

DATA BULLETIN

English Language Learners, School Year 2011-12

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has undertaken a program of comprehensive educational reform with a particular emphasis on closing the country's largest achievement gap between high- and low-performing students. This is crucial for the approximately 30,000 English language learners (ELLs) in Connecticut's public schools. ELLs are students who lack sufficient mastery of English to "assure equal educational opportunity in the regular school program" (C.G.S. 10-17e). They account for 5.4 percent of all public school students. Standardized assessments such as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), as well as the high school graduation rate, have illuminated a significant achievement gap between ELLs and their peers.

Federal and Connecticut Law

The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) established that ELLs are entitled to receive English language services from Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), bilingual-certified teachers, or other personnel who have received training in English language acquisition.¹ This right is protected by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights. ELLs are entitled to these services so that they may attain English proficiency and realize mastery of the same core academic content as other students. Therefore, their education is not just the responsibility of TESOL and bilingual teachers but also regular education faculty. The Connecticut Bilingual Statute (C.G.S. 10-17e-j) established the conditions under which local educational agencies (LEAs) must offer bilingual education programs. The 2010 Connecticut State Board of Education's position statement on ELLs reaffirmed that

Quick Facts about Connecticut's English Language Learners (ELLs), 2011-12:

- There were 29,527 ELLs in 164 public LEAs;
- ELLs spoke 139 different dominant languages; however, Spanish accounted for 72 percent of all ELLs.
- 97 percent of ELLs received English language services.
- Over half of all ELLs were in Grades K-4.
- 4,688 ELLs were also identified for special education.
- 79 percent of ELLs were eligible for either free or reduced-price meals.
- For the 2011-12 school year, Connecticut received \$4.7 million in Title III funds for English language services.
- In the 2010-11 school year, 97.7 percent of ELL students took the annual English language proficiency assessment; 81.6 percent made progress from their prior assessment, and 43.9 percent demonstrated English proficiency.
- In the 2010-11 school year, 4,412 ELL students (14.5 percent) met the CSDE's English mastery standard.
- The four-year graduation rate for ELLs in the class of 2010 was 60.1 percent.

access to quality bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are crucial for ELLs to succeed academically.² While federal grants (Title III) are available to districts and consortia (groups of smaller districts) to support ESL services, not all LEAs choose to receive these funds. Nevertheless, all LEAs must provide English language support services to their ELLs, and this affects an increasing number of LEAs as the ELL population becomes increasingly dispersed across the state.

Table 1: Top 10 Dominant Languages (Grades K-12), School Years 2007-08 through 2011-12

Language	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Change 2007-08 through 2011-12
English	484,184	479,588	475,444	471,481	464,451	-4.1%
Spanish	47,933	47,762	47,825	47,463	47,707	-0.5%
Portuguese	2,976	2,937	2,829	2,850	2,778	-6.7%
Polish	2,433	2,358	2,291	2,280	2,232	-8.3%
Mandarin ³	2,220	2,231	2,325	2,396	1,962	-
Creole-Haitian	1,426	1,494	1,578	1,716	1,674	17.4%
Arabic	898	944	1,021	1,160	1,335	48.7%
Albanian	1,154	1,219	1,246	1,263	1,288	11.6%
Urdu	1,021	1,052	1,061	1,134	1,185	16.1%
Vietnamese	1,139	1,174	1,159	1,161	1,156	1.5%
All Others	11,284	11,393	11,401	11,803	12,588	11.6%
Total	556,668	552,152	548,180	544,707	538,356	-3.4%

Linguistic Diversity in Public Schools (Grades K-12)

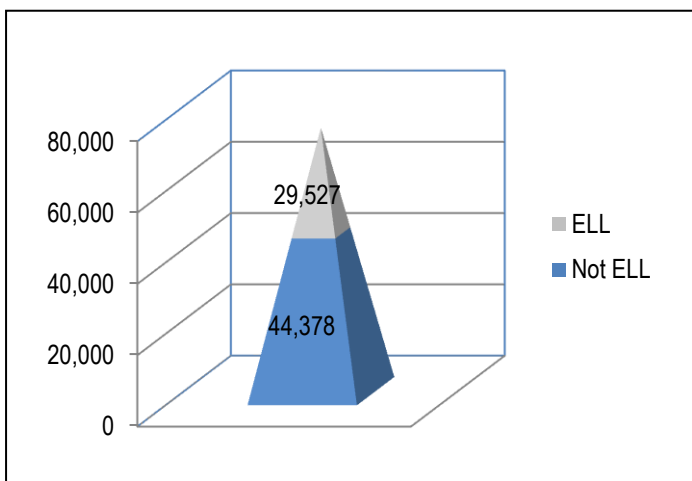
Under C.G.S. 10-17f and NCLB, LEAs must ascertain the dominant language of all new K-12 students, which is typically done through a home language survey.⁴ In the 2011-12 school year, 73,905 students spoke 171 languages other than English (table 1). Over the last five years, the number of students with dominant languages other than English increased by 2 percent while English speakers declined by 4.1 percent and the number of total students also declined by 3.4 percent. It is important to note that the increase in students with a dominant language other than English occurred while speakers of the largest non-English languages (Spanish, Portuguese and Polish) declined. This graphically illustrates the increased linguistic diversity of Connecticut's public schools and it is interesting that this changes over time in part as a result of global instability and natural disasters. For example over the last five years, the number of Arabic-speaking students in Connecticut public schools grew by 48.7 percent and the number of Creole-Haitian speakers increased by 17.4 percent. Among the largest dominant languages, the number of Urdu (16.1 percent) and Albanian (11.6 percent) speakers also increased. Linguistic diversity was also driven by the rapid growth in the number of speakers of smaller languages such as Bangla (108.8 percent), Telugu (63.8 percent), Twi/Fante (63.4 percent), and Nepali (59 percent).

English Language Learners

NCLB and Connecticut law also require LEAs to determine the English proficiency of students whose dominant language is not English, according to the home language survey. Following CSDE guidance, their ELL identification procedures should include the use of a language proficiency test, interviews and a review of the student's record. In practice, the identification process varies by LEA. Determining the ELL status of transfers into the district can pose a particular challenge as the exchange of student records may be delayed or the record itself may be incomplete.

In the 2011-12 school year, 73,905 students had a dominant language other than English; however, only 29,527 of these (40 percent) were identified as ELLs (figure 1). During the last five years, the number of ELLs (-1.6 percent) declined a little less than all students (-3.4 percent).

Figure 1: ELL Status of Students with a Dominant Language Other than English, 2011-12



English Language Support Services

Under federal law, ELLs are entitled to receive English language support services until they demonstrate English proficiency by meeting the CSDE's English mastery standard. Research on English language acquisition identifies two interrelated sets of language skills that comprise language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), which refers to contextual conversational language skills, and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which includes more abstract decontextualized language skills.⁵ Research on English language acquisition suggests that while native-like proficiency in BICS takes about two years, CALP requires five to six years.⁶ Although some research questions the distinctiveness of BICS and CALP skills in practice, the general consensus in the field is that the acquisition of academic English language skills is crucial for ELLs' academic success, particularly as their grade level increases.⁷

In 2011-12, one-quarter of ELLs received bilingual education (table 2). The CSDE annually identifies schools with 20 or more ELL students who have the same dominant language and, under Connecticut law, these schools are required to provide a bilingual program in the following school year.⁸ Based upon 2010-11 enrollment figures, 220 schools in 36 different LEAs were identified for bilingual programs for the 2011-12 school year. Spanish accounted for 217 bilingual programs, followed by Portuguese (nine), Creole-Haitian (eight), Arabic (two) and one each in Japanese, Karen, Mandarin, Polish and Serbo-Croatian. While the vast majority of bilingual programs are in urban schools, an increasing number of suburban schools, public charter schools, endowed and incorporated academies, and regional educational service center (RESC) schools have also been identified for bilingual programs. Despite the increase in the number of LEAs offering bilingual programs, the number of ELLs in them fell by 1,000 over the last five years.

There are two types of bilingual programs. Transitional bilingual education programs utilize the student's dominant language (decreasing over time) and English in instruction so that the student ultimately attains English language proficiency. Under Connecticut law, students may be in this program for a maximum of 30 months. Dual language bilingual programs also utilize students' dominant languages and English in instruction but with the aim of developing proficiency in both languages. There is no time limit for students in dual language bilingual programs.

Table 2: ELLs by English Language Service, 2011-12

Service	Students	Percentage of ELLs
Transitional bilingual	6,661	22.6%
Dual language bilingual	1,118	3.8%
Language transition support services	5,464	18.5%
Pull-out ESL	8,279	28.0%
Push-in ESL	2,012	6.8%
Sheltered ESL	1,016	3.4%
Other types of ESL	4,062	11.9%
Parental refusal of ESL services	915	3.1%
Totals	29,527	100.0%

Students who have exhausted their eligibility for participation in a transitional bilingual education program but have not met the CSDE's English mastery standard receive language transition support services (LTSS), which may include the various ESL services described below. With the decline in the number of bilingual students, ELLs in LTSS declined by 5 percent over the last five years.

Over half of all ELL students received various types of ESL support services. These include ESL pull-out, in which ELLs meet with TESOL certified teachers; ESL push-in/co-teaching, which means that TESOL certified teachers provide instruction in the general education classrooms; sheltered English instruction, which refers to teaching English through content areas; and other services, including tutoring. In practice, students often receive a mix of all these and other types of services. Program figures in table 2 reflect the most frequent type of ESL service they receive. While the number of ELLs declined over the five years, those receiving ESL services increased 5.5 percent.

In the 2011-12 school year, there were 915 ELLs who did not receive English language support services because their parents refused them. There may be many personal reasons for parents to refuse English language services, including a preference for "English immersion" as the option for their children to become proficient in English. Nearly one-third of ELL students who did not receive English language services were also identified for special education.

Bilingual and TESOL Teaching Positions

For the 2011-12 school year, the CSDE identified bilingual education, PK-12 and TESOL as teacher shortage areas, based on results from its 2010 fall hiring survey.⁹ Bilingual education has traditionally been designated as a shortage area and will continue to be one in the 2012-13 school year. Over the last two school years, the total number of bilingual positions fell by 22 percent while TESOL positions have remained relatively unchanged. The CSDE's 2011 fall hiring survey found that the number of available bilingual education positions declined by nearly half, from 34 in the 2010-11 school year to 18 in 2011-12, while available TESOL positions fell slightly from 36 to 34. Among the positions that were available for the 2011-12 school year, eight of the 18 bilingual positions remained vacant, while only three of the 34 TESOL positions were not filled. Bilingual education and TESOL vacancies attracted small applicant pools and districts generally rated the quality of these applicants as poor.¹⁰ Furthermore, the rates of new and renewed bilingual and TESOL teacher certificates were among the lowest for any type of teaching certificate. Recognizing these difficulties, the CSDE issued 13 durational shortage permits for vacancies in bilingual education and five for TESOL, which gave LEAs greater flexibility to fill these vacancies in the 2010-11 school year. To address teacher shortages, the CSDE also created the Alternate Route to Certification for Teachers of English Language Learners (ARCTELL) program, which includes courses and field work related to teaching ELLs. The certified teachers who complete this program become cross-endorsed in either bilingual education or TESOL.

ELL Student Demographics

Dominant Language

In the 2011-12 school year, the ELL subpopulation had 139 dominant languages, although only 21 of them were spoken by 100 or more ELLs. Over the last five years, nine of the top 10 most common languages remained the same; the only exception was French, which surpassed Russian (table 3). Arabic and Creole-Haitian experienced the largest growth among the most prevalent languages. The other smaller languages that experienced significant growth included Bangla (106.3 percent), Telugu (64.8 percent), Bengali (37 percent) and Turkish (18.8 percent). The number of Karen speakers increased more than sevenfold from 23 to 174.

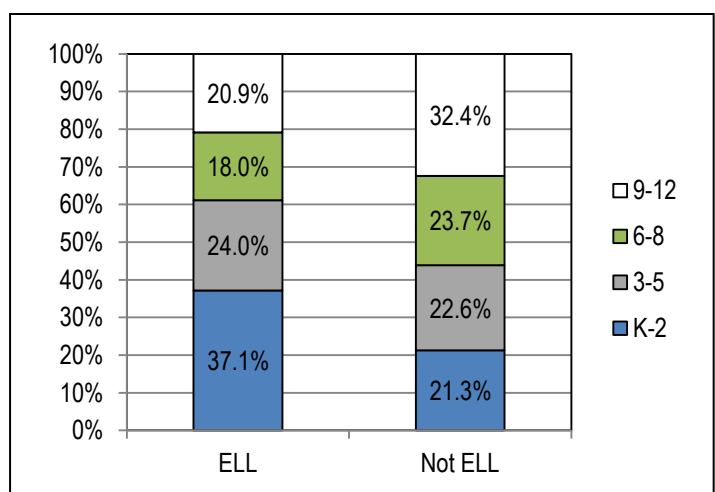
Table 3: Top 10 Dominant Languages for ELLs, 2011-12

Language	Students	Change in Students 2007-08 to 2011-12	Percentage of All ELL Students
Spanish	21,352	-0.4%	72.3%
Portuguese	851	-26.4%	2.9%
Creole-Haitian	685	17.7%	2.3%
Arabic	641	75.1%	2.2%
Mandarin ³	542	-	1.8%
Polish	486	-26.0%	1.6%
Albanian	453	-9.0%	1.5%
Urdu	348	3.9%	1.2%
Vietnamese	314	-16.7%	1.1%
French	237	-15.7%	0.8%
All Others	3,618	0.4%	12.3%
Totals	29,527	-1.6%	100.0%

Grade

ELL students were more heavily concentrated in the lower grades than other students and were less prevalent in high school (figure 3). While ELLs were 5.5 percent of all students, they accounted for 9.4 percent of all those in K-2 but just 3.6 percent of high school students. The number of ELLs in each of the grade bands in figure 3 remained stable except those in middle school, which declined by 7 percent.

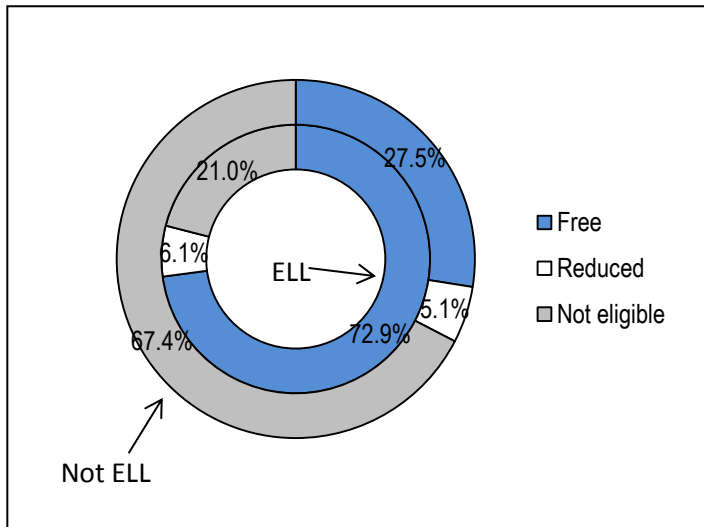
Figure 2: Percentage of ELL and Non-ELL Students by Grade, 2011-12



Eligibility for Free or Reduced-price Meals

Over the last five years, the percentage of ELLs eligible for either free or reduced-price meals increased from 71.1 percent to 79 percent. In sharp contrast, only one-third of non-ELLs were eligible (figure 4). This illuminates the fact that a large percentage of the ELL student population has multiple service needs.

Figure 3: Percentage Eligible for Free or Reduced-price Meals by ELL Status, 2011-12



Identification for Special Education

Over the last five years, the numbers of ELLs who were also identified for special education increased by nearly one-third, from 3,561 to 4,688 (table 4).¹¹ This growth is remarkable as it occurred during a time of declining enrollments for total public students, ELLs and students with disabilities. Specifically, the number of ELLs identified as autistic more than doubled, those with attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD) increased 85 percent, and ELLs with multiple disabilities increased 72.3 percent.

ELLs were more likely than non-ELLs to be identified for special education (15.9 percent versus 10.8 percent). In the largest urban districts, District Reference Group (DRG) I, nearly 19 percent of ELLs were identified for special education, and they accounted for 55 percent of all ELLs receiving special education. Moderate-size urban districts (DRG H) accounted for an additional 23 percent of these special education ELLs.¹² While all DRGs experienced double digit growth in ELLs identified for special education over the last five years, the fastest growth occurred in the smaller urban districts (DRG G: 63 percent) and the small affluent suburban districts (DRG C: 61 percent).¹³

ELLs identified for special education have multiple service needs that may require interventions by both TESOL and special education teachers and service providers. Recognizing this, the Connecticut Administrators of Programs for ELLs (CAPELL) produced a resource handbook for ELLs receiving special education in 2011.¹⁴ ELLs received the same median number of special education hours (six) and total school hours (33) as non-ELL special education students. On average, they spent just slightly more time with their non-disabled peers (83 versus 82 percent of their time). Over the last five years, the percentage of special education ELLs who received related services increased from 45 percent to 50 percent, which was still below that of their non-ELL special education peers (54 percent). For special education ELLs, the most commonly received services included speech/language pathology and audiology (28 percent), counseling (14 percent), social work (14 percent), and physical and occupational therapy (9 percent). Not only do ELLs identified for special education have multiple educational service needs, over 85 percent of them were also eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

The variety of languages among ELL students poses a challenge to special education service providers. In all, ELLs in special education had 76 different dominant languages, with Spanish (84 percent), Portuguese (2.2 percent) and Creole-Haitian speakers (1.6 percent) being the most prevalent.

Table 4: Public School ELLs Identified for Special Education (Grades K-12), 2011-12

Primary Disability	ELL Special Education Students, 2009-10	Change in Students 2007-08 to 2011-12	Primary Disability's Percentage of ELL Special Education Students	Primary Disability's Percentage of Non-ELL Special Education Students
Specific learning disabilities	2,002	26.3%	42.7%	33.8%
Speech/language impairment	1,182	18.6%	25.2%	17.6%
ADD/ADHD	345	84.5%	7.4%	12.2%
Other health impairment	254	42.7%	5.4%	7.7%
Intellectually disabled	250	32.3%	5.3%	3.5%
Emotional disturbance	167	33.6%	3.6%	7.4%
Developmental delay	162	42.1%	3.4%	2.5%
Autism	149	140.3%	3.2%	10.1%
Multiple disabilities	112	72.3%	2.4%	3.8%
Hearing impairment	41	20.6%	0.9%	0.8%
Visual impairment	12	-7.7%	0.3%	0.3%
Traumatic brain injury	7	16.7%	0.1%	0.2%
Orthopedic impairment	4	-33.3%	0.1%	0.1%
Deaf-blindness	1	-	0.0%	0.0%
Totals	4,688	31.6%	100%	100%

Geographic Distribution of ELLs

The geographic distribution of Connecticut's ELLs is characterized by the concentration of the majority in the largest urban districts, and the growing migration of ELLs to smaller suburban and rural districts, that had few, if any, ELLs five or more years ago. In the 2011-12 school year, 12 LEAs accounted for 68.7 percent of ELL students (table 5). Significantly, over the last five years ELL enrollment declined for seven of the 12 LEAs with the largest ELL populations. Among the LEAs with the largest number of ELLs, West Haven (35.9 percent), Windham (13.8 percent) and New Haven (8.4 percent) experienced the most growth.

The migration of ELLs to the smaller suburban and rural districts over the last five years has created a number of "low incidence" LEAs with a small number of ELLs. These LEAs had to develop ELL identification procedures and ESL instructional programs, administer the annual English language proficiency assessment, and build data systems for tracking ELL students and meeting all reporting requirements. Indicative of this trend, the number of LEAs with ELL students increased from 148 to 164, while those without any fell from 46 to 31 from 2007 to 2011 (figure 4). Among the 46 LEAs without any ELLs in the 2007-08 school year, 22 had ELLs in the 2011-12 school year. Conversely, seven LEAs that had ELLs in 2007 did not have any in 2011, and this illuminates the challenge low incidence districts face in not only establishing but maintaining an ESL program.

During the last five years, 45 percent of LEAs experienced growth in their number of ELLs, 37 percent had a decline, and 18 percent stayed the same. Eighteen LEAs had their numbers of ELLs double, and all but two of these were low incidence districts with fewer than 20 in the 2007-08 school year. Growth occurred in the small affluent suburban LEAs (DRG C), such as East Lyme (73 percent), East Hampton (57 percent) and Waterford (37 percent). The smallest rural LEAs (DRG E) also experienced significant growth in their number of ELLs, such as Portland (800 percent), Willington (200 percent) and East Haddam (33 percent). Growth also

occurred in smaller urban districts (DRG G), such as Vernon (54 percent), Manchester (31 percent) and Torrington (17 percent).

Over the last five years, the number of ELLs in public charter schools (532 percent), endowed and incorporated academies (60.9 percent) and regional educational service centers (43.4 percent) also increased significantly, and the percentage of all ELLs in these programs doubled from 1 to 2 percent. Overall, 96.6 percent of all ELLs were in public elementary or secondary schools, as compared with 88.7 percent of non-ELLs students in 2011.

Figure 4: Distribution of LEAs by Size of ELL Enrollment, 2007-08 and 2011-12

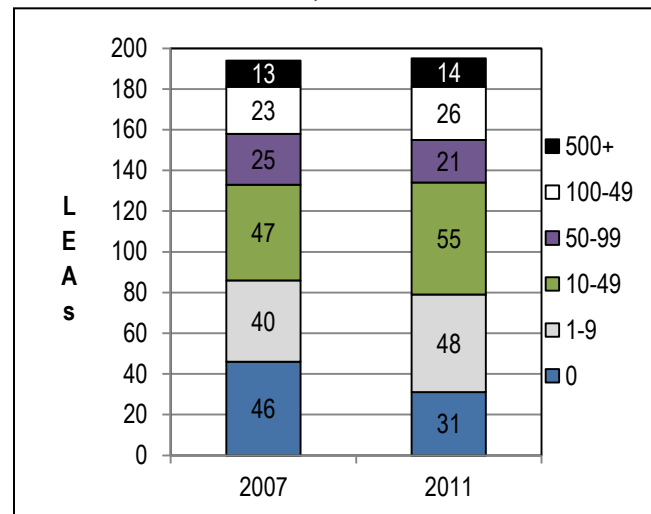


Table 5: LEAs with the Largest ELL Enrollments, 2011-12

LEA	ELL Students	Change in Total ELL Students 2007-08 to 2011-12	ELL as a Percentage of LEAs' Total Students	Percentage of Connecticut's ELLs
Hartford	3,600	-3.9%	18.0%	12.2%
New Haven	2,526	8.4%	13.5%	8.6%
Bridgeport	2,387	-15.8%	12.3%	8.1%
Stamford	2,024	-6.2%	13.1%	6.9%
Waterbury	1,952	-11.2%	11.2%	6.6%
Danbury	1,871	3.3%	18.1%	6.3%
New Britain	1,653	-4.4%	17.0%	5.6%
Norwalk	1,256	-4.6%	11.5%	4.3%
Meriden	980	2.9%	12.3%	3.3%
Windham	798	13.8%	26.5%	2.7%
West Haven	640	35.9%	10.7%	2.2%
New London	606	-4.3%	20.7%	2.1%
All Others	9,234	1.2%	2.2%	31.3%
Totals	29,527	-1.6%	5.5%	100%

School Disciplinary Incidents

During the 2010-11 school year, 11.9 percent of ELLs were cited for school disciplinary infractions, which was a higher percentage than for non-ELL students (9.3 percent). Similar to others cited for an offense, ELLs were largely male (65.7 percent) and in Grades 7 through 10 (79.3 percent). A higher percentage of ELLs than non-ELL students cited for disciplinary offenses were also in special education (27 percent vs. 19 percent). Strikingly, ELLs with specific learning disabilities (LD) accounted for 14 percent of all ELLs cited for a school infraction, while just 7 percent of all non-ELL offenders had specific learning disabilities. Furthermore, for certain primary disabilities, the percentage of ELLs who had a disciplinary incident was quite high, including emotional disturbance (51.9 percent); ADD/ADHD (51.7 percent); specific learning disabilities (26.7 percent); other health impairment (25.3 percent); visual impairment (25 percent); and intellectual disabilities (19.3 percent). All of these percentages were higher than those for their non-ELL special education peers.

Similar to all others, ELLs were principally cited for school policy violations (65 percent, e.g., insubordination, attendance problems and classroom disruptions). Other prevalent offenses included fighting (13 percent) and physical/verbal confrontations (10 percent). One percent of ELL students' incidences involved drugs or weapons. Over 90 percent of disciplinary incidents were resolved with in-school suspensions or out-of-school suspensions.

It is important to note that many ELL students have fled civic disorder and natural disasters and may have post-traumatic stress disorder. They may also have different cultural and social norms and come from situations where access to the educational system may be limited or non-existent. Heightened cultural sensitivity will help these ELLs' social and academic transitions and, consequently, may reduce their disciplinary incidences.

Standardized Assessments

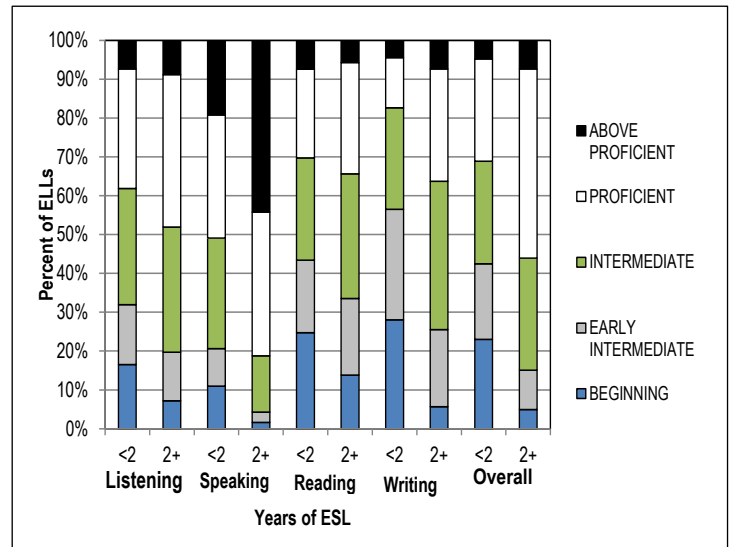
English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELP)

Under NCLB, the English language proficiency of all ELLs must be assessed annually, including those whose parents refused English language services. In Connecticut, the mandated assessment instrument is the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) Links, which districts administer between January and early May. This instrument includes grade-level listening, speaking, reading and writing subtests and is designed to primarily assess acquisition of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and, in particular, those related to the school setting.¹⁵

In 2011, 97.7 percent of ELLs who were in public LEAs during the spring testing period took the LAS Links. ELLs did not take the LAS Links due to long-term absences (1.3 percent), IEP/disability (0.5 percent), student or parental refusal (0.3 percent) and other causes (0.2 percent). In 2011, 43.9 percent of public school ELLs who completed the LAS Links achieved overall English proficiency, and 81.6 percent of those who took the LAS Links for at least two years made progress as they increased their overall test scores. Over the last several years, the percentages of proficient students and those who made progress have remained consistent.

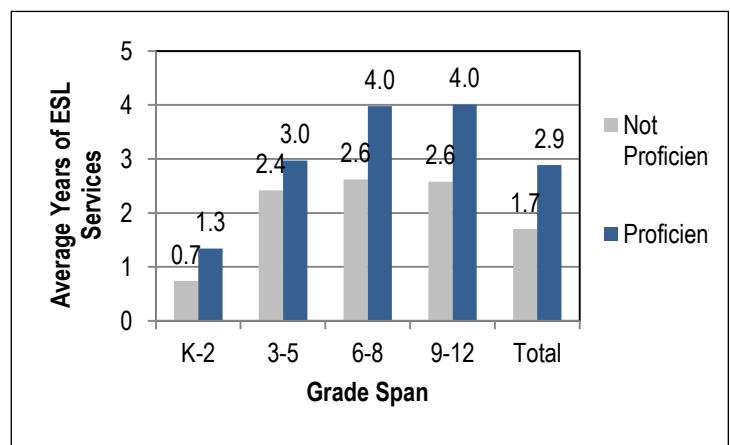
National studies suggest that educational time, particularly years of ESL service, is a key factor in ELLs' English language acquisition.¹⁶ It is also important to note, however, that language acquisition is also not a simple linear process.¹⁷ The comparison of Connecticut's ELLs who had less than two years of services with those who had more illustrates the relationship between service time and performance level on the LAS Links (figure 5).¹⁸

Figure 5: Comparing LAS Links Performance Level for ELLs with Less than Two Years of ESL Service and Those with Two or More Years of ESL Service 2011



LAS Links is organized into grade spans. For each of the grade spans, the average years of ESL service was greater for those who achieved proficiency and these differences were statistically significant (figure 6). The overall proficiency score is a composite of the four subtests and it is important to note that an ELL who achieved overall proficiency may not be proficient in each of the four domains. ELLs identified for special education were less likely than others to achieve proficiency (28 percent versus 46 percent), and ELLs eligible for free or reduced-price meals were also less likely to achieve proficiency (43 percent versus 52 percent).

Figure 6: Average Years of ESL Service by Overall Proficiency Status and Grade Span, 2011

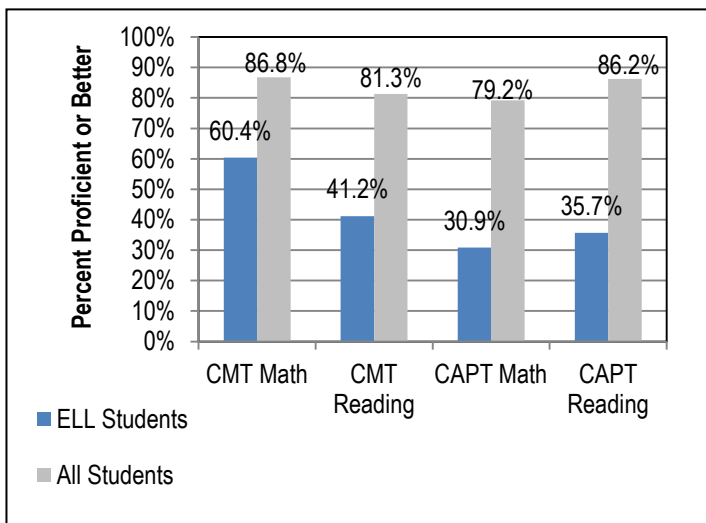


Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)

CMT (Grades 3-8) and CAPT (Grade 10) results starkly illustrate the achievement gap between ELL students and public school students as a whole (figure 7).¹⁹ The CMT and CAPT assess mastery of academic content and, therefore, pose a significant challenge to ELLs, many of whom are still in the process of acquiring BICS as well as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). It is important to reiterate that research in English language acquisition suggests that native-like proficiency in BICS requires about two years, but CALP requires five to six years.²⁰

Monitored former ELLs achieved proficiency or better at levels similar to all students on CMT mathematics (83.4 percent) and reading (72.6 percent).

Figure 7: Percentage Proficient or Better on the CMT or CAPT, 2011



Proficiency on the CMT and CAPT and the LAS Links were weakly but significantly correlated. As might be logically anticipated, ELLs who were proficient on the academic CMT and CAPT subtests were more likely to achieve overall proficiency on the LAS Links: CMT mathematics (74.3 percent on LAS Links); CMT reading (82.3 percent); and CMT writing (82.5 percent); CAPT mathematics (68.5 percent); CAPT reading (76.9 percent); and CAPT writing (71.1 percent). The LAS Links is primarily an assessment of BICS and, consequently, it was not a good predictor of proficiency on either the CMT or the CAPT. For example, only 38.4 percent of ELLs who achieved overall proficiency on the LAS Links were proficient on CMT reading and 44.3 percent on CAPT reading.

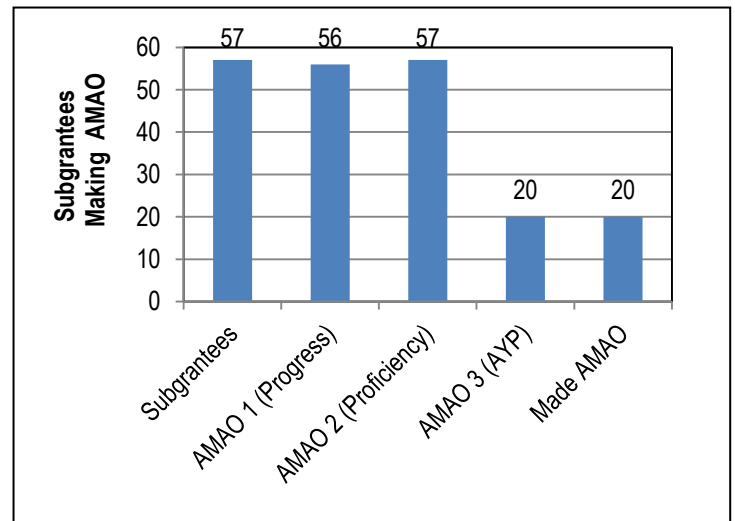
Title III Accountability

Under NCLB, Title III subgrantees (independent districts and consortia) must meet Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), which are performance targets established by the CSDE, including the percentage of their ELLs receiving ESL services that made progress in English language acquisition (AMAO 1), and the percentage who

attained English language proficiency (AMAO 2) as measured by the LAS Links during the annual ELP (see appendix A for AMAO 1 and AMAO 2 targets).²¹ In addition, subgrantees are held accountable for the adequate yearly progress (AYP) performance of the ELL subgroup (AMAO 3) on the CMT and CAPT. Title III subgrantees must meet all three AMAOs in order to achieve AMAO overall.

In 2011, 56 of the 57 subgrantees made AMAO 1 (Progress), all 57 made AMAO 2 (Proficiency), but only 20 made AMAO 3 (AYP) and, therefore, only 20 subgrantees achieved AMAO overall (figure 8).²² AMAO results have remained relatively consistent over time. The disparity of LEAs that achieved AMAO 1 and AMAO 2 compared with those who made AMAO 3 reflects the difference in the assessment instruments. Specifically, the LAS Links (AMAO 1 and AMAO 2) measures English language acquisition while the CMT and CAPT (AMAO 3) are mastery tests of academic content. Furthermore, the ELL subgroup, like all AYP subgroups, is required to meet targets that increase over time; yet it experiences significant turnover as those ELLs achieving higher academic performance reach English mastery and cease to be ELL.

Figure 8: Title III Subgrantee AMAO Performance, School Year 2010-11



Among the 37 Title III subgrantees that did not make AMAO overall in 2011, 12 had not made it for eight consecutive years, one for seven years, five for six years, four for three years, one for two years, and 14 for one year. Connecticut made AMAO 1 and AMAO 2, but not AMAO 3 and, therefore, did not make AMAO overall.

NCLB includes corrective actions to be implemented by Title III subgrantees that do not achieve AMAO. Parental notification that the district or consortium did not make AMAO is always required. Other corrective actions vary by the number of consecutive years that the Title III subgrantees have not achieved AMAO. These actions include the creation or amending of an improvement plan, modification of curriculum or programs, and even personnel replacement. The CSDE's Bureau of Accountability and Improvement provides

technical assistance to LEAs with regard to ELL instruction, support services and the development of improvement plans.

The CSDE's English Mastery Standard

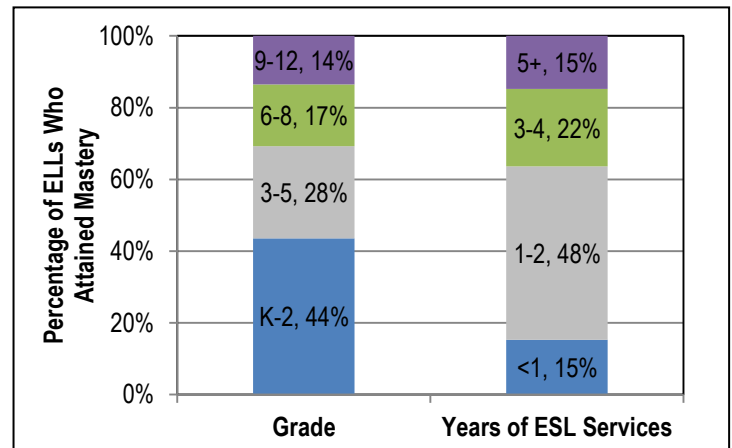
Following NCLB, the CSDE instituted an English mastery standard that all ELL students must meet before they can exit ELL status (table 7). It established grade-specific criteria, including indicators of English language acquisition and mastery of academic content.²³

In the 2010-11 school year, the largest number of ELLs achieved English mastery (4,412) since data has been collected, and this was also the highest percentage of all those who completed the LAS Links to have attained mastery (14.5 percent). During the last four years, the number of ELLs who met the mastery standard increased by 12.4 percent.

ELLs in Grades K-2 were the largest group to attain English mastery (figure 9). First graders (25 percent) had the highest percentage of ELLs who attained mastery and second graders were also near the top (19 percent). In contrast, high school students accounted for 21 percent of all ELLs but they were just 14 percent of those who reached mastery. Tenth graders must take the CAPT and 24 percent of them attained mastery; however, only 2 percent of ninth- and 12th-graders achieved mastery.

ESL service time is an important factor in attaining English language mastery. The average service time of students who met mastery increased as the grade span increased: K-2 (1.2 years), Grades 3-5 (2.8 years), Grades 6-8 (3.4 years) and Grades 9-12 (3.2 years). For each of these grade spans, ELLs who achieved mastery had more average years of ESL services than those who did not, and these differences were statistically significant for Grades K-2 and 9-12. ELLs with disabilities were less than half as likely as all others to attain mastery (5.8 percent versus 15 percent).

Figure 9: ELLs Who Attained English Mastery by Grade and Years of ESL Service, School Year 2010-11



Graduation Rate

The four-year graduation rate for ELLs in the class of 2010 was 60.1 percent, which was considerably below the rate for non-ELL students (82.7 percent). The ELL graduation rate was also lower than other AYP subgroups, such as special education students (62.5 percent) and students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (62.7 percent). In the 2010-11 school year, 11 percent of the ELLs from the class of the 2010 cohort were still enrolled in public schools, and this was similar to the percentage of students eligible for reduced-price meals (12 percent) but less than special education students (21.3 percent).

Addressing the Achievement Gap

This bulletin has highlighted the significant achievement gap between ELLs and their peers. With the increased dispersion of the ELLs throughout Connecticut, narrowing this gap poses a significant challenge for an increasing number of LEAs. The CSDE is also committed to addressing this achievement gap.

Table 7: CSDE English Mastery Standard

Grade	English Language Proficiency	Mastery of Academic Content		
		Mathematics	Reading	Writing
K-2	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 and 5)	—	Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (K: Level 4; Grade 1: Level 18; Grade 2: Level 28 Nonfiction Selection)	—
3-8	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 and 5)	CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5); MAS (Proficient or better: Levels 2-3)	CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5); MAS (Proficient or better: Levels 2-3)	CMT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)
9	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 and 5)	School Secure CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5)	School Secure CMT (Proficient or better: Levels 3-5)	School Secure CMT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)
10-12	LAS Links (Proficient or better: Levels 4 and 5)	CAPT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5); MAS (Proficient or better: Levels 2-3)	CAPT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5); MAS (Proficient or better: Levels 2-3)	CAPT (Basic or better: Levels 2-5)

While effective bilingual and ESL programs are essential, an important approach to narrowing the achievement gap should focus on the general education classroom, where ELL students receive most of their instruction. ELLs in general education classrooms need to receive differentiated instruction and ongoing support so they may simultaneously acquire academic vocabulary and content, as well as English language skills. The Connecticut State Board of Education's 2010 adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the CSDE's implementation of them can facilitate these goals. Throughout the adoption, transition and implementation of the CCSS, the CSDE has solicited the involvement of ELL stakeholders to address the unique needs of ELLs. As part of the CCSS implementation process, the CSDE has been training general educators and administrators, as well as other district staff, in effective instructional strategies for ELLs, including making academic content comprehensible to these students. Furthermore, the CSDE created documents and resource materials, such as the CCSS-ELL framework linkages project, that identified instructional links between ELL framework indicators and all CCSS English/language arts standards and standards for mathematical practice. These documents were developed collaboratively by CSDE staff, ESL and bilingual education experts, and should be used for general education curriculum development and revision. Implementation of the CCSS continues, and two ESL consultants, who are members of the leadership team, are further ensuring that the needs of ELLs are addressed.

To address teacher shortages, the CSDE created the Alternate Route to Certification for Teachers of English Language Learners (ARCTELL) program, which includes courses and field work related to teaching ELLs. The certified teachers who complete this program become cross-endorsed in either bilingual education or TESOL. This is potentially very valuable for ELLs and particularly their mastery of academic content, as it brings experienced teachers with content knowledge into ESL and bilingual education.

In winter 2012, the CSDE applied to the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver regarding its NCLB requirements, including its methodology for AYP calculations. This will have implications for LEAs regarding both Title I accountability for the ELL subgroup and for Title III (AMAO 3). In its application, the CSDE affirmed its commitment to reducing the achievement gap.

The CSDE's Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation continues to analyze and make ELL-related data and analysis available to LEAs, stakeholders and the public. These data and analyses may inform LEAs' data-driven decision making. In the 2011-12 school year, the CSDE implemented the use of new, more descriptive ELL program codes in the Public School Information System (PSIS), which is Connecticut's public school student database. These codes were developed in cooperation with a committee of ESL program directors and will be used for further data analysis, including program effectiveness.

Although this bulletin has examined Connecticut's ELLs as a group and contrasted them with other students to highlight their unique characteristics, it is important to remember that ELLs are themselves a heterogeneous group of individual students with varying socio-cultural backgrounds and academic experiences. For example, some ELLs have experienced civic disorder, warfare or natural disasters and may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. ELLs also vary in their previous exposure to both conversational and academic English. Another crucial difference is their level of native language competence. Some ELLs have had limited, irregular or no access to education before enrolling in the U.S. school system.²⁴ In contrast, ELLs who are proficient in their native language may have an advantage in developing English language proficiency. Given all these potential differences among ELLs, some educators advocate differentiation or individualization of ESL instruction, assessment and expectations regarding the pace of student achievement.²⁵ In addition to building basic conversational and social skills, instruction of ELLs must foster the acquisition of academic English language skills because these are essential for long-term academic success and closing the achievement gap.²⁶

Endnotes

1. U.S. Department of Education: Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Notice of Final Interpretation, Federal Register (V:73 N: 202) October 17, 2008.
2. Connecticut State Board of Education (2010). *Position Statement on the Education of Students Who Are English Language Learners*.
3. Totals for school years 2007-08 through 2009-10 combine students coded Mandarin and Chinese. Chinese was discontinued as language code as of the October 2011 PSIS collection, i.e. for the 2011-12 school year. In that collection, Mandarin grew from 181 students the previous October to 1,962 students. Similarly, the number of Cantonese speakers increased from 104 to 574.
4. The CSDE recommended a three-question home language survey to determine the dominant language, including: The first language spoken by the student; the primary language spoken by the student at home; and the primary language spoken by the parent(s) or guardian(s) at home. The dominant language is the answer to two of these questions. LEAs may also use student observation and/or testing to make the final determination of the dominant language. The identification procedure should be done within 30 days for students who have been enrolled since the beginning of the school year and two weeks for those who transferred in after the beginning of the school year.
5. Cummins, J. (1980). The cross-lingual dimensions of language proficiency: Implications for bilingual education and the optimal age issue. *TESOL Quarterly* 14(2).
6. Hakuta, K., Butler, Y.G., & Witt, D. (2000). *How long does it take English learners to reach proficiency?* Santa Barbara: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute Policy Report.
7. Scarcella, R. (2003). *Academic English: A Conceptual Framework*. Technical Reports, University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute, UC Berkeley.
8. Schools identified for a bilingual program must offer one even if they no longer have 20 ELL students speaking the same language.
9. The teacher shortage area designation provides LEAs with greater flexibility to staff positions in shortage areas. Teachers in shortage areas may also qualify for mortgage assistance through CHFA and student loan deferral or forgiveness.
10. The median applicant pool rating for bilingual positions was 1: "Few or no minimally qualified applicants." For TESOL it was 2: "Some

acceptable candidates.” The median divides a distribution of numbers in half, i.e. half are higher and half are lower. See the CSDE’s *Fall Hiring Report, 2011-12*.

11. The CSDE stresses that ESL instruction is part of the Tier I core instruction and only those ELL students for whom Tier I and II interventions have failed should be referred for Tier III services. Each tier provides supports of increasing intensity. See CSDE SRBI document http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/SRBI_full.pdf.
12. The CSDE created DRGs or Districts Reference Groups, which is a systematic grouping of districts based upon similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics, for comparative educational analysis. DRG I includes Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury and Windham. DRG H includes Ansonia, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Meriden, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford and West Haven.
13. For DRG membership, see http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/Files/Pdf/Reports/db_drg_06_2006.pdf
14. Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners. (2011). *English Language Learners and Special Education: A Resource Handbook*. <http://www.capelct.org/>.
15. CTB McGraw-Hill. (2005). *LAS Links Interpretation Guide*.
16. Collier, V., and Thomas, W. (2002). *A National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement*. Final Reports, Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence, UC Berkeley. Gottlieb, M. (2006). *Assessing English Language Learners: Bridges from Language Proficiency to Academic Achievement*. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA. Hakuta, et. al. see footnote 6.
17. Scarcella, see footnote 7.
18. Service time is based upon the most recent, consecutive period of time students received services during their current registration with the LEA they were in when the student took the LAS Links. That is, ELL services received in other LEAs or during enrollments prior to the student’s current one are not included in the student’s service time. Interruptions in services, particularly depending upon their length, may affect students’ English language acquisition. ELLs who have been in multiple LEAs may have also received services that varied significantly by content, intensity and frequency. Therefore, in Title III accountability, the CSDE does not hold LEAs responsible for service time their students received in other LEAs. In Figure 5, two years of services was selected to divide the categories because national research has suggested the BICS proficiency generally takes two years (see Hakuta, et. al. footnote 6).
19. Under NCLB, ELL students in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school (less than 12 months in attendance) may be exempt from taking the reading and writing subsections of the CMT and CAPT, but must take the math and science subsections. Schools in Puerto Rico are not considered to be U.S. schools. Schools can request such test accommodations for ELL students as readers, time extensions, word-to-word translation dictionaries or particular test settings. Based upon their IEP, ELL students who are also receiving special education services may take the Skills Checklist or the Modified Assessment. They may also be eligible for accommodations based upon their disabilities.
20. Hakuta, et. al., see footnote 6.
21. Every five years, the CSDE files an Accountability Plan with the U.S. Department of Education that establishes Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Under Title III, AMAO targets must annually increase. The CSDE annually calculates AMAOs for all Title III subgrantees and, beginning in 2009, it incorporated ESL service time into its AMAO 1 and AMAO 2 calculations. Specifically, ELLs with less than one year of service who do not make Progress or Proficiency are weighted .2, and those with more than one year but less than 2 full years are weighted .4 in the denominators for calculating AMAO 1 and AMAO 2. These weights were selected based upon cohort analysis of LAS Links data which showed that typically 20 percent of first-year ELL students attained proficiency and 40 percent did so in their second year. This method was adopted based upon the U.S. Department of Education’s Notice of Final Interpretation of Title III Accountability Regulations. The CSDE annually reports the AMAO performance of its subgrantees and ELP results for all ELLs.
22. Following Title I AYP standards, Connecticut does not calculate AYP results for subgroups with fewer than 40 students. For AMAO purposes, districts with fewer than 40 students in the ELL subgroup that, therefore, had no AYP score are by default considered to have made AYP. Of the 20 districts whose ELL subgroup was considered to have met AMAO 3 (AYP), nine made AYP or Safe Harbor while 11 had fewer than 40 ELL students in their ELL AYP subgroup.
23. Students must meet both criteria in the same school year in order for the LEA to determine that they have met the Standard. Until they do so, students remain ELL and, as such, are entitled to receive language services and their English proficiency must be annually assessed. The exceptions to this are students who meet the CAPT requirement but are not proficient on the LAS Links. If these students achieve proficiency on the LAS Links in the next academic year, they can be considered to have met mastery without retaking the CAPT. The reason is that the academic content does not change by grade for those who retake the CAPT, unlike the CMT.
24. Gottlieb, see footnote 12.
25. Gottlieb, see footnote 12.
26. Scarcella, see footnote 17.

Data Notes: General public school data and ELL figures, program statistics and demographics are from the Public School Information System (PSIS) October collection. Teacher shortage area information is from the ED 156 Fall Hiring Survey. Special education data is from the Special Education Data Application and Collection (SEDAC). School discipline data is from the ED 166 Disciplinary Offense collection. LAS Links and English Mastery results are from the ELL database. CMT and CAPT data are from the CSDE’s official test files.

Appendix A: AMAO One (Progress) and AMAO Two (Proficiency) Targets, School Years 2008-2013

School Year	AMAO 1 (Progress)	AMAO 2 (Proficiency)
2008-09	72%	22%
2009-10	74%	24%
2010-11	76%	26%
2011-12	78%	28%
2012-13	80%	30%

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