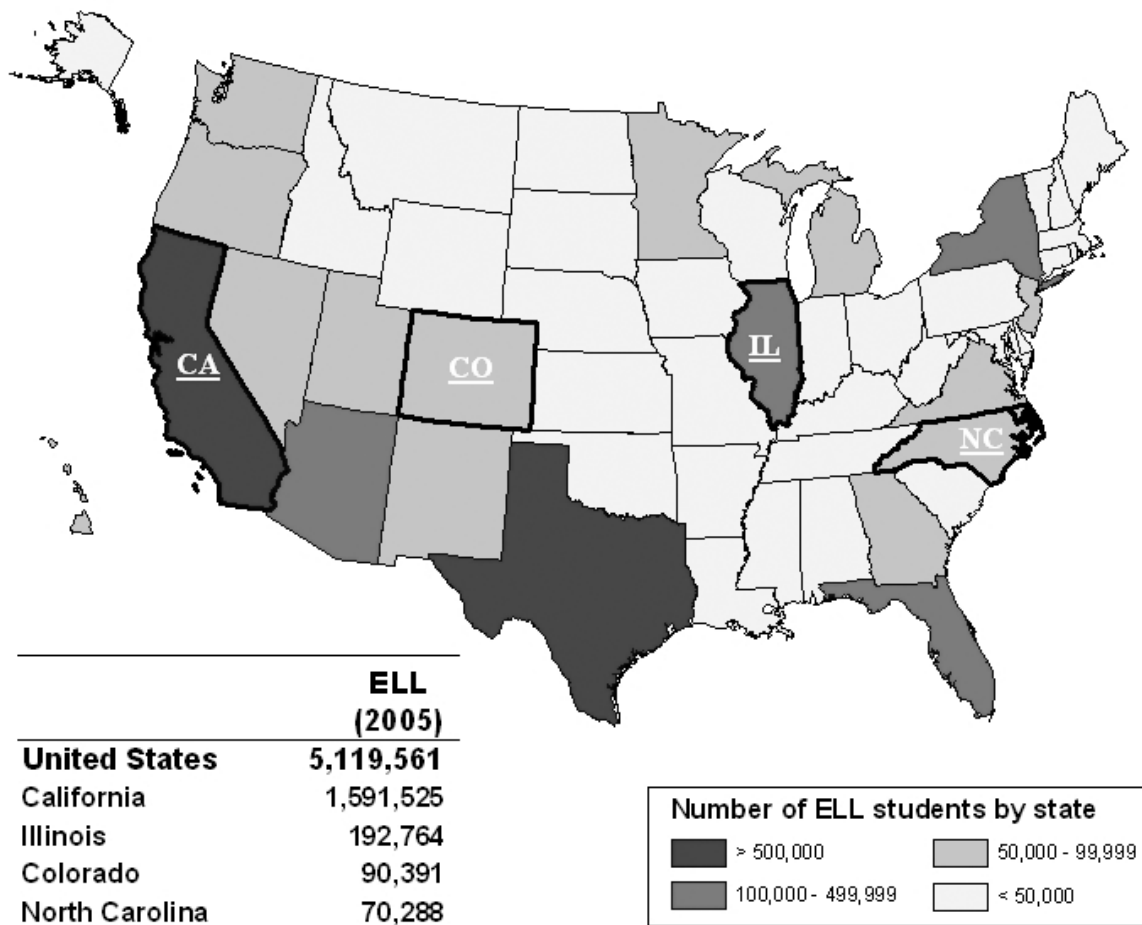
As Figure 2 shows, the total PK–12 enrollment in US public schools grew 2.6 percent from 47.7 million in 1994–1995 to 48.9 million in 2004–2005. In contrast, the ELL enrollment increased by 56.2 percent from 3.3 million students to 5.1 million during the same period. Proportionally, the share of ELL students in the total student population increased as well; from 6.9 percent in 1994–1995 to 10.5 percent in 2004–2005.⁷

Although NCELA data do not allow analysis of enrollment growth of ELL students by grade, previous research indicates that ELL students are currently concentrated at the Pre-K and primary school levels (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005). As time passes, the large cohort of today's younger ELLs will be moving to the middle and high schools, where there are typically fewer resources available to address ELL students' needs.

6. This share is somewhat higher than Census numbers for adolescents we report later partly because of the year of reporting (2000 *versus* 2005), partly because most LEP students are enrolled in grades K–5, and partly because of differences in Census and state definitions.

7. For detailed enrollment numbers of ELL and total student population in the United States, refer to Appendix B.

Figure 1. ELL student population (PK–12) by state, 2004–2005



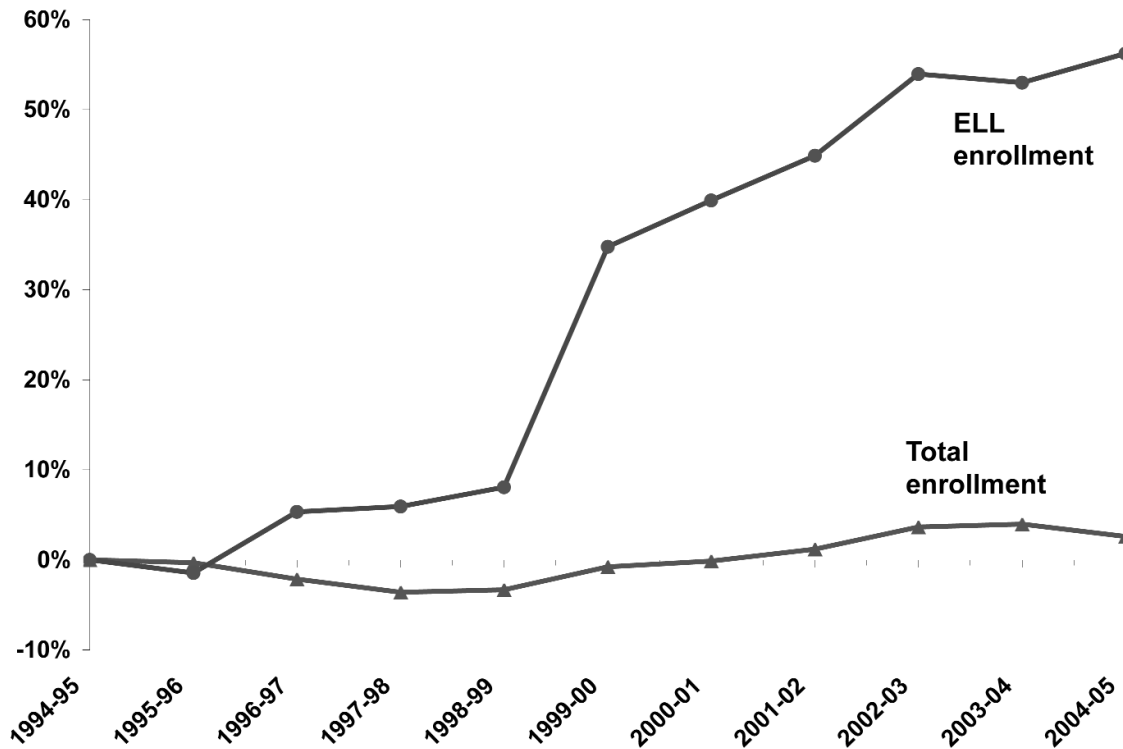
Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA), National and Regional Numbers and Statistics, 2006. Available at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/stats/>.

Like the absolute numbers of ELL students, ELL growth rates vary across places. As Figure 3 demonstrates, the states with the fastest growing ELL student populations are not the same as those with the largest ELL populations. For example, Colorado and North Carolina are among the states that experienced more than 200 percent growth of their ELL population in the last decade.

While it is true that the absolute numbers of ELLs in states like North Carolina are still small compared to those in more traditional receiving states such as California, their growth is quite rapid. Fast growth raises important questions about whether these states have the resources and infrastructure to accommodate these students and ensure that the children have adequate academic and language instruction.

Figure 4 shows the rates of (PK–12) total and ELL enrollment growth for California, Illinois, Colorado, and North Carolina.

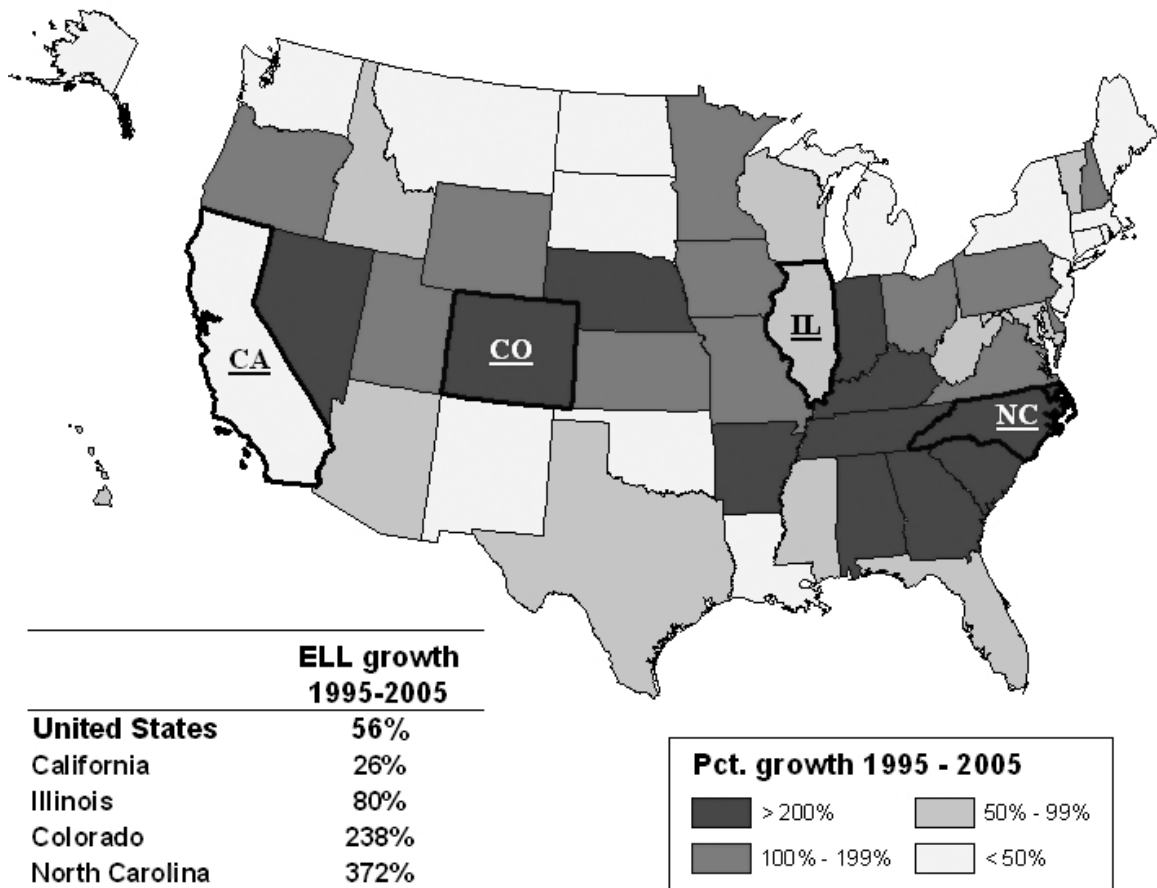
Figure 2. Rate of total and ELL enrollment growth (PK–12): The United States, 1994–1995 to 2004–2005



Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA), National and Regional Numbers and Statistics, 2006. Available at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/stats/>.

Figure 4 tells three stories regarding the changing total enrollment and ELL student enrollment. First, the rate of growth of the LEP population varies dramatically across study states, from 26 percent in California to 372 percent in North Carolina. Second, the states vary in the rate of growth of their overall student population—which rose 4.5 percent in California, while staying the same in North Carolina and declining in Illinois. And third, in each state, the ELL population grew substantially faster than the total population as a whole. Thus, while Colorado and California show parallel increases in total and ELL enrollments, the other two states report an increase only in the ELL population and little increase or even a decline in total enrollment. These trends raise questions about the availability of financial and personnel resources. Will states such as Illinois and North Carolina have more available resources to meet the needs of increasing special populations like ELL adolescents, considering that they do not have to cope with a simultaneous rise in the general student population? What will take place in states such as Colorado and California, which now have to address the needs of both a growing ELL and general student population?

Figure 3. PK–12 ELL student population growth from 1994–1995 to 2004–2005, by state



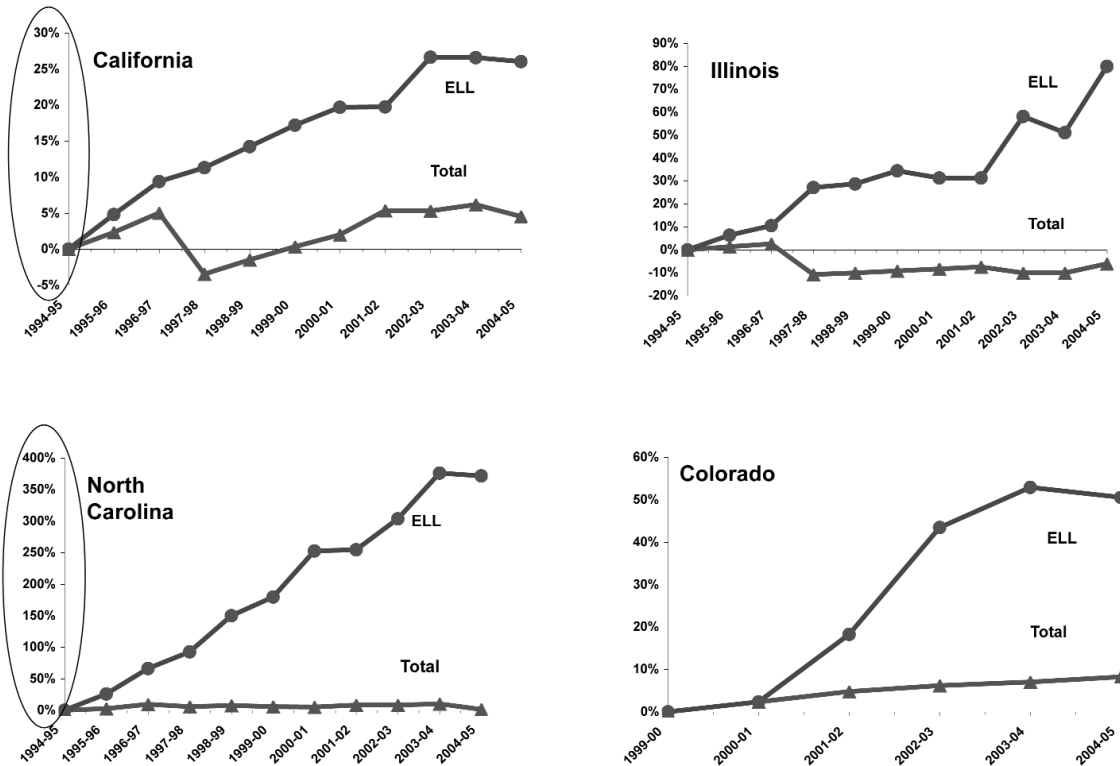
Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA), National and Regional Numbers and Statistics, 2006. Available at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/stats/>.

Characteristics of Adolescent ELL students

Below, we draw on the analysis of the 5 percent Public-Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) available from the 2000 US Census of Population and Housing to provide a profile of the demographic and social characteristics of ELL students.⁸ In doing so, we use a recent Urban Institute analysis of the ELL population to compare characteristics of ELL students in grades 6–12

8. In this report, we use 5 percent PUMS Census 2000 data. The dataset contains records for a sample of housing units, i.e., 5 percent of housing units that completed long-form Census questionnaires on the day of Census. Census PUMS data have information on the characteristics of each housing unit and each person in it. The responses on housing and individual characteristics are self-reported. In a Census, some persons are not counted. By conducting a post-enumeration survey, the US Bureau of Census identified

Figure 4. Rate of total and ELL enrollment growth (PK–12): California, Illinois, and North Carolina, 1994–1995 to 2004–2005 and Colorado, 1999–2000 to 2004–2005⁹



Notes: Consider the different scales of the “percent” axes on the states’ enrollment figures. In some instances, changes from year to year may be in part a product of changing definitions and reporting practices. Colorado’s data on the number of ELLs for 1997–1998 and 1998–1999 are not available. Due to concerns about data quality, we report trends in total and ELL enrollment for Colorado only beginning from 1999–2000.

Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA), National and Regional Numbers and Statistics, 2006. Available at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/stats/>.

that certain populations (racial and ethnic minorities and undocumented migrants) were undercounted. However, the PUMS Census data were not adjusted for the undercount.

- For detailed enrollment numbers of ELL and total student enrollment for each of the four study states, refer to Appendix C.

across the states (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005). In this section, unless stated otherwise, we define *adolescents* as students who are currently enrolled in grades 6–12. All figures and tables report data on this population.

Advantages and Challenges of Using Census Data

There are a number of reasons why researchers rely on Census data in studying ELL and immigrant children. First, the US Census is the only nationwide dataset that includes information on child age, school enrollment, place of birth and US citizenship status of parents and children, parent and child English-language proficiency, family incomes, and other key demographic factors. In contrast, state data are rarely disaggregated by grade and language proficiency and offer few insights into a child's family background.

A second advantage of the Census data is that it adopts a uniform, standardized definition of the LEP population, thus providing comparability across national and state-level data and allowing comparisons over time and place. As discussed above, there is no consistent definition of the ELL/LEP population because states (and districts) use a wide range of language proficiency tests and standards for defining their LEP students.

In this regard, we define individuals who are “limited English proficient” as those who reported speaking a language other than English at home and speaking English less than “very well.”¹⁰ The Census measures only spoken English proficiency, while the definitions of English proficiency used by states and local school districts generally include reading, writing, listening, and comprehension. For many states, school data show higher numbers of LEP students than the Census.¹¹

In other words, the data advantage turns into a data challenge: Even though the Census provides a consistent definition of the LEP population in different contexts, it may underesti-

10. In all households where a language other than English is spoken, the Census asks if members of the household speak English “very well,” “well,” “not well,” or “not at all.” The Census categorizes all persons speaking English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all” as those having difficulties with English. For more information on this classification scheme, see Census 2000 Brief, “Language Use and English-Speaking Ability,” available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf>. Using Census data, National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) defines ELL/LEP persons as those who reported on the Census questionnaire that they speak English less than “very well” (see “English Language Learners and the US Census: 1990–2000” at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/states/ellcensus90s.pdf>). For our Census data analysis, we use the same definition.

11. The following explanation comes from a recent Urban Institute study (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005): “States collect information on the number of LEP students through the schools with the Survey of States’ Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services (State Educational Agency Survey or SEA Survey). The SEA Survey total for LEP students nationally in 2000–01 was 12 percent higher than the Census 2000 figure for LEP children ages 5–17: 3.9 versus 3.5 million. There was great variation state-by-state, with California’s SEA reporting 400,000 more LEP children than the Census. Seventeen states, mostly in the West, reported considerably higher numbers of LEP children in the SEA than appear in the Census, while most of the rest of the states—generally in the Northeast, Midwest and South—reported lower numbers of LEP children. These differences are due in part to the non-standard definition of LEP across states.”

mate the number of LEP students as it relies only on one measure of English proficiency. A recent Urban Institute study finds a 12 percent difference between the state-reported estimates of their LEP students and Census-based estimates (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005).

Table 1 arrays a number of characteristics of adolescents for the United States as a whole and the four selected study states. The table reveals that California has the highest percentage of children of immigrants and immigrant children among adolescents: about 15 percent of 6–12th graders were foreign born while another 31 percent were born in the United States to immigrant parents.¹² These numbers are not surprising given the fact that California has been the leading immigrant-receiving state for decades. The share of foreign-born children and children of immigrants in Illinois is slightly higher than the national level, while in Colorado the share is slightly lower. In contrast, only 3.4 percent of adolescent students in North Carolina are foreign born, with an additional 4.1 percent being born in the United States to immigrant parents.

Linguistic isolation

In addition to an individual’s language proficiency, the Census allows us to determine the share of linguistically isolated families and children. According to the US Census, a linguistically isolated person is any person living in a household where all members aged 14 and above are LEP. In our analysis, we use the Census’ definition of linguistic isolation and focus on the ability of family members to communicate in English.

Table 1. Selected characteristics of students in grades 6–12 in the United States, California, Colorado, Illinois, and North Carolina: Census 2000

	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
All students in grades 6–12	28,539,956	3,599,522	425,202	1,246,750	751,614
Children of immigrants	5,195,015	1,663,899	56,010	240,977	56,365
Share of all school children	18.2	46.2	13.7	19.3	7.5
Foreign-born children	1,862,701	547,817	23,750	87,433	25,338
Share of all school children	6.5	15.2	5.6	7.0	3.4
Linguistically isolated children	979,613	328,214	12,736	46,252	10,817
Share of all school children	3.4	9.1	3.0	3.7	1.4
Spoken English ability					
Limited English proficient children	1,505,084	426,500	18,791	67,694	21,665
Share of all school children	5.3	11.9	4.4	5.4	2.9

Source: Authors’ tabulations of the Census 2000 data.

12. We define the foreign born as persons who were not US citizens at birth. For the purposes of this report, we use the terms “foreign born” and “immigrant” interchangeably. Children of immigrants include foreign-born children as well as US-born children with at least one foreign-born parent.

The share of children with LEP parents (and other LEP family members) is a significant concern, since the English proficiency of parents may affect their ability to assist with the children's educational development, monitor their progress, and communicate with teachers and school administrators (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005). In addition, being in a linguistically isolated family is associated with other social and economic risk factors such as poverty and low parental educational levels (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005).

Adolescents in California are almost three times more likely (9.1 percent) than the average US adolescent (3.4 percent) or adolescent in Colorado (3 percent) to live in a linguistically isolated household. The share of adolescents living in linguistically isolated families in Illinois (3.7 percent) is also much lower than the share in California but higher than the share in North Carolina (1.4 percent).

Spoken English Proficiency

As Table 1 indicates, the four states vary in their share of students in grades 6–12 who are LEP. California has the highest share of students who are LEP (11.9 percent), while North Carolina has the lowest share of LEP (2.9 percent).

Generation

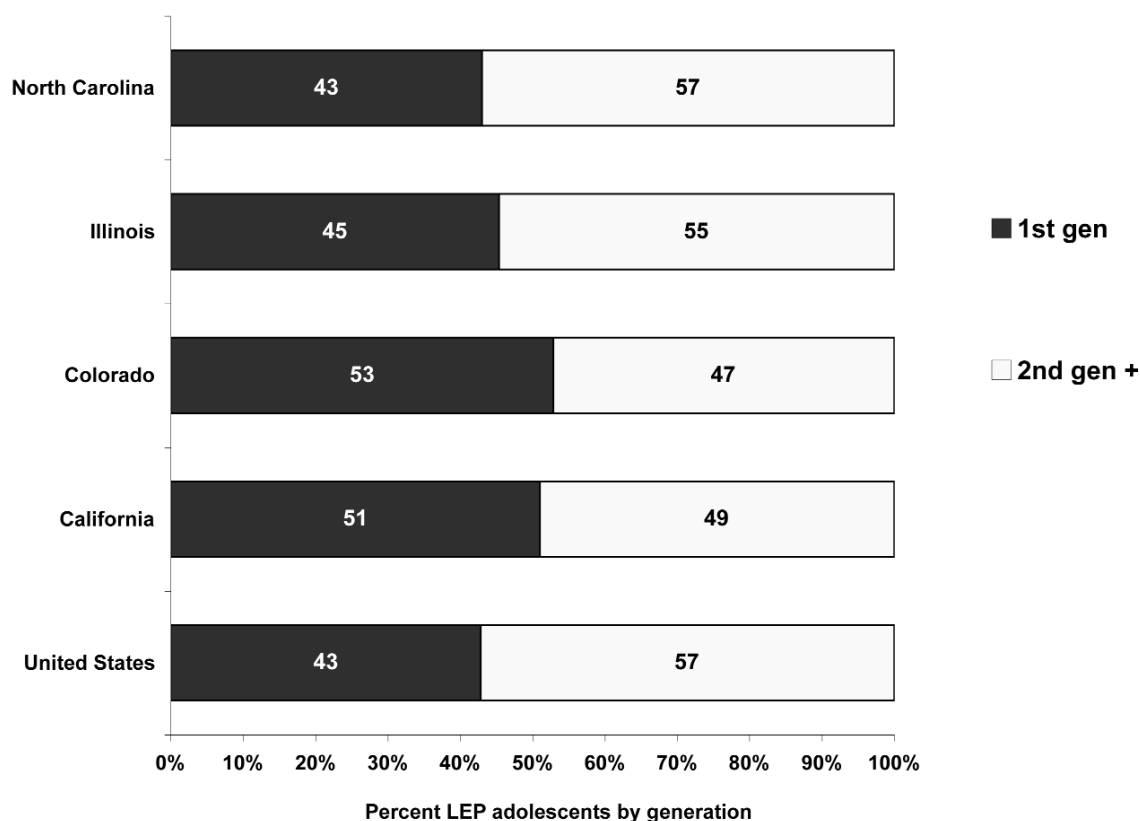
Compared to their native-born counterparts, foreign-born adolescents are much more likely to be LEP. The first generation is about three times more likely to be LEP (34.6 percent) than the second generation (11.9 percent) and 18 times more likely to be LEP than the third generation (1.9 percent).¹³ However, as Figure 5 demonstrates, it is not correct to equate LEP students with foreign-born students.

At the national level, 57 percent of all LEP adolescents are US-born children. The numbers in North Carolina and Illinois are similar to the national share, but smaller in Colorado (47 percent) and California (49 percent).

The large numbers of US-born adolescents who continue to be LEP in secondary school suggest that many LEP children are not learning English even after many years in US schools. NCLB addresses the language needs of these students by placing responsibility on district and state educational systems to ensure that these students learn English in addition to attaining academic proficiency. However, these data on third-generation LEP adolescents suggest major challenges for states and districts in their quest to meet NCLB standards. Perhaps even more challenging is the number of immigrant children entering US schools at later ages who may find it more difficult to achieve English-language proficiency because schools may have fewer resources and less time to teach them English (Capps, Fix, et al. 2005). As a recent report makes clear, many secondary schools have not been equipped to teach language and academic content and to bring immigrant students to a level of proficiency during the comparatively few years they are enrolled in US public schools (Short and Fitzsimmons 2007).

13. Our generational definitions are as follows: first generation, a foreign-born person; second generation, a US-born person with at least one foreign-born parent; third and above generation, a US-born person with US-born parents.

Figure 5. Percentage of adolescent LEP students by generation



Source: Authors' tabulations of the Census 2000 data.

Family Income and Parental Education

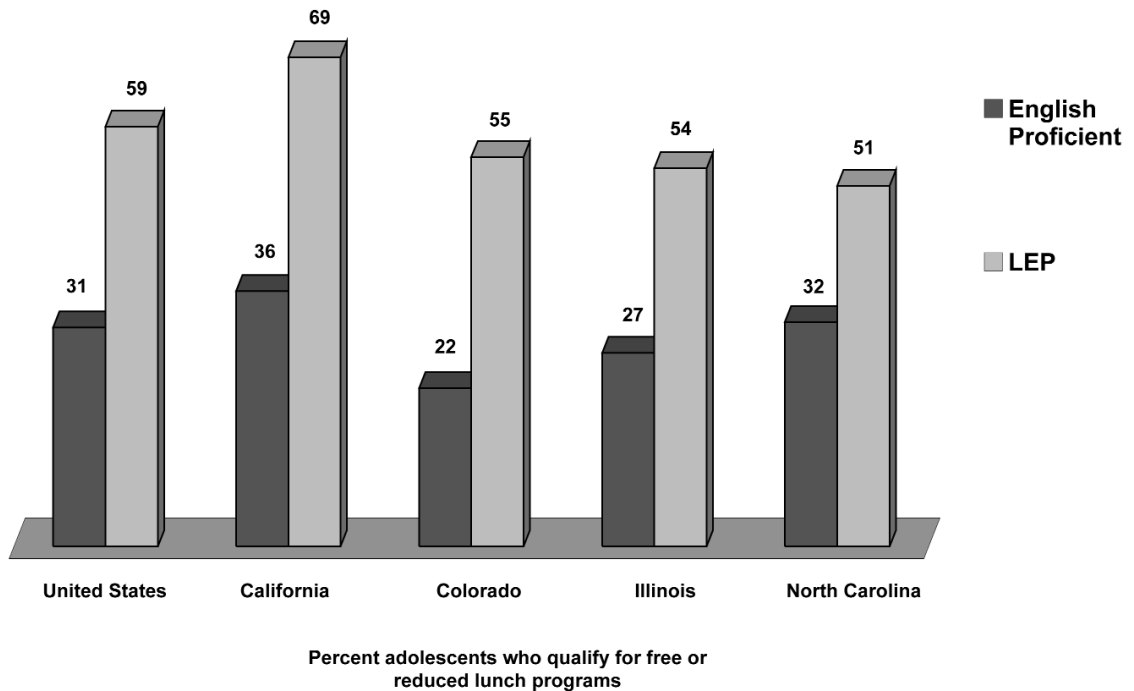
Family income and parental education are two additional factors that are highly correlated with children's success in school and are important for NCLB implementation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). As Figure 6 indicates, there is considerable overlap between LEP and low-income children.

In every state, LEP students are more likely than English-proficient adolescents to live in families whose income is below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. The gap is particularly large in California, where LEP students are substantially more likely to live in poor families than those in Colorado, Illinois, and North Carolina.

Key provisions of NCLB stress the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. Schools may face challenges involving parents who have low incomes, limited English proficiency, low levels of formal education, and who themselves may be low-literate.

As Figure 7 demonstrates, LEP students in the nation overall and in our study states are much more likely to have parents with less than a high school education. LEP students in California appear substantially more likely than their LEP counterparts in North Carolina to have parents without a high school degree.

Figure 6. Percentage of adolescent students who qualify for free or reduced lunch programs by language proficiency



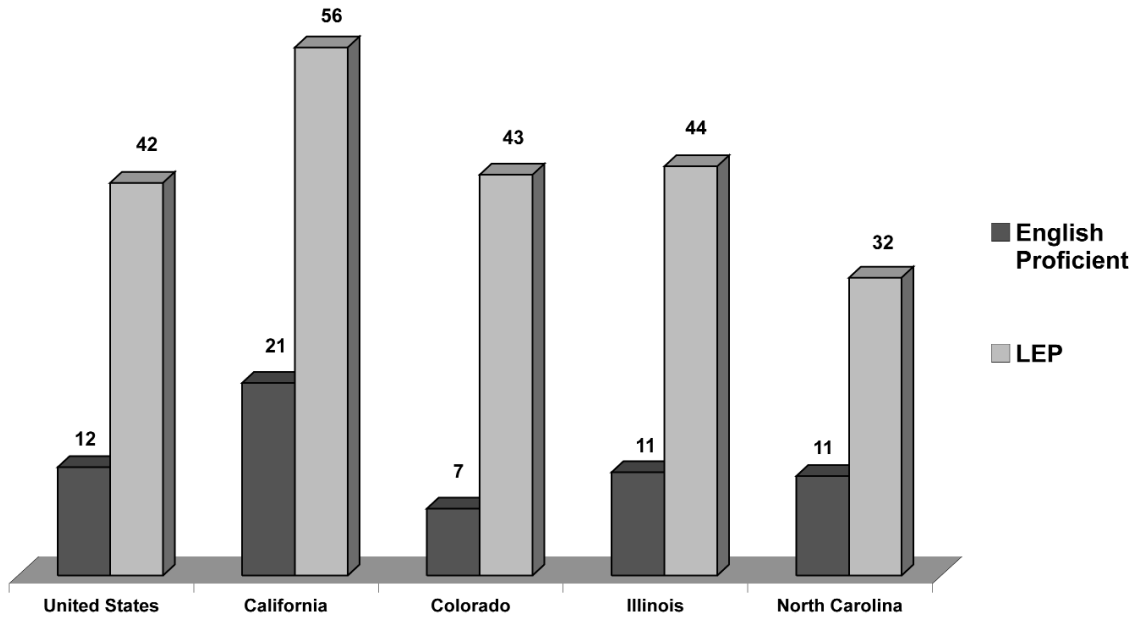
Notes: To qualify for free or reduced lunch programs, a student has to live in a family with income below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. The term “English proficient” refers to students who speak only English or speak English “very well.”

Source: Authors’ tabulations of the Census 2000 data.

Languages Spoken in LEP Students’ Homes

Table 2 portrays LEP adolescents by language spoken at home for the nation as a whole and across our four study states. Overall, we find that Spanish is spoken by 70 percent of LEP adolescents; the next most commonly spoken language, Vietnamese, accounts for only 3.3 percent of LEP adolescents. This pattern complicates the development of effective language acquisition instruction programs because there are few economies of scale in developing teacher training curriculum and other resources needed for teaching speakers of languages other than Spanish.

Figure 7. Percentage of adolescents whose parents have less than a high school education



Percent adolescents with low-educated parents

Note: The term “English proficient” refers to students who speak only English or speak English “very well.”

Source: Authors’ tabulations of the Census 2000 data.

Table 2. Top ten languages spoken in LEP adolescents' homes

United States	Total	California	Total	Colorado	Total	Illinois	Total	North Carolina	Total
Spanish	70.0	Spanish	73.8	Spanish	78.0	Spanish	74.6	Spanish	74.0
Vietnamese	3.3	Vietnamese	4.8	Vietnamese	3.1	Polish	5.5	French	4.9
French	3.2	Chinese languages	3.2	French	2.9	French	2.4	Vietnamese	4.0
Chinese languages	2.6	Tagalog	2.3	German	2.1	Korean	1.5	German	2.4
Korean	1.7	Korean	2.1	Miao, Hmong	1.8	Tagalog	1.4	Miao, Hmong	2.2
German	1.7	Miao, Hmong	2.0	Korean	1.8	German	1.4	Chinese languages	1.8
Miao, Hmong	1.3	Mon-Khmer/Cambodian	1.4	Russian	1.6	Chinese languages	1.3	Korean	1.3
Tagalog	1.3	Cantonese	1.1	Chinese languages	1.2	Vietnamese	1.1	Russian	1.2
Russian	1.1	Russian	0.8	Japanese	0.9	Russian	1.1	Arabic	1.0
French Creole	1.1	Laotian	0.6	Arabic	0.8	Gujarathi	0.9	Cushite	0.7
Percent speaking 10 top languages	87.2	Percent speaking 10 top languages	92.3	Percent speaking 10 top languages	94.3	Percent speaking 10 top languages	91.2	Percent speaking 10 top languages	93.3
Number of LEP students	1,505,084	Number of LEP students	426,500	Number of LEP students	18,791	Number of LEP students	67,694	Number of LEP students	21,665

Source: Authors' tabulations of the Census 2000 data.

CHAPTER III

LEP ADOLESCENT LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT: RESULTS FROM THE NAEP

We chose to analyze data from both the NAEP (this chapter) and from the state achievement tests (next chapter) to capture multiple indicators of adolescent ELL student performance on national and state literacy goals.¹⁴ A word of caution is in order: The data from the NAEP and state achievement datasets are not directly comparable since the structure and content of the achievement tests, the proficiency standards set in math and reading, and the administration of the tests themselves vary substantially (McCombs et al. 2004).

The focus of our analysis of the NAEP data is how LEP, former LEP, and non-LEP 8th graders in the four states are performing relative to national literacy goals in reading and mathematics. We use 2005 NAEP results, the most recent year available with complete data at the time of writing.

What Is the NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often called “The Nation’s Report Card,” is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what US students should and do know in various subject areas. Since its inception in 1969, NAEP has assessed generations of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in a variety of academic subjects: mathematics, reading, science, writing, geography, US history, civics, and the arts. NAEP is the only national survey of students’ progress in academic subjects that distinguishes students’ results by students’ English-language ability.

NCLB requires that states receiving Title I funding (a federal funding stream directed at low-income children and the schools that serve them) take part in the NAEP. Since all states receive Title I funding, they must participate in the NAEP math and reading evaluation of 4th

14. Some researchers have questioned the level of difficulty and the appropriateness of the test design of the math NAEP test, arguing that the test does not sufficiently capture what students in each of the tested grades are supposed to know in math (Tom Loveless, 2004. *How Well Are American Students Learning?* Vol. 1, Number 5. Washington, DC: Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institute, available at http://www.brookings.edu/GS/brown/bc_report/2004/2004report.htm). Given these potential limitations, we use the NAEP test score as an indicator of trends in achievement over time rather than focusing on concrete gains in scores from one year to the next.

and 8th graders; however, their participation in testing on other subjects is voluntary. The closely monitored and, at least in theory, standardized administration of the same tests with the same proficiency thresholds makes it possible to conduct a state-by-state comparison of student achievement.

NAEP results show student performance for the nation as a whole and for each participating state. The data are presented in two ways: 1) The average scale scores that are numerical scores indicate what students know and can do; and 2) achievement levels, which indicate whether students have reached standards for what they should know and be able to do. NAEP has established four achievement levels for each grade level:¹⁵

- Advanced—superior academic performance;
- Proficient—solid academic performance;
- Basic—partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade; and
- Below basic—less than partial mastery.

Both average scale scores and achievement level results are provided for the total group of students in a grade as well as for groups defined by gender, race/ethnicity, English proficiency, and other group-level characteristics. NAEP data are not reported at the individual-student level, only at a group level.

Student Participation in the NAEP Assessment

Students in public schools are randomly selected to participate in the NAEP. The schools themselves are selected using scientific sampling techniques to provide a representative sample of schools in each state. However, student participation is voluntary, meaning that not all students selected actually take the test. In addition, disabled or LEP students may be excluded from the student sample. The decision to exclude any of these students is made by teachers or staff members, although NAEP encourages participating schools to adhere to the same inclusion/exclusion criteria.

According to the NAEP, a student who is identified by the school as LEP and who is a native speaker of a language other than English *should* be included in the NAEP assessment unless:¹⁶

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15. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the *advanced* level “signifies superior performance,” the *proficient* level “represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed; students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter,” and the *basic* level “denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade” (US Department of Education, 2004–2005). The *below basic* level indicates a student did not perform well enough to meet even the basic benchmark, the lowest on the NAEP. For more information on the achievement level definitions in reading and math refer to: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp> and <http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/math/achieveall.asp>.
 16. Available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/criteria.asp>.

-
- The student has received reading or mathematics instruction primarily in English for less than three school years, including the current year; and
 - The student cannot demonstrate his or her knowledge of reading or mathematics in English even with an accommodation permitted by NAEP (e.g., extended time, small group administration, large-print booklet, etc.).

However, because school staff make a final decision on whether a particular LEP student should be included in the NAEP assessment, some researchers have raised questions about how well the test results capture student achievement for this group.

Since LEP students tend to score below average on assessments, exclusion or inclusion of such students from these tested groups may increase or decrease a jurisdiction's scores. Two more factors complicate the analysis. First, exclusion rates varied across states in 2005. And second, exclusion rates within states changed over time, making it difficult to evaluate comparisons over time within states.

NAEP administrators recognize the validity issue related to the inclusion of LEP students in the NAEP testing. Therefore, they continuously evaluate the potential impact of changes in exclusion rates on score gains. Preliminary findings suggest that in the case of *cross-state comparisons*, higher exclusion rates were not associated with higher average scores in 2005. Analysis of the *within state* patterns indicates that increases in exclusion rates led to a slight rise in the average scores, although these exclusion increases do not explain the entirety of score gains.¹⁷

Despite the limitations, we use the NAEP data because they are the only nationally representative data available for US students and they provide at least suggestive indicators of the progress of LEP students at the state and national level.

Reading Assessment of 8th Graders

According to the 2005 Reading Framework developed by the National Assessment Governing Board, NAEP assesses students on:

Three contexts for reading: 1) reading for literary experience; 2) reading for information; and 3) reading to perform a task.

Four aspects of reading: 1) forming a general understanding; 2) developing interpretation; 3) making reader/text connections; and 4) examining content and structure.¹⁸

The type and difficulty of questions vary by grade. The scale for the 2005 reading assessment of 8th graders ranges from 0 to 500, with the cutoff for the *basic* level set at 243, *proficient* at 281, and *advanced* at 323 points.¹⁹

17. For more information on the research on the impacts of exclusion rates on the NAEP results, see http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/2005_effect_exclusion.asp.

18. See the NAEP Reading Assessment Measure Web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/whatmeasure.asp>.

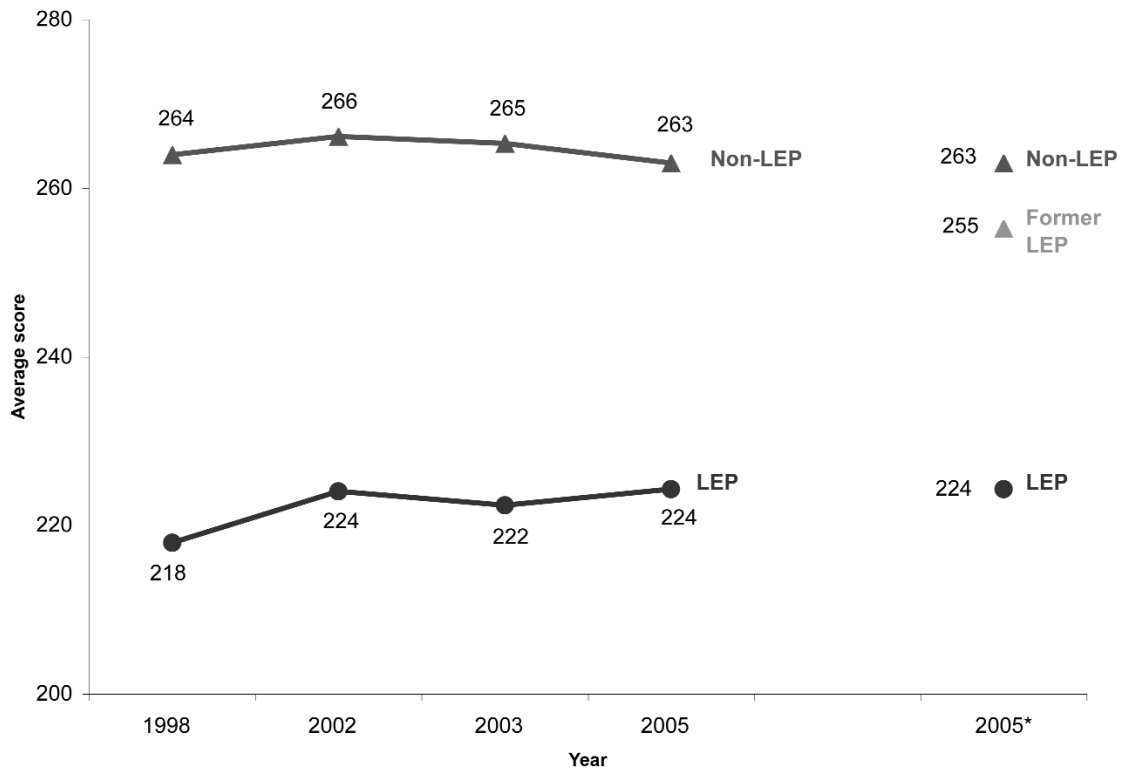
19. For proficiency cutoff points, see <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2005/2006451.pdf>.

Performance of 8th Graders on the Reading Test

Figure 8 shows the change in average reading scores between 1998 and 2005 for the nation overall. It indicates that although 8th-grade LEP students had slightly higher average scores on reading test in 2005 than in 1998, the historical achievement gap between LEP and non-LEP students persisted. For the first time, the 2005 NAEP distinguished between current and former LEP students (those who completed language instruction programs) and found that former LEP students had much higher and significantly different scores than those of their LEP counterparts. The scores suggest that once LEP students clear the language barrier and become former LEP students, they proceed through school like any other student.

The following two graphs show the 2005 reading assessment results for the LEP and non-LEP 8th graders for the nation and the four study states. The share of students taking the test who are LEP varied by state. About 20 percent of students in the California 8th grade NAEP sample were LEP, which is almost twice the share of LEP adolescents according to Census 2000 (11.9 percent). Both nationally and in the other three states, the share of LEP students

Figure 8. Average achievement scores of 8th graders in reading by English-language proficiency: NAEP, 1998–2005



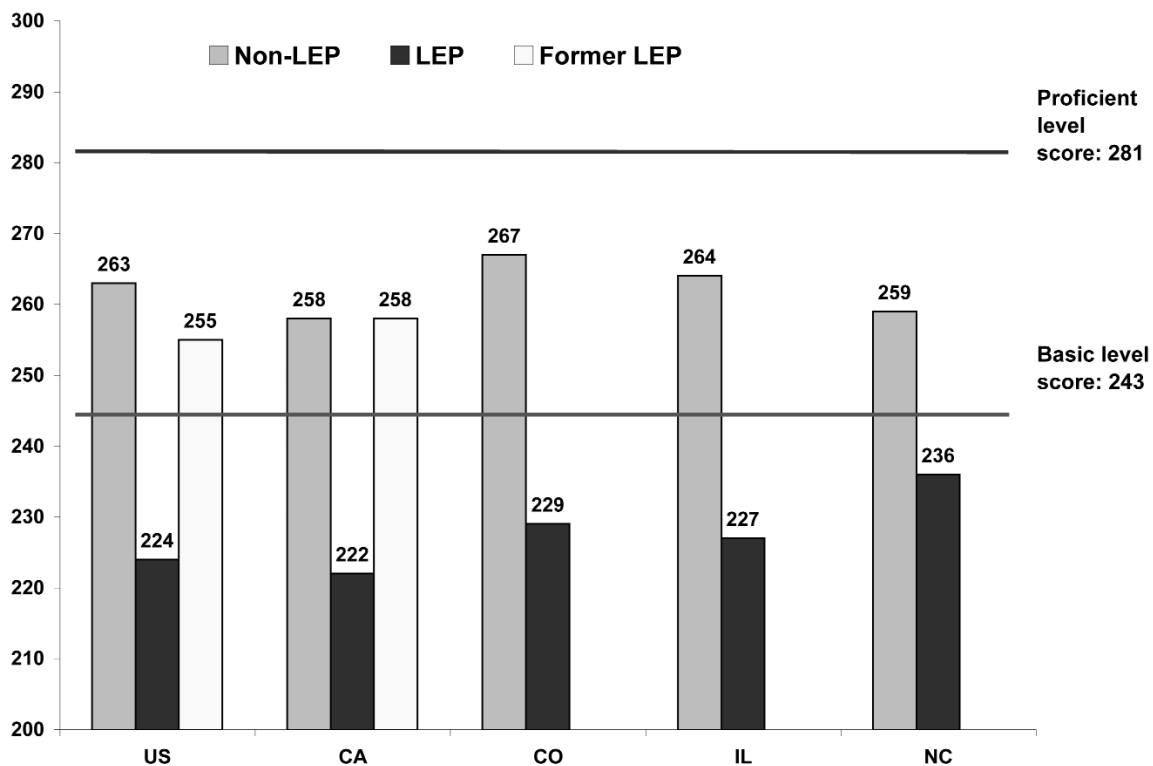
Source: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 Reading Assessment.

in the NAEP sample was significantly smaller: 5 percent at the national level and in Colorado, and 1 percent in Illinois and 3 percent in North Carolina.

Average scores

1. As Figure 9 indicates, in all five geographical areas, non-LEP students far outperformed their LEP counterparts. The performance gap in terms of average score was roughly equivalent across all states, ranging from 23 to 38 points on the 500-point scale.
2. While non-LEP students on average scored above the *basic* level, LEP students' scores were *below the basic* level.
3. Similar to the nation as a whole, former LEP students in California outperformed their LEP counterparts. Former LEP students had the same scores as non-LEP students in California.

Figure 9. Average achievement scores of 8th graders in reading by English-language proficiency and state, NAEP 2005



Notes: Average achievement scores in reading are reported on a 0–500 scale. Scores of former LEP students were available only for the nation overall and for California.

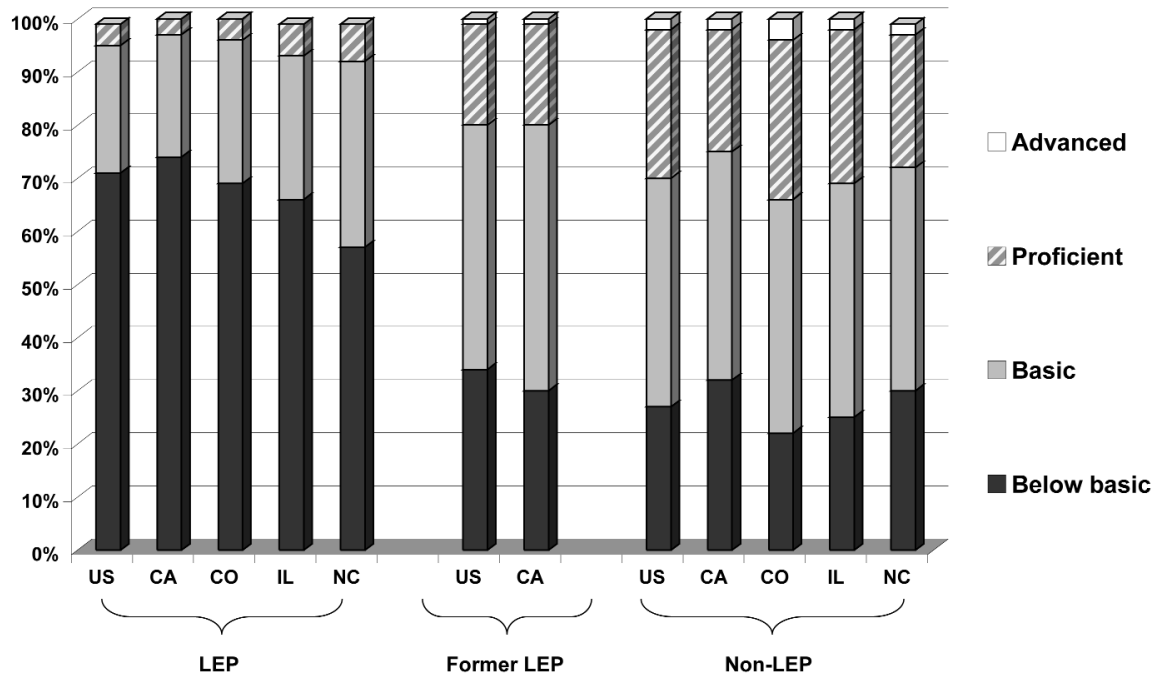
Source: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 Reading Assessment.

- On average, students did not pass the proficiency benchmark in reading, regardless of their LEP status.

Achievement level

- Figure 10 reveals that practically no LEP students achieved the *advanced* level in reading. The percent of those who reached the *proficiency* level was also not very high, ranging from about 3 percent in California to 7 percent in North Carolina (for more details, see Appendix D).
- Nationally, 71 percent of LEP students taking the NAEP scored at the *below basic* level in reading. Scores across the four study states suggested that LEP students are far from meeting national proficiency standards.
- At the same time, former LEP students at the national level achieved the *advanced* and *proficient* levels at higher rates than their LEP counterparts. In California, the percent of former LEP 8th graders who scored at the *proficient* level is significantly higher than of that of the LEP students and not significantly different from that of the non-LEP students.

Figure 10. Percentage of 8th graders scoring at four achievement levels in reading, NAEP 2005



Notes: Test scores of former LEP students were available only for the nation overall and for California.

Source: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 Reading Assessment.

Math Assessment of 8th Graders

The 2005 NAEP Mathematics Framework focuses on mathematical content and complexity:

Content: 1) number properties and operations; 2) measurement; 3) geometry; 4) data analysis and probability; and 5) algebra.

Complexity: 1) math ability (conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, and problem solving); and 2) mathematical power (reasoning, connections, and communication).²⁰

The NAEP math test measures more than just a student's ability to manipulate numbers. The mathematical power section relies heavily on communication, ability to make connections, and reasoning capacity, which would be included in the broad definition of literacy described in Chapter I. Linguistic components of this section of the test affect children who are not English literate (Abedi and Lord 2001), thus analysis of the NAEP math test does offer another avenue for measuring literacy.

The type and difficulty of questions on the NAEP math test vary by grade. The scale for the 2005 math assessment of 8th graders ranges from 0 to 500, with the cutoff for the *basic* level set at 262, *proficient* at 299, and *advanced* at 333.²¹

Performance of 8th Graders on the Math Test

Figure 11 indicates that while both LEP and non-LEP groups are gaining in math scores over time, the gap has not narrowed. Former LEP students did much better than their LEP counterparts on the math test and their scores were only slightly lower than those of non-LEP students.

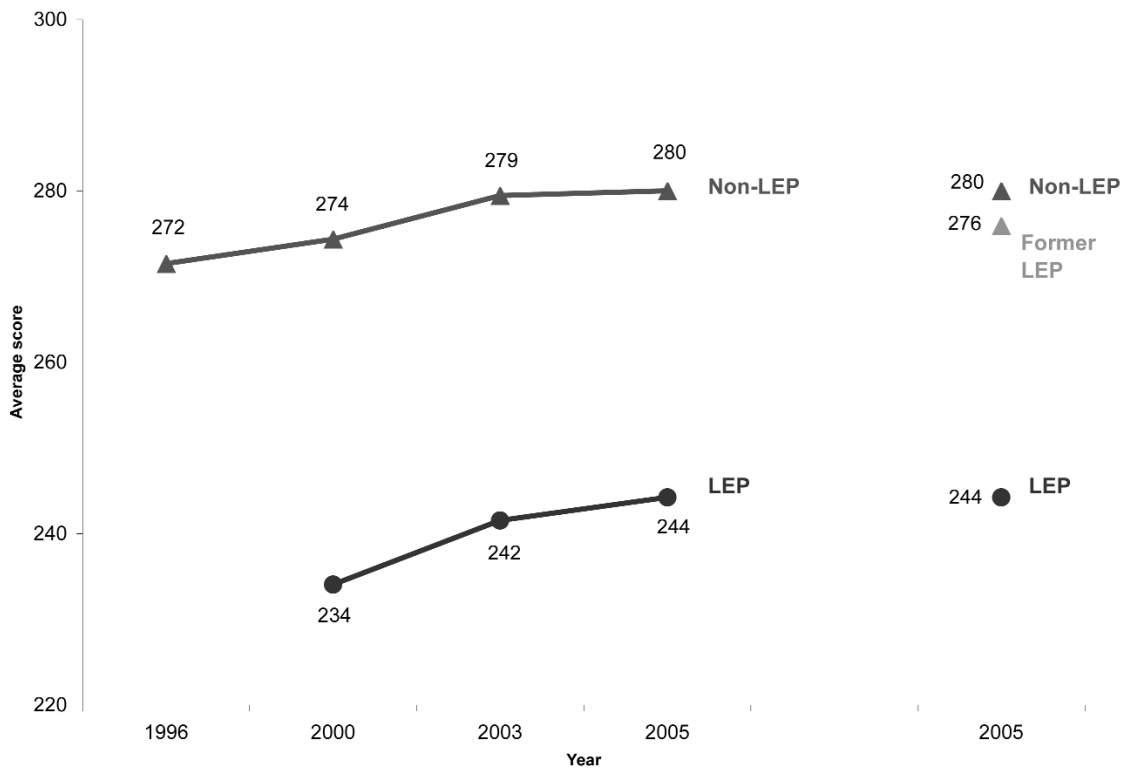
Average scores

1. As Figure 12 indicates, non-LEP students far outperformed their LEP counterparts. The performance gap was roughly equal across all four study states, ranging from 31 points in North Carolina to 37 in Colorado.
2. While non-LEP students on average scored above the basic level, LEP students trailed far below the basic level. California's LEP students had the lowest average score in math (241 points), whereas LEP students from North Carolina had the highest average score (252).
3. Former LEP students in California outperformed their LEP counterparts (similar to the trends in the nation as a whole) and had slightly higher but not statistically different scores from non-LEP students.

20. See the NAEP Mathematics Assessment Measure Web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/whatmeasure.asp>.

21. For proficiency cutoff points, see <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2005/2006453.pdf>.

Figure 11. Average achievement scores of 8th graders in math by English-language proficiency: NAEP, 1996–2005



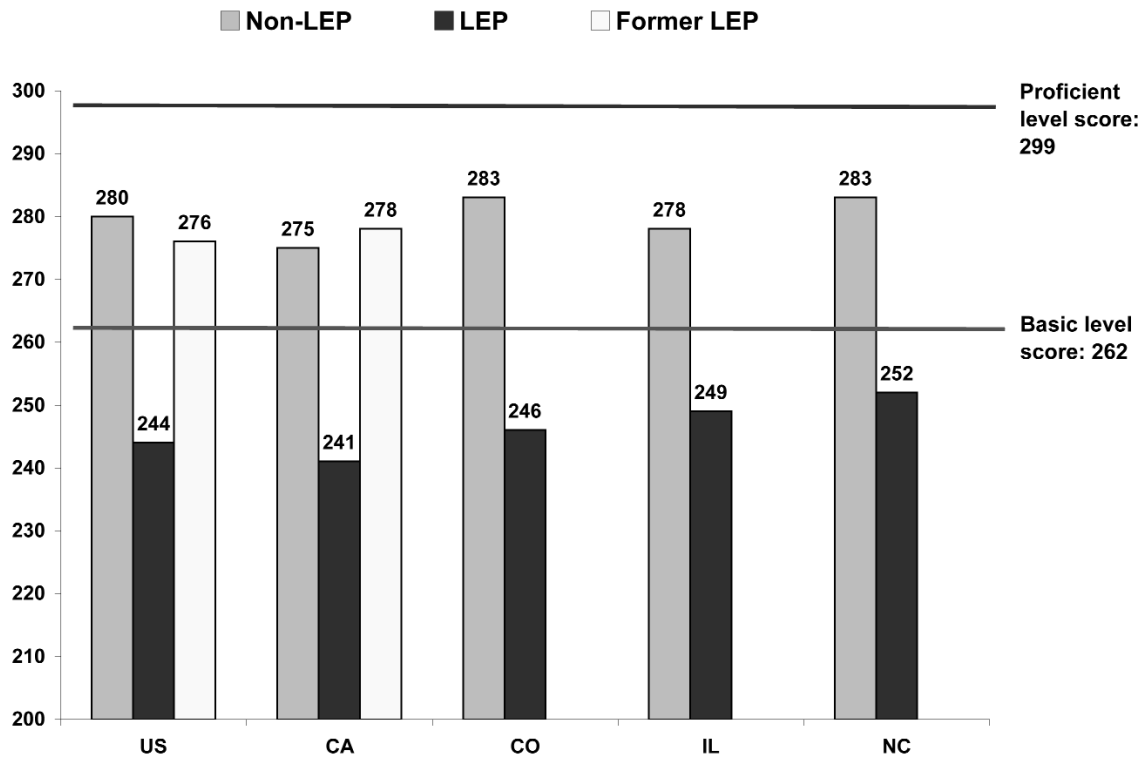
Source: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 Mathematics Assessment.

4. On average, students did not achieve proficiency in math, regardless of their language proficiency.

Achievement level

1. As Figure 13 indicates, LEP students performed slightly better in math than reading in terms of their achievement level. The percentage of those who reached *proficiency* in math was still not high, though: about 7 percent in North Carolina, 6 percent in Illinois, 5 percent in the nation overall, and 4 percent in Colorado and in California (see Appendix E).
2. Of LEP adolescents taking the NAEP, 71 percent scored *below basic* nationwide. The share of students scoring *below basic* was higher in California (74 percent) and lower in North Carolina (58 percent). The percentages of students scoring at the *below basic* level in Colorado and Illinois were not significantly different from those of the nation.
3. Former LEP students nationwide and in California achieved the *advanced* and *proficient* levels at significantly higher rates than their LEP counterparts. At the same time, their scores at either level of proficiency were not significantly different from those of the non-LEP students.

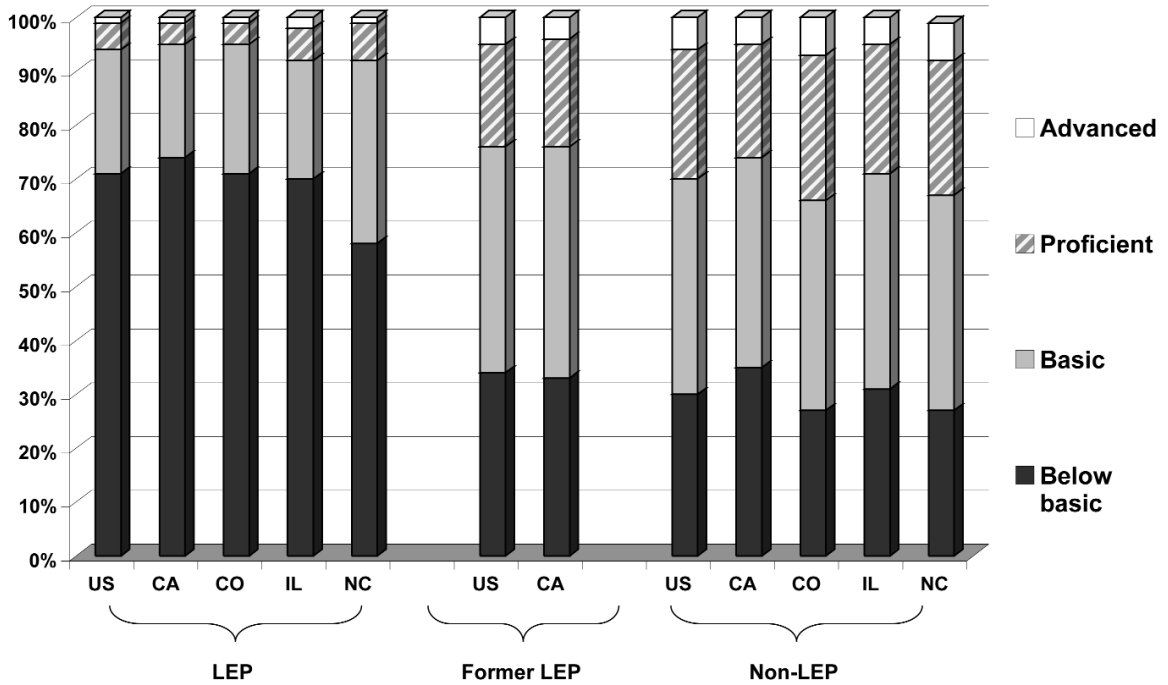
Figure 12. Average achievement scores of 8th graders in mathematics by English-language proficiency and state, NAEP 2005



Notes: Average achievement scores in math are reported on a 0–500 scale. Scores of former LEP students were available only for the nation overall and for California.

Source: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 Mathematics Assessment.

Figure 13. Percentage of 8th graders scoring at four achievement levels in mathematics, NAEP 2005



Notes: Scores of former LEP students were available only for the nation overall and for California.
Source: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 Mathematics Assessment.

CHAPTER IV

ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FROM THE STATE REPORT CARDS

NCLB requires states to adopt standards-based accountability systems that set challenging content and performance standards for all students. Furthermore, Title III of the NCLB Act requires states to include LEP students in the state accountability systems and monitor their progress in acquiring academic knowledge. States must establish goals for performance on the assessment and track performance for all students and subgroups of students (i.e., economically disadvantaged, major racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and LEP students).

Every year, states have to report to the US Department of Education whether their schools and the state itself make adequate yearly progress (AYP). The main factors determining AYP are annual academic performance targets in reading and math that the schools, districts, and the state must reach to be on track for 100 percent proficiency by 2014. To comply with NCLB requirements, states are restructuring their assessment system by developing and expanding the content and structure of their tests and accountability system to include groups that were not previously monitored.

States have wide discretion in how they accomplish this task. As a result, the tests themselves and proficiency levels vary dramatically, posing a problem for researchers interested in comparing how students from different states are faring on the achievement tests (McCombs et al. 2004). As we stated earlier, data from the various states are not equivalent and cannot be compared. The best approach in studying how students are doing academically is to compare their progress against each state's own established targets.

State Report Cards

As required by NCLB, states have to report the scores on achievement tests for at least three levels—basic, proficient, and advanced. The proficient level is a benchmark for passing the test and making adequate progress. We use 2005 data from the state accountability assessments, called Report Cards, to examine the results in mathematics and reading/language arts of LEP and non-LEP students. The report cards are based on the 2005 results of the California Standards Tests (CST), Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), and North Carolina's End-of-Grade test (EOG). (For a further description of the format and content of these tests, refer to Appendix A.)

Reading and Math Assessment of 8th Graders

Table 3 shows the percentage of students by English-proficiency level who scored at or above the *proficient* level in reading and math as reported by the four study states. As discussed above, although state-to-state comparisons are limited in their value, researchers can readily make LEP to non-LEP comparisons within each state. Since state tests are given to nearly all students rather than a sample, state gaps between LEP and non-LEP students are definitive rather than suggestive, an important difference between state testing and NAEP data.

Table 3. Percentage of 8th graders scoring at or above *proficient* achievement level by reported ELL/LEP status in four states, 2005 State Report Cards

	Reading/ English Language Arts	Mathematics
California		
All students	39	36
English only	47	36
Initially Fluent English proficient	50	41
Redesignated Fluent English proficient	42	36
English Learner	6	10
Colorado		
All students	64	44
English only	69	48
Fluent English proficient	48	28
Non-English proficient	4	5
Limited English proficient	11	8
Illinois		
All students	73	54
Limited English proficient	35	26
North Carolina		
All Students	88	84
Not limited English proficient	89	85
Limited English proficient	53	62

Sources: California's Report Card results are available at: <http://star.cde.ca.gov/star2005/viewreport.asp>; Colorado's Report Card results are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/csap_summary.html; and North Carolina's Report Card results are available at: <http://webprod1.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getsearchcriteria.aspx>; <http://disag.ncpublicschools.org/2005/>.

California

Overall, 39 percent of 8th grade students scored at or above the proficient level on the CST English/language arts assessment and 36 percent scored at this level on the math assessment. English-language learners scored much lower than their fluent English peers on both tests.

California breaks its non-ELL students into three groups. There are *English only* students, who are native English speakers; *initially fluent English* speakers who are native speakers of another language but who were assessed to be English proficient at the time of enrollment in school; and *redesignated fluent English* speakers who are essentially former EL students, that is, students who reached adequate English proficiency after receiving language instruction services in a school.

The results of *Initially Fluent English* speakers are notable: They outperformed all other groups—achieving 50 percent proficiency on the English/language arts test, and 41 percent proficiency on math. They were followed by *English only* speakers and former EL students.

The gap between English learners and all students was smaller in math in part because of higher ELL proficiency scores in math than in reading (10 versus 6 percent).

Colorado

Colorado has four categories of language proficiency. Students in two of them—*English only* and *fluent English proficient (FEP)*—have mastered the English language. Fluent English proficient are native speakers of another language who have passed the required level of English proficiency set by the state of Colorado either during the initial language assessment or after completing a language instructional program. Students in the other two categories—*non-English proficient (NEP)* and *LEP*—are, to varying degrees, still learning English.

Test scores show that about 64 percent of all 8th grade students met or exceeded the state standards in reading but only 44 percent did so in math. In general, ELL students did not do as well as fluent English students, with *NEP* students scoring the lowest of all four groups (4 percent in reading and 5 percent in math), and *English only* students scoring the highest (69 percent in reading and 48 percent in math). *LEP* students achieved slightly better results than *NEP* students but scored significantly lower than their *FEP* counterparts. With the exception of *NEP* 8th graders, all other groups did better in reading than in math assessments.

Illinois

Unlike other states, Illinois provides limited information on the assessment results by LEP status. The data are reported only for all students and for LEP students.

Overall, 73 and 54 percent of 8th graders scored at or above proficient level in reading and math, respectively. The shares of LEP students meeting and exceeding standards were substantially lower: Only 35 percent of LEP 8th graders scored at a proficient and above level in reading; 26 percent did so in math.

North Carolina

Most 8th graders in North Carolina reached the proficient or higher level on the reading comprehension (88 percent) and math (84 percent) end-of-grade assessment. The shares among non-LEP students who met or exceeded expectations were essentially similar. In contrast, about two-thirds (62 percent) of students with limited-English proficiency scored proficient or above on the math exam. The share of LEP students deemed to be proficient in the reading assessment was lower (53 percent).

As states vary in their testing choices and processes for identifying, educating, and including ELL students in standardized tests, these ranges do not necessarily indicate a more successful model in one state than another, nor do they imply more or less stringent standards. What these performance measures do indicate, however, is that states and districts face large challenges under NCLB, which requires that all LEP children be proficient in reading and math by 2014.

CHAPTER V

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to US Department of Education figures, there were about 5.1 million LEP students in US schools in 2005. The LEP population is large in both absolute and relative terms and is expected to increase as an anticipated 14 million immigrants come to the United States in this decade (Fix and Passel 2003). Our analysis of the NAEP and State Report Cards indicates that the LEP population is likely to face significant difficulties in achieving the high academic standards required by NCLB.

In this concluding chapter, we raise a number of analytical, methodological, and policy-related questions that emerge from our report and suggest promising topics for future research.

Do Census data accurately capture the LEP population?

There is an urgent need to examine how well data available through the US Census Bureau (from the decennial Census and the American Community Survey [ACS]) capture the LEP population.²² As we noted earlier, the Census-based definition of LEP has an analytical advantage over other sources of data because it provides comparability over time and place. This advantage means that researchers are likely to use Census data for their analyses. Additionally, data from the Census Bureau on the number of LEP students have been used to determine the allocation of the majority of federal Title III grants, which target the development of LEP and migrant children. A recent report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) finds that the number of LEP students from the administrative data reported by states do not always match those based on ACS data. This data inconsistency leads to differences in how much funding states would receive depending on the data source used (state administrative or ACS).

22. Beginning in 2004, the American Community Survey was used for this purpose, but this annual population survey keeps the same definition of LEP as the Census.

23. GAO, *Education's Data Improvement Efforts Could Strengthen the Basis for Distributing Title III Funds*, GAO-07-140 (Washington, DC: December 2006). Available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07140.pdf>.

We suggest three areas for future investigation:

- Census data are either self-reported or proxy-reported (i.e., reported by a person who filled out the Census questionnaire). In other words, Census data provide no formal way to determine how well people *actually* speak English compared to their reports. The Census Bureau conducted a study in the early 1980s that found a strong correlation between scores on language proficiency tests and responses to the Census question on speaking ability (Department of Education as cited in Kominski 1989). However, the study is dated, and we have no way of knowing how applicable it is to today's population of LEP students.
- The Census only measures spoken English proficiency, which may not capture other aspects of language mastery such as listening and comprehension, reading, and writing. These areas are standard forms of assessment on any state language proficiency test. Research indicates that students may be able to speak English but not read or write it well. As Van Hook and Fix (2000) argue, Census data may substantially underestimate the language challenges that LEP students face, since there is a three- to five-year gap between oral language proficiency and the full acquisition of academic English skills required for success in secondary schools.
- In this report we have followed the Department of Education in its use of Census data by defining students who are "limited English proficient" as those who reported speaking a language other than English at home *and* speaking English less than "very well." However, this breakdown may be problematic. Are those who report that they speak English "well" closer in ability to those who said "very well" or to those who said "not well" or "not at all"? Another study by the US Census Bureau (as cited by Kominski 1989) found that respondents who reported speaking English "very well" and "well" also reported higher levels of English language reading and writing than those who said they spoke English "not well" or "not at all." Almost all respondents who claimed they spoke English "very well" or "well" said that they could read and write in English.

Recommendation: Studies of the correlation between reported Census responses to questions that bear on English-language proficiency and actual speaking ability should be updated with a special focus on the student population. They should directly address whether those children who are reported to speak English "well" should be classified as LEP or whether they are in fact closer in ability to those people who speak "very well." Further research should explore whether language responses on population surveys are good proxies for reading and writing ability, since new language proficiency standards in US schools place greater emphasis on these skills.²⁴

24. The American Community Survey (ACS), introduced to replace the long form of the decennial Census as of 2010, collects data from a sample of three million households each year. It provides a wealth of information that has not been available on a more or less current basis. With regard to the LEP population, ACS has essentially replicated the decennial Census questions, so our recommendations are pertinent to the analysis of ACS data.

How do varying state exclusion rates of ELL students affect NAEP results?

Our analyses suggest that states vary in their policies and practices regarding LEP student exclusion from the NAEP, which may have an impact on reported results.

Recommendation: At a minimum, concerns about exclusion practices suggest that future research should systematically examine state exclusion policies and practices regarding LEP students and determine whether and to what degree they influence test results.

What can we learn by looking at the literacy levels of former LEP students?

Our analyses demonstrate a persistent gap in the math and reading results between LEP and non-LEP students. One promising area of research may be to examine how well former LEP students are doing compared to monolingual English students and what accounts for their comparatively strong outcomes on standardized test.

Recommendation: Currently, the NAEP only provides data on former LEP students for a limited number of states, and thus there is no way to conduct a cross-state analysis comparing their progress with that of English-only students. Title III reports submitted by states contain information on how well former Title-III LEP students are doing, so this type of information is already collected. It may make sense to explore adding a representative sample of former LEP students to the NAEP data for all states.

How do states vary in their testing and monitoring practices for ELL students whose parents opt out of language instruction services?

NCLB stipulates that parents can choose to remove their LEP children from language instruction programs. These students, however, are typically still considered ELLs and are provided with extra help, tutoring, and accommodations on state assessments. Schools also assess the students' annual progress in learning English, and school officials report the results to students and parents.

Recommendation: We are not aware of any studies that closely examine state variation in testing and monitoring ELL students whose parents opt out of language instruction, nor do we know of any that examine how widespread opting out is. Future research should thoroughly examine state policies and practices regarding the monitoring of students who opt out. It might also explore why parents opt out, how many of them do it, and the impact that declining services has on a child's educational progress.

What research opportunities do multi-state English proficiency tests, which are currently being developed, offer for analyzing ELL outcomes?

As we point out in the report, direct state-to-state comparisons of ELL students' progress in learning English are very limited. However, researchers may soon be able to make more meaningful state-by-state comparisons because many states have entered multi-state consortia that will share proficiency tests. For example, 15 states in one of the consortia—World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)—have combined efforts to develop an English-language proficiency test that would meet the requirements of NCLB and may enable cross-state comparisons.²⁵ The test was administered for the first time in Spring 2005 in three states; with other states adopting it by 2006–2007.

Recommendation: Once standardized assessments are in place, there are several cross-state analyses that would be very useful, depending on the amount of information available about students, including: (1) the level of English proficiency with which ELL students begin school; (2) the average length of time that students are designated as ELLs; and (3) the rate of progress that states make in improving English proficiency for ELLs over time.

More broadly, following a recent report to Carnegie Corporation on ELL adolescent literacy, we recommend:

- *state adoption of a common definition of LEP status;*
- *expanded study of ELL performance in schools, disaggregating results in ways that capture the heterogeneity of the population (by generation, time in the United States, interrupted schooling, literacy in the native language, e.g.); and*
- *increased support for longitudinal studies that capture the differing trajectories of ELLs and former ELLs in US schools (Short and Fitzsimmons 2007).*

25. The current 15 WIDA partner states are Alabama, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

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APPENDIX A

STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING ELLS

In addition to profiling the ELL population and student performance on the NAEP and state standardized tests, we examined four areas of state policy regarding the education of adolescent ELLs. They are: (1) approaches to identifying ELLs and assessing their progress in learning English; (2) policies governing the language instruction programs provided to ELLs; (3) approaches to assessing ELLs' academic or content-based knowledge; and (4) the accommodations offered to ELLs taking state achievement tests. Flowchart A.1 documents the process states use to identify, serve, and assess LEP students.²⁶ Again, we use our four study states (California, Colorado, Illinois, and North Carolina) as the basis for our analysis.

1. Identifying the ELL Population

As this section will demonstrate, states use different definitions of the ELL/LEP population, administer different language proficiency tests, and set different thresholds of language proficiency. For consistency, we use the same definitions that each of the states currently use. Flowchart A.1 shows a general model of how states identify and track ELLs' progress in learning English and academic content.

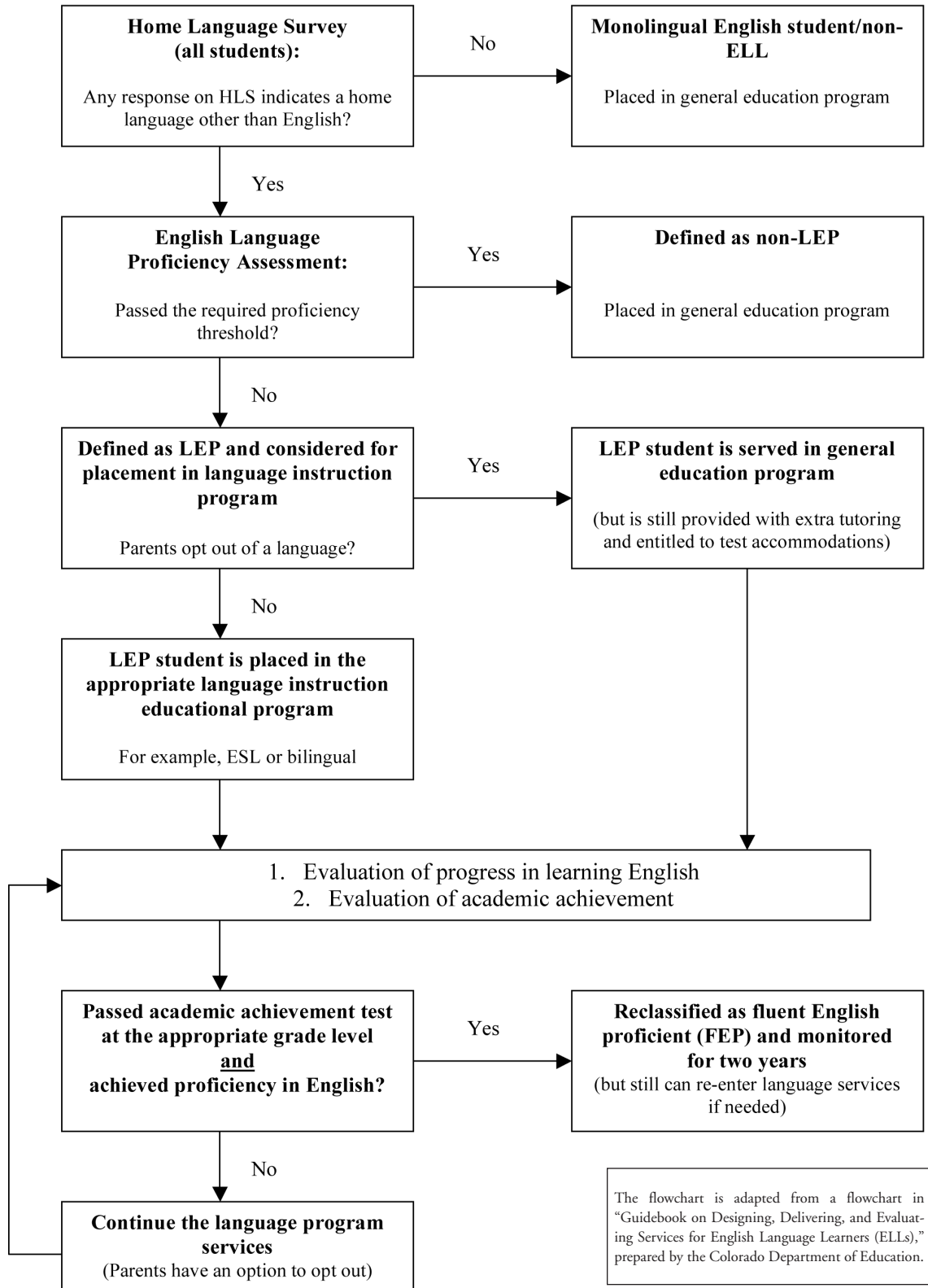
Home language survey

In all four states, upon initial registration at school, each student has to have his or her parent/guardian complete a Home Language Survey (HLS). The survey form is usually provided in the languages most frequently spoken in the local community. The survey's objective is to find out if there is a language other than English used in the student's home, the student's first language, and whether the student speaks a language other than English.

If the answer to any question on the home language survey is "a language other than English," the student must take a language proficiency test at initial enrollment.²⁷ The test usually assesses the student's

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26. The flowchart is adapted from a flowchart in "Guidebook on Designing, Delivering, and Evaluating Services for English Language Learners (ELLs)" prepared by the Colorado Department of Education. The flowchart describes the process of identification, English language assessment, and program placement of ELL students in our four states.
 27. However, the presence of a language other than English does not automatically signify that the student is not a competent and proficient speaker of English. If a student takes an assessment test and demonstrates an adequate level of proficiency (determined by the test thresholds), then a student is considered to be fluent English proficient (or non-LEP) and placed in a general education program.

Flowchart A.1: Process to identify, serve, test, and reclassify ELL students



level of proficiency in a number of domains. The same tests may be used by districts that receive NCLB's Title III funding, which targets ELL and immigrant children, to assess the English-language gains of ELL students.

If a parent refuses to allow his or her child to take the language proficiency test, or if the student refuses to be administered part or all of the tests, the decision not to participate must be documented. The school has to make every effort to explain to the family and the child the consequences of refusal (e.g., becoming ineligible for English as a Second Language [ESL] programs and/or test taking with accommodations).

Initial and subsequent annual assessment of English-language proficiency of ELL students

Our four study states use different tests to assess the English-language proficiency of their ELL students. The tests vary in the content and proficiency thresholds. In addition to the proficiency tests, states and school districts may implement other methods such as teacher evaluations.

NCLB requires that ELL students make progress toward English proficiency. At the state level, this progress must include annual increases in the number or percentage of students 1) making progress in learning English and 2) attaining English proficiency by the end of each school year (US Department of Education 2005). The results of the English-language proficiency tests are used to measure progress toward these goals.

From LEP to FEP

LEP students must be evaluated annually to assess their academic achievements as well as progress in learning English and whether they have become English proficient. Students are reclassified from LEP to fluent English proficient (FEP) status once they attain specific English proficiency standards and score at the appropriate grade level in core academic subjects.²⁸ Once students have exited a language program, their academic progress is monitored for the following two years (although they may receive additional assistance if they have difficulties with their academic subjects).

Below, we describe state-specific policies and practices related to LEP identification and assessment.

California²⁹

California requires that districts and schools administer the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to identify LEP students, determine their level of English proficiency, and evaluate their annual progress in learning English. This test must be given to K-12 students whose primary language is not English.

There are five levels of proficiency: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. Each CELDT report provides a scale score and proficiency level for each skill area tested (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the student's overall English proficiency level.³⁰

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28. Students have to pass both requirements (academic and English proficiency) to make sure that the former LEP students are not placed into a general academic setting if they are not prepared for it.
 29. CELDT Assistance Packet for School Districts/Schools. February 2006. Available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/assistancepkt.asp>.
 30. The skill area scale scores differ not only by skill area but also by grade (K, grade 1, grade 2, grades 3–5, grades 6–8, grades 9–12).

The overall English proficiency score is calculated by weighting the skill area scale scores: 50 percent listening and speaking, 25 percent reading, and 25 percent writing.³¹ Students are classified as English learners (EL) when their scores are below early advanced *or* when their overall scores are at least early advanced but one or more of the skill area scores falls below intermediate.

School districts have to use annual CELDT results as one of four criteria for considering the reclassification of English learners to fluent English proficient (FEP). Additional factors include academic achievement, teacher evaluations, and parent opinions and consultation.

FEP students are those whose primary language is not English and who have met the district criteria for English proficiency. The FEP category includes students who were identified as FEP on initial identification and students who were reclassified from EL status.

Colorado³²

Since the spring of 2006, all districts have had to adopt a single, state-approved language-proficiency assessment called CELA (Colorado English Language Assessment).³³ CELA replaces three different tests that school districts used to measure their students' English-language proficiency.

Based on the results of the assessment, each ELL student is identified as non-English proficient (NEP), limited English proficient (LEP), or Fluent English Proficient (FEP). Further program placement and instructional decisions are based on the student's English-language proficiency designation.

Illinois

In the 2005–2006 school year, Illinois introduced new statewide proficiency and placement tests: ACCESS Screening (also known as WIDA ACCESS Placement test) and ACCESS for ELLs (which is used to determine proficiency progress after a student is designated LEP). The ACCESS for ELLs test targets academic and social language proficiency rather than general social English, the focus of the English-language proficiency tests used by the state in the past.

The ACCESS tests were created through a consortium of states called World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment or WIDA, which was funded after the passage of NCLB to promote the creation of new English proficiency tests. Illinois is one of the 15 current WIDA state partners. ACCESS for ELLs will be the instrument used in these states to measure annual gains in English-language proficiency of their ELL students. Test results will determine whether the states, including Illinois, have met NCLB requirements to improve the English proficiency of LEP students.³⁴

31. Students in Kindergarten and first grade are assessed only in listening and speaking. No weighting is necessary for their scores.

32. "Guidebook on Designing, Delivering, and Evaluating Services for English Language Learners (ELLs)," Colorado Department of Education, 2002.

33. "CELA Updates," Colorado Department of Education. Available at http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/download/CELA/CELAupdates.pdf.

34. Since all students must be assessed for academic achievement, the WIDA consortium states are also developing a system to assess ELL students' progress in standardized tests. In most states, the results of this assessment—Academic ACCESS—will be reported to determine AYP for accountability purposes. For more information, refer to <http://www.wida.us/>.

North Carolina³⁵

North Carolina uses only one test to initially assess ELL students and monitor their progress in learning English: The IDEA Proficiency Test (or IPT).

The IPT is administered to all language minority students at initial enrollment and annually thereafter to all students identified as LEP. The IPT annual scores are used to demonstrate progress and attainment of language proficiency under NCLB. There are six proficiency levels identified by the IPT: novice low, novice high, intermediate low, intermediate high, advanced, and superior.

A LEP student is “any student whose native or home language is a language other than English who scores below superior in at least one domain of the IPT. Most LEP students are served in ESL or other language programs.”³⁶

When a LEP student scores superior in all domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of the language proficiency test, the student is no longer considered LEP for funding or testing accommodations. However, the school can choose to continue offering language instruction services to the student.

2. Language Instruction Programs

Once a school identifies a LEP student through a language-proficiency test, the student is eligible to enroll in a language instruction program offered by the school. A list of allowable language instruction programs is approved by the state; school districts decide which ones they will offer.

NCLB’s Title III requires that districts develop and implement language instruction programs for early childhood, elementary, and secondary school programs based on methods and approaches that rely on scientific evidence and are found to be effective in teaching ELL students.

There are two broad program models for ELLs—bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL). Within these categories, a variety of approaches are used to teach English language skills and standards-based content. Bilingual education programs utilize varying degrees of native-language instruction while the student develops English-language proficiency. ESL programs provide instruction using English as a medium. According to the US Department of Education (2005), our four study states offer a wide range of language instruction programs to ELLs (see Table A.1).³⁷

Opting out of the language program

Where there is more than one option, parents in each of our four study states can choose the language instruction program for their children. They can also refuse to enroll their children in any program. If a parent opts out of all language instruction programs, the student is placed in a regular classroom but is still considered as LEP/ELL. Usually these students receive extra tutoring in the classroom and are

35. Frequently Asked Questions—IDEA English Language Proficiency Test (IPT). Available online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/policyoperations/faqiptyjanuary2005.pdf>. For more information on the structure of the IPT test, see <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/esl/scos/eld/eld.pdf>.

36. North Carolina Department of Education Web site <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/esl/faq/>.

37. See page 25 of the US Department of Education’s *Biennial Report to Congress* for a brief explanation of types of language instruction programs. Available at <http://www.nclta.gwu.edu/oela/biennial05/>.

Table A.1: Types of language instruction educational programs used for teaching ELL students

Language instruction educational program	CA	CO	IL	NC
Two-way immersion	X		X	
Heritage language		X		X
Transitional bilingual	X	X	X	X
Dual language		X	X	X
Sheltered English instruction		X	X	X
Structured English immersion	X			X
Specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE)	X	X		X
Content-based ESL		X	X	
Pull-out ESL		X	X	
Development bilingual			X	
Other English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Language Development (ELD) programs	X		X	X

entitled to accommodations on the state achievement tests. They must also be tested annually to evaluate their progress in learning English.

ELL enrollment by type of language instruction program

California

EL students made up a quarter of all student enrollment. Table A.2 shows types of instructional services California's EL students were receiving in 2004–2005. Out of 1.6 million EL students, 2.4 percent were not receiving any language instructional services during the 2004–2005 school year.

Illinois

Illinois offers two broad kinds of language-instruction programs:

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) refers to a full- or part-time program of instruction employing English and the students' home language. TBE is required of schools with 20 or more students with the same non-English language classification, including Kindergarten.

Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) refers to a program required of schools with 1–19 LEP students of the same non-English language background, offering instruction in English and in the native language to the extent necessary based on an individual student assessment.

Table A.3 shows the number of LEP students in Illinois receiving language instructional services by grade in 2005. Of all LEP students, 78 percent were enrolled in TBE programs, 21 percent were in TPI programs, and less than 1 percent each were in dual language or newcomer services.

Table A.2: Language instruction educational programs received by EL students in California, 2004–2005

	ELs Receiving English Language Development (ELD) Services	ELs Receiving ELD and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)	ELs Receiving ELD and SDAIE with Primary Language (L1) Support	ELs Receiving ELD and Academic Subjects through the Primary Language (L1)	ELs Receiving Other EL Instructional Services	ELs not Receiving any EL Instructional Services	Total ELs
Statewide Totals	174,406	804,202	337,031	111,920	125,359	38,607	1,591,525

Source: California Department of Education, *DataQuest*, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

For description of the language services, see: http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_EIPart2b.asp.

Table A.3: Number of LEP students enrolled in language program, Illinois, FY 2004–2005

	Type of Program				Total
	Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)	Dual Language	Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)	Newcomer	
Total	121,222	1,135	33,364	629	156,350

Source: Illinois State Board of Education, Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division (2006).

North Carolina

No information on the types of language-instruction programs or their relative usage by ELL students was available from the North Carolina State Board of Education at the time of the writing of this report.

Colorado

The Colorado Department of Education provided the following breakdown of its LEP students by type of language-instruction program: 60,410 students were enrolled in ESL programs and 31,898 were enrolled in bilingual programs in 2005.

3. Assessing Academic Knowledge of ELL Students

NCLB requires that states adopt challenging academic and content performance standards and standards-based achievement tests that accurately measure student performance. ELLs present a unique challenge since schools are often held accountable for students' academic performance before the students are proficient in English.

After a certain period of being enrolled in school and receiving language instruction services, students identified as LEP have to take an English version of the state achievement tests in English and math.

Table A.4 provides a list of academic achievement tests administered by our four study states. The results of these tests are used by states to calculate their progress toward 100 percent proficiency in math and reading by 2014 as required by NCLB.

As Table A.4 demonstrates, policies regarding when and how to assess the academic knowledge of ELL students vary significantly across our study states. English-language learners in California have only one year until they are tested in English to assess reading and math. In contrast, their counterparts in Colorado receive English tests in math and reading after three years of being in school. There are many reasons why ELL students in California are *reported* to be doing worse in meeting state standards of academic knowledge than their counterparts in the other states (see Table 3 in Chapter IV). One reason *may* be a comparatively early assessment.

4. Accommodations Offered to ELL Students Taking State Achievement Tests

Each study state authorizes a set of accommodations for LEP students taking state achievement tests. An accommodation is a change made to the assessment procedures intended to provide a student with access to information and an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills without affecting the reliability or validity of the assessment. Accommodations, however, should not change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. Also, students who are ELLs may be provided certain test accommodations (e.g., a translation glossary or word list) only if these aids are *regularly* used in the classroom so that accommodations are consistent with instructional practice.

Accommodations fall into four general types (US Department of Education 2005):

1. Presentation (e.g., read test aloud to students, linguistic modification of test directions);
2. Response (e.g., responses in native language, answers dictated);
3. Setting (e.g., separate room for test taking); and
4. Time/Scheduling (e.g., extra time, breaks during testing).

States provide school districts with a list of approved accommodations for each subject tested, but it is up to the districts and schools to select which accommodations they provide to their students. This discretion means that a student's access to accommodations may vary widely by school and district.

Table A.4: List of standardized academic achievement tests administered by states

California	
CST	California uses the California Standards Test (CST) to measure progress in reading/English language arts and math in grades 2–11, science in grades 5 and 9-11, and history/social science in grades 8, 10, and 11. The California Standards Test (CST) was developed for California public schools to assess state-adopted content standards. The CST is given at specific grade levels or for specific courses.
<i>Assessing ELLs</i>	ELL students' math and reading knowledge is assessed in English (using the CST) during the first year of their enrollment in a school. However, the results of their testing are not counted for NCLB math and reading proficiency purposes until these students have been enrolled for at least 12 months. Spanish-speaking English learners who have been enrolled for less than 12 months or who receive instruction in Spanish regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States, must take the designated primary language test (DPLT), currently the Aprenda 3. Standards-Based Tests in Spanish for reading/language arts and math are currently being developed for grades 2 through 4. The tests are to replace the DPLT. In addition, all students whose primary language is not English must take the California Language Development Test within 30 calendar days after they are enrolled in California public schools. Then, ELs must take the CELDT test every year until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient.
Colorado	
CSAP	The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) test is the primary assessment tool used to ensure that the state of Colorado is in compliance with NCLB requirements. Students in grades 3-10 are tested in reading, writing, and math and those in grades 5, 8, and 10 are also tested in sciences.
<i>Assessing ELLs</i>	All students must attempt to take the CSAP. If a student in 3 rd or 4 th grade has been in an English-language proficiency program for less than three years, the student may be able to take a Spanish version of the reading and writing assessment; in grades 5-10, the school district must make appropriate accommodations so that the test is comprehensible to the student. A student who has been enrolled in an English-proficiency program for three years or more must take an English version of the CSAP, with or without accommodations. ³⁸
Illinois	
ISAT	The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is administered to students in grades 3-8. It measures individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards in reading, mathematics, and science.
<i>Assessing ELLs</i>	Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) is administered to students who have been in state-approved transitional bilingual and transitional instruction programs for up to five years. ³⁹ Originally designed as a language proficiency test, Illinois now uses IMAGE to measure ELLs' math and reading progress relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. ⁴⁰ This test is given to students in grades 3-8 and grade 11.

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38. Colorado Department of Education, "2005–2006 CSAP Procedures Manual," http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/manuals/2006/2005_2006_Proc_Man.pdf.
39. Illinois State of Education, "Guide to the 2005 IMAGE Assessment," http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/pdfs/image_interpretive_guide_05.pdf.
40. Ibid., "Student Assessment: Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English," <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/image.htm>.

Table A.4: (continued)

North Carolina	
EOG 3-8	North Carolina has two end-of-grade tests that it administers to grades 3-8: North Carolina End-of-Grade Reading Comprehension Tests and the North Carolina End-of-Grade Mathematics Tests. North Carolina also tests reading and mathematics in grade 10 and science in grades 5 and 8. ⁴¹
<i>Assessing ELLs</i>	Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, North Carolina implemented the North Carolina Checklist of Academic Standards (NCCLAS) to assess the academic progress of LEP students. ⁴² Students scoring below the superior level on all domains of the North Carolina IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) are designated as LEP. LEP students who have scored below intermediate high in the reading portion of the IPT during their first two years in US schools may take the NCCLAS reading and math assessment in grades 3-8 and 10. For students scoring below superior in the writing portion of the IPT during their first two years in US schools, the NCCLAS may be administered for writing in grades 4, 7, and 10 and for math in grades 3-8 and 10.

Table A.5: Accommodations provided to LEP students taking state achievement tests

California	<p>Presentation: directions read aloud or explained; use of glossaries in native language; use of glossaries in English</p> <p>Setting: small-group or individual administration; separate room administration</p> <p>Time/scheduling: breaks during testing</p>
Colorado	<p>Presentation: assessment in the native language; addition of visual supports; linguistic modification of test directions; oral directions in the native language; use of dictionaries; use of glossaries in native language</p> <p>Response: answers dictated</p> <p>Setting: small-group or individual administration; separate room administration</p> <p>Time/scheduling: extra assessment time</p>
Illinois	<p>Presentation: text changes in vocabulary; modification of linguistic complexity; addition of visual supports; linguistic modification of test directions; oral directions in the native language; reading aloud of questions in English; directions read aloud or explained</p> <p>Setting: small-group or individual administration; separate room administration</p> <p>Time/scheduling: administration in several sessions</p>
North Carolina	<p>Presentation: use of dictionaries; reading aloud of questions in English; directions read aloud or explained</p> <p>Response: answers written directly in test booklet</p> <p>Setting: separate room administration</p> <p>Time/scheduling: extra assessment time; administration in several sessions</p>

41. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Accountability Services Division, <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/accountability/testing/eog/>.

42. Ibid., "Alternate Assessment Changes in the North Carolina Testing Program 2005-06," http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/alternate_assessment_changes_2005_06_080305.pdf.

APPENDIX B

TOTAL AND ELL ENROLLMENTS (PK-12): NUMBERS AND PERCENT GROWTH BETWEEN 1994-1995 AND 2004-2005, UNITED STATES

	Total enrollment	Total growth since 1994-95	ELL enrollment	ELL growth since 1994-95
1994-95	47,745,835	0.0%	3,277,298	0.0%
1995-96	47,582,665	-0.3%	3,228,799	-1.5%
1996-97	46,714,980	-2.2%	3,452,073	5.3%
1997-98	46,023,969	-3.6%	3,470,268	5.9%
1998-99	46,153,266	-3.3%	3,540,673	8.0%
1999-00	47,356,089	-0.8%	4,416,580	34.8%
2000-01	47,665,483	-0.2%	4,584,946	39.9%
2001-02	48,296,777	1.2%	4,747,763	44.9%
2002-03	49,478,583	3.6%	5,044,361	53.9%
2003-04	49,619,090	3.9%	5,013,539	53.0%
2004-05	48,982,898	2.6%	5,119,561	56.2%

Source: NCELA, National and Regional Numbers and Statistics (revised November 2006), available at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/expert/faq/01leps.html>.

APPENDIX C

**TOTAL AND ELL ENROLLMENTS (PK-12):
NUMBERS AND PERCENT GROWTH
BETWEEN 1994-1995 AND 2004-2005,
CALIFORNIA, ILLINOIS, AND
NORTH CAROLINA, AND COLORADO
BETWEEN 1999-2000 AND 2004-2005**

California				
	Total enrollment	Total growth since 1994-95	ELL enrollment	ELL growth since 1994-95
1994-95	5,930,864	0.0%	1,262,982	0.0%
1995-96	6,069,802	2.3%	1,323,767	4.8%
1996-97	6,228,036	5.0%	1,381,393	9.4%
1997-98	5,727,303	-3.4%	1,406,166	11.3%
1998-99	5,844,511	-1.5%	1,442,642	14.2%
1999-00	5,952,598	0.4%	1,480,527	17.2%
2000-01	6,050,895	2.0%	1,511,646	19.7%
2001-02	6,247,889	5.3%	1,512,655	19.8%
2002-03	6,244,403	5.3%	1,599,542	26.6%
2003-04	6,298,769	6.2%	1,598,535	26.6%
2004-05	6,198,237	4.5%	1,591,525	26.0%

Colorado				
	Total enrollment	Total Growth Since 1999-00	ELL Enrollment	ELL Growth Since 1999-00
1999-00	708,109	0.0%	60,031	0.0%
2000-01	724,508	2.3%	61,421	2.3%
2001-02	742,065	4.8%	71,011	18.3%
2002-03	751,862	6.2%	86,129	43.5%
2003-04	757,668	7.0%	91,751	52.8%
2004-05	766,657	8.3%	90,391	50.6%

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Illinois				
	Total enrollment	Total growth since 1994–95	ELL enrollment	ELL growth since 1994–95
1994–95	2,236,462	0.0%	107,084	0.0%
1995–96	2,267,061	1.4%	113,899	6.4%
1996–97	2,293,920	2.6%	118,246	10.4%
1997–98	1,995,289	-10.8%	136,186	27.2%
1998–99	2,011,530	-10.1%	137,717	28.6%
1999–00	2,027,600	-9.3%	143,855	34.3%
2000–01	2,048,792	-8.4%	140,528	31.2%
2001–02	2,068,182	-7.5%	140,528	31.2%
2002–03	2,011,077	-10.1%	169,414	58.2%
2003–04	2,010,332	-10.1%	161,700	51.0%
2004–05	2,097,503	-6.2%	192,764	80.0%

North Carolina				
	Total enrollment	Total growth since 1994–95	ELL enrollment	ELL growth since 1994–95
1994–95	1,207,404	0.0%	14,901	0.0%
1995–96	1,240,984	2.8%	18,744	25.8%
1996–97	1,324,791	9.7%	24,771	66.2%
1997–98	1,274,949	5.6%	28,709	92.7%
1998–99	1,295,780	7.3%	37,251	150.0%
1999–00	1,275,925	5.7%	41,667	179.6%
2000–01	1,267,070	4.9%	52,513	252.4%
2001–02	1,303,928	8.0%	52,835	254.6%
2002–03	1,303,707	8.0%	60,149	303.7%
2003–04	1,325,344	9.8%	70,937	376.1%
2004–05	1,221,062	1.1%	70,288	371.7%

Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA), National and Regional Numbers and Statistics, 2006. Available at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/stats/>.

APPENDIX D

PERCENTAGE OF 8TH GRADERS SCORING AT FOUR ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN READING BY LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND STATE, NAEP 2005

LEP	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
Below basic	71%	74%	69%	66%	57%
Basic	24%	23%	27%	27%	35%
Proficient	4%	3%	5%	6%	7%
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Former LEP	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
Below basic	34%	30%	–	–	–
Basic	46%	50%	–	–	–
Proficient	19%	19%	–	–	–
Advanced	1%	1%	–	–	–

Non-LEP	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
Below basic	27%	32%	22%	25%	30%
Basic	43%	43%	44%	44%	42%
Proficient	28%	23%	30%	29%	25%
Advanced	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%

Percent of all students identified as LEP*	5%	20%	5%	1%	3%
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Notes: *Identified as LEP for inclusion and assessed in the test.

Source: Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Percentages of Students in States and Jurisdictions Identified, Excluded, and Assessed in Reading. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc/reading_math_2005/S0092.asp?tab_id=tab3&subtab_id=Tab_1&printver=#chart.

APPENDIX E

**PERCENTAGE OF 8TH GRADERS
SCORING AT FOUR ACHIEVEMENT
LEVELS IN MATH BY LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY AND STATE, NAEP 2005**

LEP	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
Below basic	71%	74%	71%	70%	58%
Basic	23%	21%	24%	22%	34%
Proficient	5%	4%	4%	6%	7%
Advanced	1%	1	1%	3%	1%

Former LEP	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
Below basic	34%	33%	–	–	–
Basic	42%	43%	–	–	–
Proficient	19%	20%	–	–	–
Advanced	5%	5%	–	–	–

Non-LEP	US	CA	CO	IL	NC
Below basic	30%	35%	27%	31%	27%
Basic	40%	39%	39%	40%	40%
Proficient	24%	21%	27%	24%	25%
Advanced	6%	5%	7%	5%	7%

Percent of all students identified as LEP*	5%	20%	6%	2%	3%
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Notes: *Identified as LEP for inclusion and assessed in the test.

Source: Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Percentages of Students in States and Jurisdictions Identified, Excluded, and Assessed in Mathematics. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc/reading_math_2005/S0094.asp?tab_id=tab3&subtab_id=Tab_3&printver=#chart.

In 2007, the Migration Policy Institute established the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. The Center's goal is to inform policymaking at all levels of government in the often overlooked area of integration policy. The Center is also intended to serve as a hub connecting government administrators, researchers, community leaders, service providers, the media, and others who are seeking to understand and respond to the challenges of high sustained levels of immigration.

The Center's core functions include policy research and design, leadership development, convening stakeholders, and technical assistance. The Center has also created an electronic resource center that assembles the best recent scholarship on integration issues ranging from changes in US citizenship policy to the performance of immigrant students in US schools, the most pertinent data on immigrants and their integration, and information on key legislative and other policy developments. These online resources can be found on MPI's Web site at www.migrationpolicy.org/integration.



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