

English Learners in Oregon

Annual Report 2020-21

June 2022



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DEPARTMENT OF
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Executive Summary

ORS 327.016 directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to prepare an annual report on English learner program funding and student outcomes. The report's intention is to describe the population of English Learners in Oregon and provide a summary of district and state progress towards meeting their needs and objectives. This report is also available on the [ODE website](#). Any member of the public can contact the Government Relations and External Affairs Director to request a copy of this report.

Definitions

ORS 327.016 describes students who receive English language instruction, supports, and services as part of an English language development (ELD) program as English learners. While these students are learning English in an ELD program, the English learner label only focuses on a singular dimension (i.e., learning English) and does not reflect the linguistic and cultural assets of the students (García, 2009). Thus, although this report will use the English Learner label in order to comply with ORS 327.016, we recognize these students are multilingual and value their linguistic and cultural assets.

The ODE annually reports four groups of English learners: current, former, ever, and never English learners. Current English learners are multilingual students who were learning English in an ELD program during the 2020-21 school year¹. Former English learners are multilingual students who demonstrated English proficiency and exited an ELD program prior to the 2020-21 school year. Ever English learners are the combination of both current and former English learners. Finally, never English learners are monolingual English or multilingual students who were not eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program before or during the 2020-21 school year.

English Learners in Oregon's K-12 schools

As of May 1, 2021, 557,723 students enrolled in Oregon public schools and districts. Among those students, 9.6 percent were current English learners (53,677 students), 8.7 percent were former English learners (48,663 students), and 81.7 percent were never English learners (455,383 students). Both current and former English learners (i.e., ever English learners and 18.3 percent of students) were an incredibly diverse student population in 2020-21. These students brought rich linguistic and cultural heritages to their classrooms, schools, and communities.

The distribution of current English learners varied across grade levels and districts in Oregon during the 2020-21 school year. The district with the highest percentage of current English learners was Woodburn School District, with 36.2 percent of its student population learning English in an ELD program as of May 1, 2021. On the other hand, 49 percent of Oregon districts either had no current English learners or very few (i.e., less than 5 percent of all students).

Other key features of the English learner student population in the 2020-21 school year include the following:

¹ Note that current English learners also include students who are eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program but do not participate because their parents or guardians waive English language instruction, supports, and services.

- The majority of current English learners were in elementary grades (62.7 percent), while the majority of former English learners were in high school grades.
- The number of recently arrived current English learners (i.e., new immigrant students) declined from 4,925 in 2019-20 to 4,373 students in 2020-21.
- Spanish was the predominant home language of current English learners (76.3 percent), but overall there were 181 unique home languages spoken by current English learners. Other prevalent languages include Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Chuukese, and Somali.
- Approximately 76.6 percent of current English learners were Latino/a/x, and 29.8 percent of Latino/a/x students were current English learners. Nearly the same percentage of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students (28.5 percent) were current English learners.

Participation in targeted programs

The report also examines the involvement of English learners in targeted federal and state programs: free or reduced price meals, special education, migrant education, and the talented and gifted (TAG) program.

Key findings include the following:

- A higher percentage of both current and former English learners were eligible for free or reduced price meals as compared to students who were never English Learners (86.3 and 79.2 percent vs. 58.8 percent).
- A higher percentage of current English learners received special education services and supports as compared to never English learners (21.1 vs. 15.2 percent); however, ever English learners and never English learners had similar percentages of students receiving special education services and supports (14.6 vs. 15.2 percent).
- Almost 11.0 percent of current English learners received services in migrant education programs (i.e., 5,930 students).
- While across Oregon 7.2 percent of never English learners participated in TAG programs, this figure was 5.6 percent for former English learners and just 0.3 percent for current English learners.

Progress towards English Language Proficiency

Oregon monitors whether or not current English learners are on-track to attain English language proficiency within seven years. A little more than half of current English learners (55 percent) in elementary school grades were on track. In contrast, current English learners in middle or high school grades as well as current English learners with disabilities were much less likely to be on track.

Student Academic Outcomes in English Language Arts and Mathematics

Data pertaining to English language arts and mathematics achievement for current, former, and never English learners are unavailable due to low and uneven assessment participation in 2020-21.

Attendance

Former and never English learners have the highest levels of regular attendance in elementary school grades. Current English learners have rates of regular attendance substantially lower in elementary, middle, and high school grades. Regular attendance rates decline considerably for current, former, and never English learners in middle and high school grades.

Graduation

Former English learners graduated at rates similar to or better than never English learners (84.2 vs. 81.1 percent); however, substantially fewer current English learners graduated in four years (64.4 percent).

Post-secondary enrollment

Post-secondary enrollment rates for former English learners were very similar to those of never English learners; in both cases, about 62.0 percent of high school graduates enroll in college within 16 months of graduation. On the other hand, current English learners were less likely to enroll in post-secondary education institutions. About 42.0 percent of current English learners went on to college within 16 months of high school graduation.

District revenues and expenditures

As in reports from previous years, this report summarizes the ratio of expenditures to revenues. In 2020-21, that ratio was 0.95, slightly less than it was in 2019-20.

Introduction

In 2020-21, students who received English language instruction, supports, and services in an English language development (ELD) program as well as students who exited the ELD program prior to the 2020-21 school year made up 18.0 percent of all students in Oregon public schools and districts (as of the first school day in May 2021). They form a vital part of our student communities and bring a variety of cultural and linguistic assets that enrich our schools and districts. This report describes this diverse population of students, examines their academic progress and achievement, and summarizes information about key aspects of the education they receive in our state.

Why this report?

ORS 327.016 directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to prepare an annual report on English learner program funding and student outcomes. The report's intention is to describe the population of English Learners in Oregon and provide a summary of district and state progress towards meeting their needs and objectives in ELD programs. ORS 327.016 requires ODE to include the following information in the annual report:

- English learner student demographics.
- Length of participation in ELD programs.
- Participation in special education and related services.
- Other information identified by the ODE.

In addition, the annual report must include the following financial information:

- Allocations to each school district from the State School Fund for students enrolled in ELD programs.
- The extent to which districts expend these allocations for students enrolled in ELD programs.
- The categories of expenditures for ELD program funding.

Each annual report looks back at the prior school year, which for this year is the 2020-21 school year. This report will be available on the ODE website, submitted to House and Senate Education Committees, and provided to district school boards. State law requires the report to be available to the public at the district's main office and on the district's website.

Definitions

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The ODE annually reports four groups of English learners: current, former, ever, and never English learners. Current English learners are multilingual students who were learning English in an ELD program during the

2020-21 school year². Former English learners are multilingual students who demonstrated English proficiency and exited an ELD program prior to the 2020-21 school year. Ever English learners are the combination of both current and former English learners. Finally, never English learners are monolingual or multilingual students who were not eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program before or during the 2020-21 school year.

Structure of this report

This report consists of five sections:

Section 1: Demographics of English Learners

Section 2: Participation in Targeted Programs

Section 3: Language Development and Academic Achievement

Section 4: Attendance, Progress toward Graduation, Graduation, and Beyond

Section 5: State Revenues and Expenditures for English Learners

Several aspects of this year's report differ from the reports the ODE issued in previous years. For example, where appropriate, this report provides comparisons to never English learners (i.e., students not eligible to receive services from an ELD program). Furthermore, in addition to describing statewide patterns, in some cases the report indicates which districts serve high percentages of certain types of students (e.g., students participating in migrant education programs).

² Note that current English learners also include students who are eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program but do not participate because their parents or guardians waive English language instruction, supports, and services.

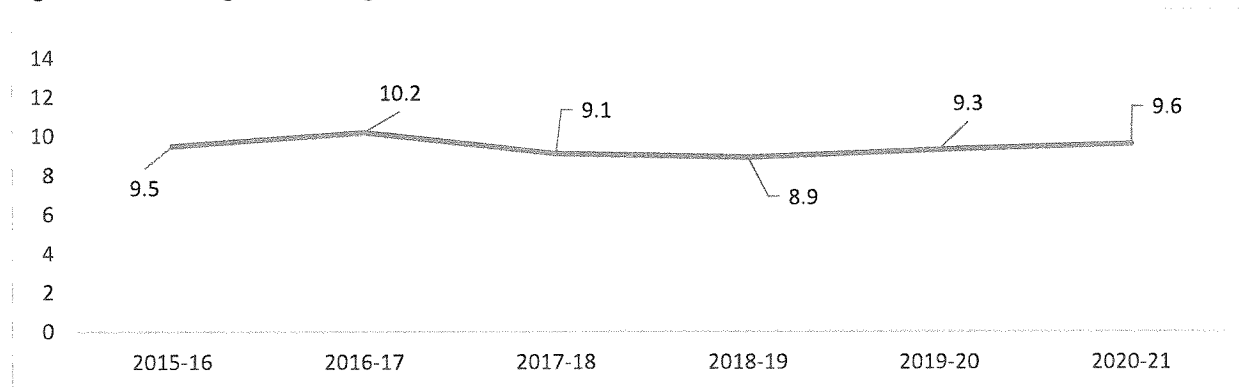
Section 1: Demographics of English Learners in Oregon in 2020-21

As of the first school day in May 2021, 557,723 students enrolled in Oregon public schools and districts. Among those students, 9.6 percent were current English learners (53,677 students), 8.7 percent were former English learners (48,663 students), and 81.7 percent were never English learners (455,383 students). Both current and former English learners were an incredibly diverse student population in 2020-21 (representing 18.3 percent of all students). These students brought a rich linguistic and cultural heritage to their classrooms, schools, and communities. This section summarizes the demographics of Oregon's English learner population, considering grade levels, interruptions in formal education among newcomer immigrant students, and racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

Current and Former English Learners

Current English Learners are multilingual students who are learning English in an ELD program during the school year³. They receive English language instruction, supports, and services because they are not proficient in English. The reason for the lack of English proficiency is because English is not their native language or they come from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their English proficiency. In 2020-21, 53,677 of Oregon's 557,723 K-12 students, or 9.6 percent, were current English learners⁴ (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of all Oregon students who were current English Learners (2015-16 to 2020-21).



A similar number of students in 2020-21 (48,663 or 8.7 percent) were former English learners. Former English learners are multilingual students who demonstrated English proficiency and exited an ELD program prior to the 2020-21 school year. Research does suggest, however, that former English learners may still need support to develop high levels of proficiency in academic English (i.e., the language students need in order to be successful in school; see de Jong 2004; Flores, Batalova & Fix, 2012).

Comparisons between current, former, ever, and never English learners are useful to understand the experiences and outcomes of current English learners. Note that ever English learners are the combination of

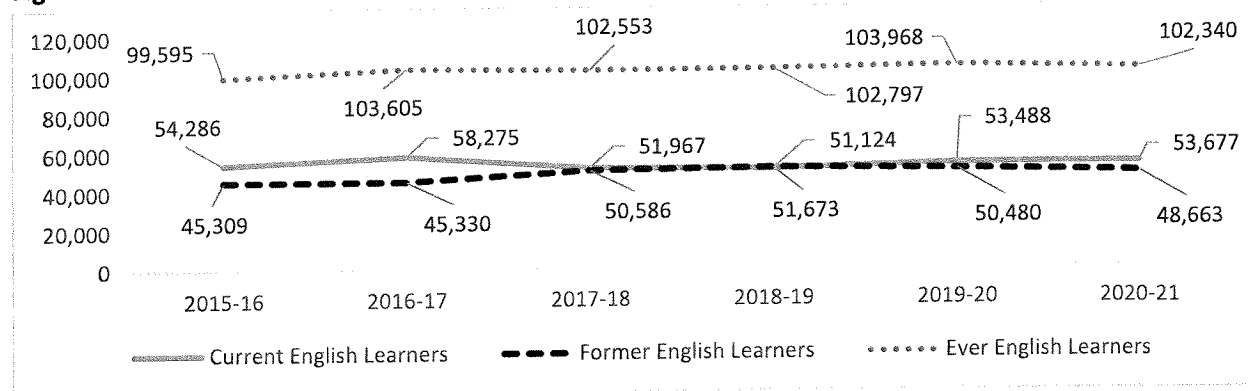
³ Note that current English learners also include students who are eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program but do not participate because their parents or guardians waive English language instruction, supports, and services.

⁴ The data for this portion of the report relies on student enrollments as of the first school day in May 2021.

current and former English learners, and never English learners are monolingual English or multilingual students who are not eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program before or during the school year. Without these comparisons, it can be easy to underestimate the achievement of current English Learners, who tend to perform at lower levels while still developing English. However, once current English learners attain English language proficiency, they often perform academically at significantly higher levels (Thompson, Umansky, & Rew, 2022; Hopkins, Thompson, Linqanti, Hakuta, & August, 2013).

Figure 2 shows the change in the count of current, former, and ever English learners in Oregon over the last six school years. In general, it displays a slightly fluctuating population of ever English learners in Oregon, starting at 99,595 in 2015-16 and, after increasing and declining for a couple years, reaching 102,340 students in 2020-21.

Figure 2. Number of current, former, and ever English Learners in Oregon (2015-16 to 2020-21).

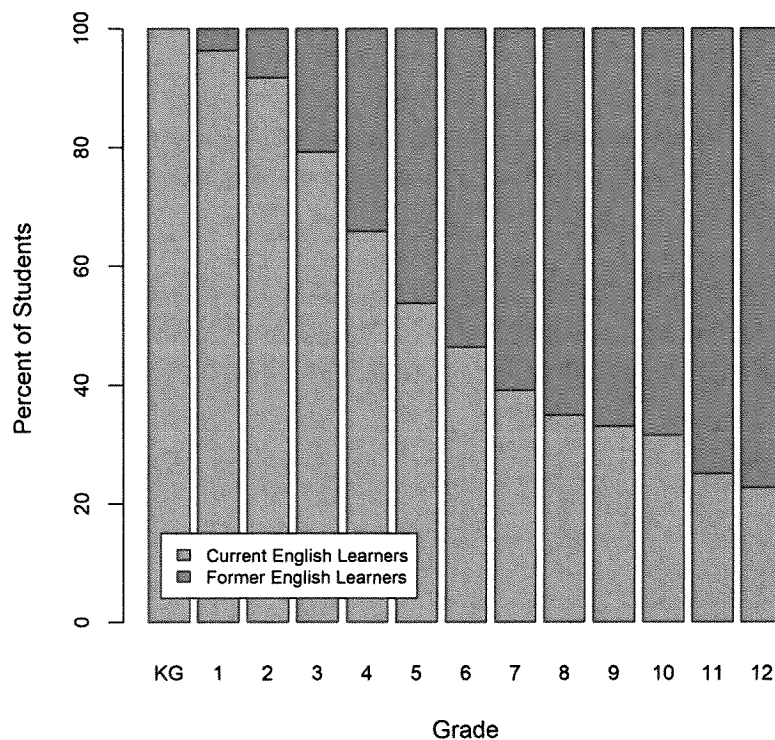


Characteristics of current English Learners in Oregon

The majority of current English Learners were in the elementary grades.

Although there were current English learners at every grade level, approximately two-thirds (62.7 percent) were in kindergarten through fifth grade. Far fewer current English learners were in middle school (grades 6-8; 19.2 percent) or in high school (grades 9-12; 18.1 percent). Figure 3 shows the percent of current and former English learners by grade in 2020-21. As the grade level increases from kindergarten to twelfth grade, the percent of current English learners decreases as they attain English proficiency and exit their ELD programs (subsequently, this results in an increase of former English learners).

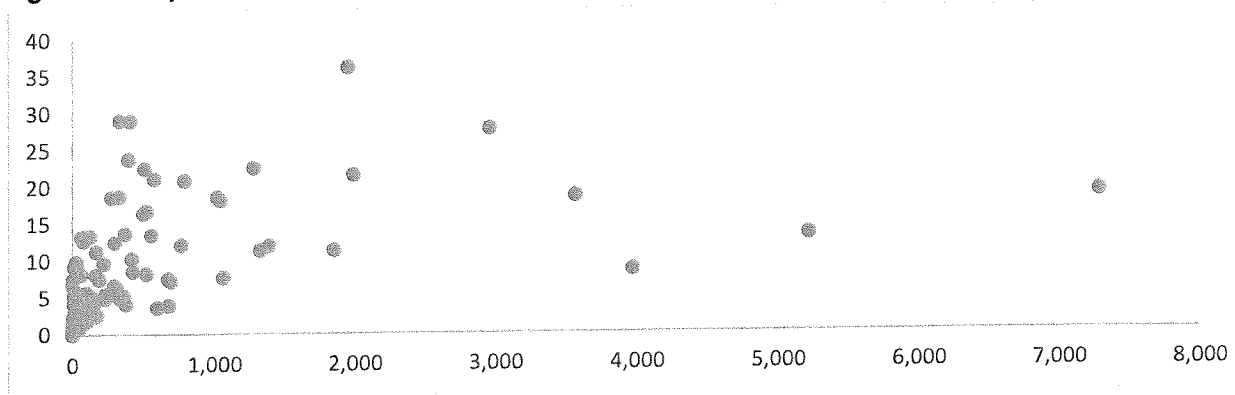
Figure 3. Comparison of the percentage of current and former English learners by grade in 2020-21.



English Learner enrollment was not uniform across Oregon districts.

Oregon has 196 school districts. In 2020-21, 146 districts provided English language instruction, supports, and services to current English learners; however, 50 districts did not have any current English learner enrollments. An additional 47 districts provided English language instruction, supports, and services to between 1 and 19 current English learners. This suggests these districts have too few current English learners to be eligible for specific improvement efforts under state and federal accountability initiatives.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of current English learners across Oregon districts. The total number of current English learners in 2020-21 is on the x-axis. While most districts are at the left hand corner, with zero or few current English learners, there were five districts with more than 2,000 current English learners. As some of those districts were larger, however, even large populations of current English learners might make up fewer than 8 percent of the student population (see the y-axis). Thus, in 2020-21, districts experienced very different situations in terms of both the number of current English learners and/or the percentage of their student population who received English language instruction, supports, and services.

Figure 4. Comparison of the number and percentage of current English learners by district in 2020-21.

This variation across districts is also evident in table 1, which shows the five districts with the highest numbers of current English learners (i.e., Salem-Keizer, Beaverton, Portland, Hillsboro, and Reynolds), as well as the five districts with the highest percentage of current English learners (i.e., Woodburn, Nyssa, Umatilla, Reynolds, and Milton-Freewater). Note that only Reynolds appears in both lists. Moreover, many of those districts with the highest percentage of current English learners have comparatively small numbers of students.

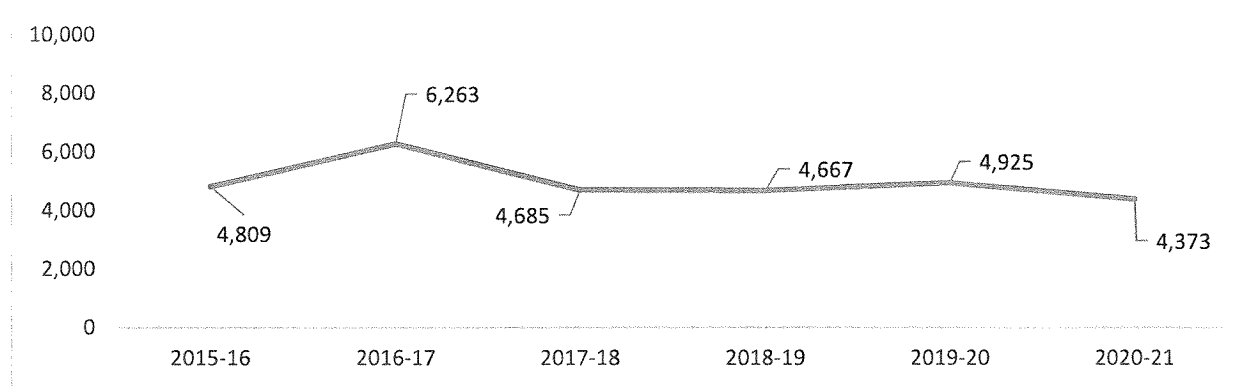
Table 1. Districts with the highest number and percentage of current English learners in 2020-21.

District Name	Number of Current English Learners	Percentage of Current English Learners
Salem-Keizer	7,286	18.8%
Beaverton	5,219	13.2%
Portland	3,968	8.5%
Hillsboro	3,565	18.6%
Reynolds	2,961	27.8%
David Douglas	1,991	21.6%
Woodburn	1,953	36.2%
Nyssa	336	29.0%
Umatilla	411	29.0%
Milton-Freewater	396	23.8%

The number of recent arrivers declined in 2020-21.

The term recent arrivers refers to students who were born outside of the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and who have been educated in the U.S. for fewer than three cumulative years (i.e., these students are recent immigrants). They can be current, former, or never English learners; however, the majority are current English learners.

In 2020-21, 4,373 current English learners were recent arrivers. This number represents the smallest count of recent arrivers over the last six years and continues the reduction from 2016-17 (6,263; see figure 5).

Figure 5. Number of current English learners who were recent arrivals in Oregon (2015-16 to 2020-21).

Most recent arrivals (60.6 percent) were in the elementary grades, while 16.3 percent were in grades 6-8 and 23.1 percent were in high school. Current English learners who are recent arrivals in middle and high school generally face particularly big challenges, since they have to learn the language while also using English-language textbooks and lectures to learn the content of their courses in a variety of subject areas (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Recent arrivals in the secondary grades are known as adolescent newcomers, and districts sometimes design specialized programs to serve their unique language and cultural needs.

Statewide, the total number of current English learners who were adolescent newcomers in 2020-21 was 1,723. Not all districts provided English language instruction, support, and services to adolescent newcomers; however, five Oregon districts had at least 100 such students in 2020-21 (see table 2).

Table 2. Districts providing English language instruction, support, and services to at least 100 adolescent newcomers in 2020-21.

District	Number of Adolescent Newcomers (Recently Arrived Current English Learners in Middle or High School)
Beaverton	226
Salem-Keizer	199
Portland	183
Reynolds	148
David Douglas	100

In 2020-21, 690 current English learners had experienced interruptions in their education.

Some current and former English learners had their education interrupted or received limited formal education before arriving in the U.S. school system. Often, these were immigrant or refugee students who had spent time in refugee camps or whose process of immigration to the U.S. prevented them from attending school for a time. These students are known as students with limited or interrupted formal education (often abbreviated as SIFE or SLIFE). Students are SLIFE if they are immigrant students or English learners who enter school in the U.S. after grade two and experience all of the following:

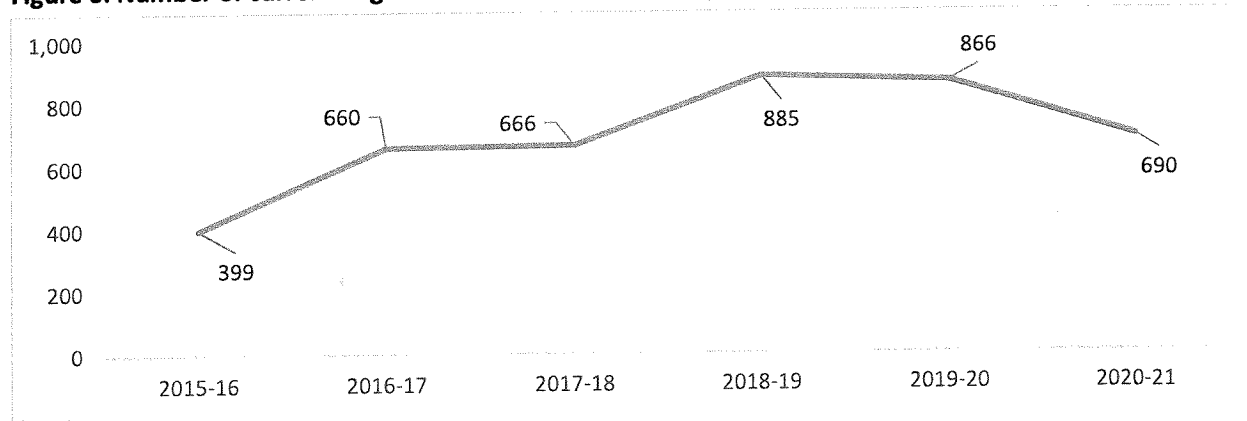
- a. have at least two fewer years of schooling than their peers of the same age,

- b. function at least two years below grade level expectations in reading and mathematics, and
- c. be preliterate in their native language.⁵

SLIFE students face unique circumstances. In addition to having missed at least two years of schooling, some arrive having experienced significant trauma. Schools need to find ways to serve SLIFE students without placing them in classes with younger students, since forming relationships with peers, including never English learner peers, is a factor that appears to improve academic outcomes (Browder 2014).

The ODE began collecting data on the number of students with limited or interrupted formal education in 2015-16. For the 2020-21 school year, districts reported 866 current English learners with limited or interrupted formal education (about 1.6 percent of all current English learners). As figure 6 illustrates, the number of students with limited or interrupted formal education increased from 2015-16 to 2018-19 but decreased in 2020-21.

Figure 6. Number of current English learners with an interrupted formal education (2015-16 to 2020-21).



Most students with limited or interrupted formal education were in high school (62.2 percent). Another 25.1 percent were in the middle school grades (grades 6-8), and only 12.8 percent were in the elementary grades.

In 2020-21, the distribution of current English learners with limited or interrupted formal education was not uniform across Oregon districts. Instead, current English learners with limited or interrupted formal education were, for the most part, concentrated in a few districts. Six districts in Oregon, identified in table 3, provided English language instruction, supports, and services to at least 20 current English learners with limited or interrupted formal education in 2020-21. These six districts alone enrolled 75.5 percent of all SLIFE students in Oregon. Note that three of the five districts serving many adolescent newcomers (see table 2) also enroll a significant numbers of current English learners with interrupted formal education (i.e., Portland, Beaverton, Reynolds, and Hillsboro).

⁵ See [ESEA Title III English Learner Definitions](#) for more details.

Table 3. Districts serving at least 20 current English learners with interrupted formal education in 2020-21.

District	Number of Current English Learners with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education
Hillsboro	147
Hermiston	96
Portland	89
Beaverton	81
Reynolds	79
Morrow	29

Current English learners across the state spoke 181 unique home languages.

Statewide, current English learners spoke about 181 different languages at home. By far the most prevalent home language among Oregon current English learners was Spanish, spoken at home by 76.3 percent of all current English learners. The four next most common languages were Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic. Taken together, these top five languages represent 84.7 percent of home languages among current English learners (see table 4). In recent years, the number of current English learners speaking Somali, Mesoamerican languages, and other languages has been increasing. The ODE is updating the way districts report the home languages of current English learners to allow for more accurate reporting in the future.

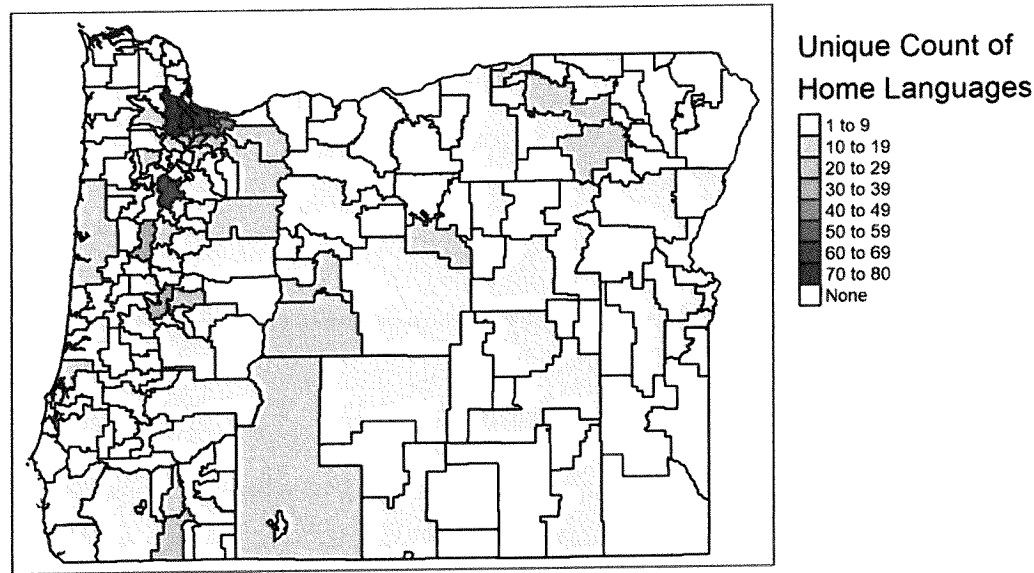
Table 4. Most prevalent home languages among current English learners in 2020-21.

Language	Number of Current English Learners with this Language	Percentage of Current English Learners with this Language
Spanish	40,973	76.3
Russian	1,360	2.5
Vietnamese	1,235	2.3
Chinese	1,082	2.0
Arabic	829	1.5
Chuukese	626	1.2
English ⁶	613	1.1
Somali	580	1.1
Ukrainian	391	0.7
Japanese	342	0.6
Marshallese	342	0.6
Mayan languages	273	0.5

Home languages other than Spanish tend to concentrate in a few districts. Figure 6 provides a map illustrating the number of different home languages in different Oregon districts. A few districts, mostly in the Portland metropolitan area and Salem, provide English language instruction, supports, and services to students with over 60 unique home languages.

⁶ All 613 current English Learners with English as the home language were American Indian/Alaska Native students.

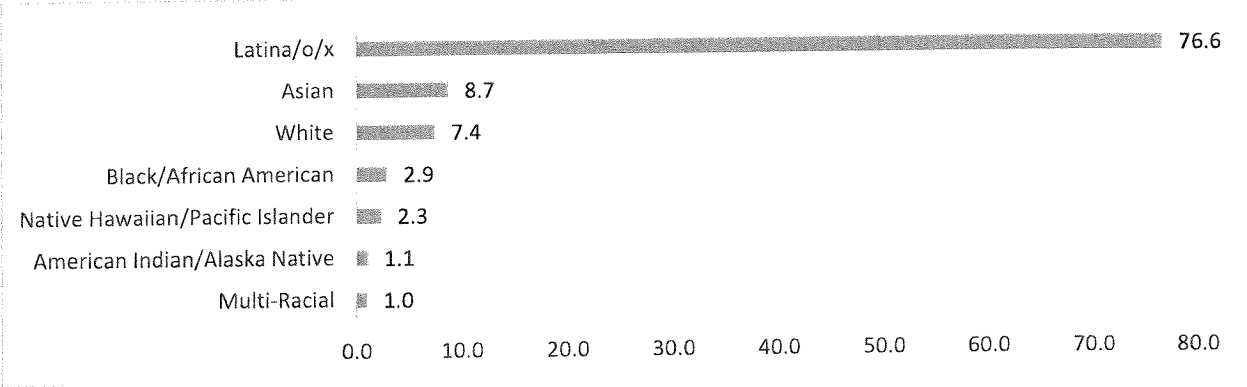
Figure 7. Geographic distribution current English learner home languages across Oregon districts during 2020-21.



The vast majority of current English learners were Latina/o/x.

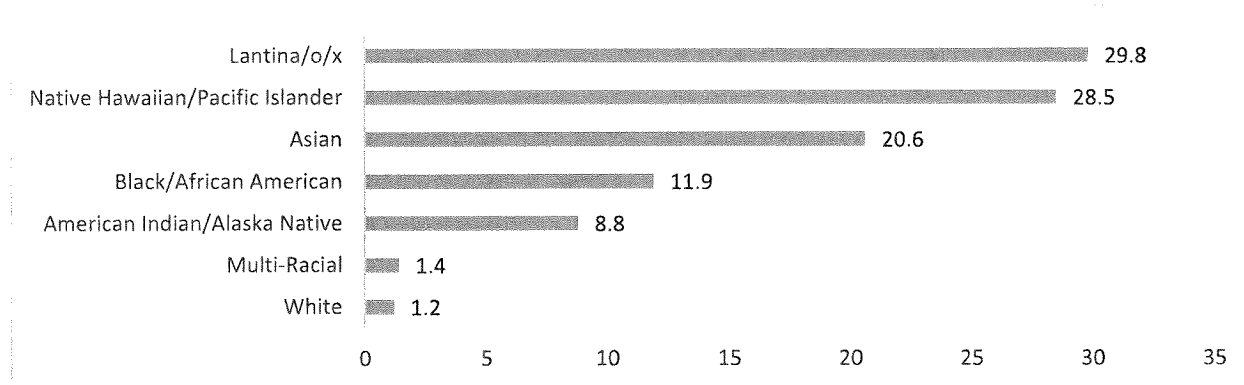
Of the 53,677 current English learners in Oregon during the 2020-21 school year, 41,110 (76.6 percent) were Latina/o/x. Slightly over 16.1 percent were White and Asian, while smaller percentages were Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Multi-Racial (see figure 8).

Figure 8. Percentage of current English learners by race/ethnicity in 2020-21.



It is important to note that most Latina/o/x students in Oregon were not current English learners. In fact, according to figure 9, only 29.8 percent of Latina/o/x students were current English learners in 2020-21. Moreover, 28.5 percent of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students were current English learners.

Figure 9. Percentage of each racial/ethnic group who were current English learners in 2020-21.



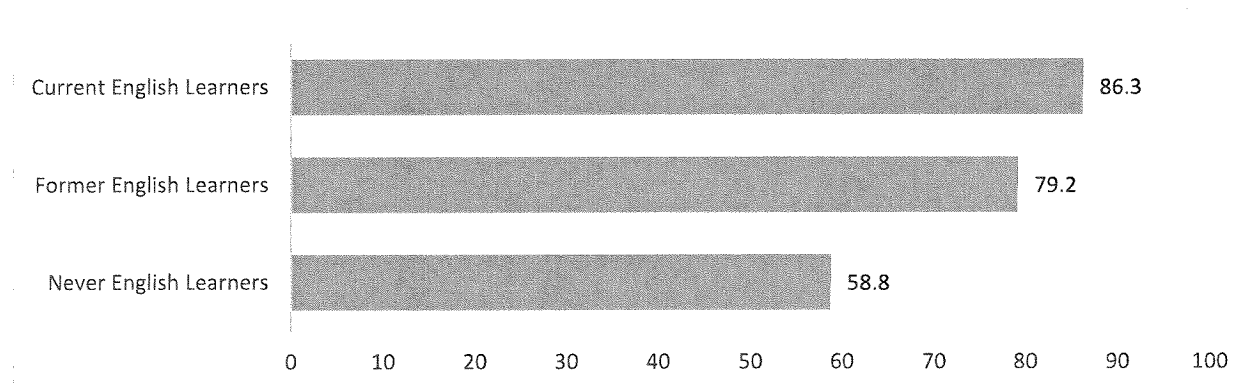
Section 2: Participation in Targeted Programs

Schools and districts deliver a range of programs that aim to address the needs of particular groups of students. These include free or reduced price meals, special education, migrant education, and TAG programs. Most of these programs receive some federal funding; however, TAG programs receive only state funding. This section of the report describes the participation of English learners in each of these programs during the 2020-21 school year.

Free or Reduced Price Meals

Students who come from low-income families (those earning below 185 percent of the federal poverty line) are eligible for free or reduced price meals. The percentage of students receiving free or reduced price meals is an estimate of the level of poverty or economic disadvantage in a school. It is an imprecise measure, since some eligible students and families never apply to the program; however, it provides the best data currently available to compare poverty and economic disadvantage levels across schools and districts. According to figure 10, current and former English learners are much more likely than never English learners to be eligible for free or reduced price meals. This suggests that households for current and former English learners are more likely to experience poverty and economic disadvantage. Overall, 86.3 percent of current English learners come from economically disadvantaged households.

Figure 10. Percentage of current, former, and never English learners receiving free or reduced price meals in 2020-21.



Special Education

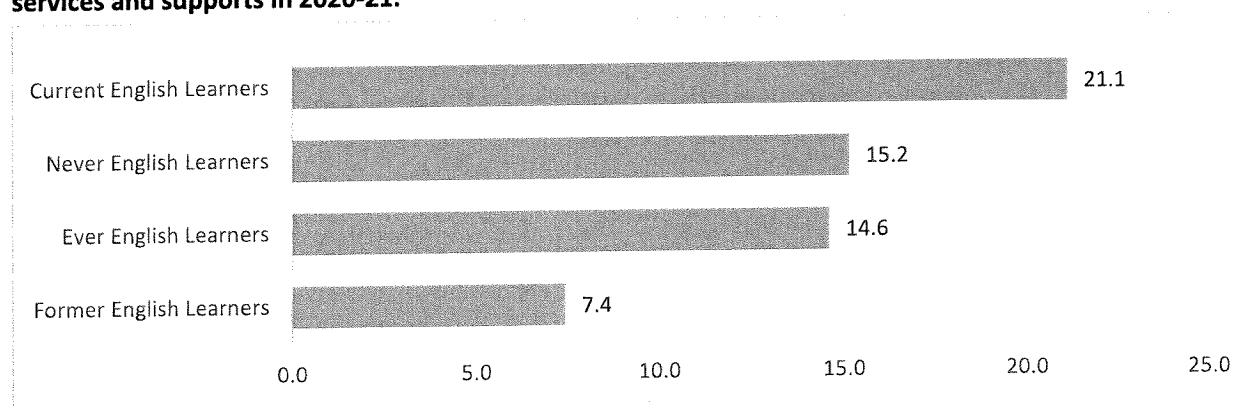
Students who are current English learners and receive special education services and supports are known as dual-identified students, since they receive instruction, supports, and services from two programs (i.e., English language and special education).

There is concern in the field about the difficulty of accurately identifying current English learners who need special education services and supports. Schools may incorrectly identify current English learners as having a learning disability when, in fact, it is their developing English proficiency that adversely influences their educational progress. On the other hand, some schools may overlook genuine disabilities, assuming that current English learners just need more time to learn English. Both identification challenges are prevalent not only in Oregon but across the United States (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez Lopez & Damico, 2007).

Ever English learners and never English learners received special education services and supports at about the same rate.

As figure 11 illustrates, a far higher rate of current English learners (21.1 percent) received special education services and supports as compared to former (7.4 percent) and never English learners (15.2 percent). However, the percentage of ever English learners (the combination of current and former English learners) receiving services and supports is very similar to that for never English learners.

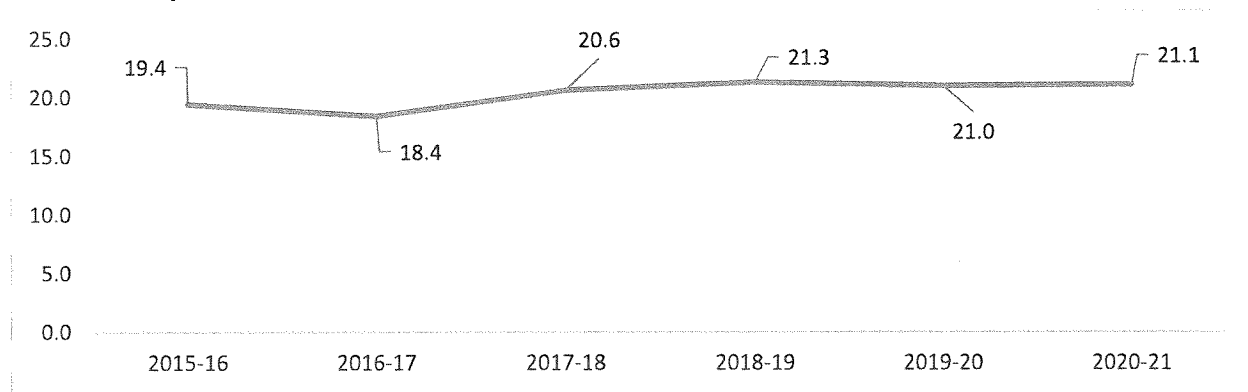
Figure 11. Percentage of current, former, never, and ever English learners receiving special education services and supports in 2020-21.



The percentage of current English learners receiving special education slightly increased in 2020-21.

In 2020-21, 11,337 current English learners (21.1 percent) were receiving special education supports and services. The number of current English learners receiving special education services and supports in 2020-21 represents a very slight increase from the year before, when 21.0 percent of current English learners received special education services and supports (see figure 12).

Figure 12. Percentage of current English learners receiving special education services and supports (2015-16 to 2020-21).



Most dual-identified students in 2020-21 had a specific learning disability (3,665 students) or a speech or language impairment (3,092 students) as their primary disability.⁷ Other primary disabilities, in order of frequency in 2020-21, include other health impairments, autism, intellectual disability, emotional behavior disability, deaf or hard of hearing, orthopedic impairment, visual impairments including blindness, traumatic brain injury, and deaf-blindness.

Migrant Education

Some English learners also participate in migrant education programs. Students are eligible for migrant education programs if their parent or guardian is a migratory worker and they move from one school district to another during the regular school year. Many migrant children live in poverty, and when they move, they confront the challenges of having to adjust to different teachers with different instructional approaches and materials, as well as building new social connections. The intention of migrant education programs is to ensure that migrant children receive the support that addresses their unique situation and are able to receive supports to succeed academically.

11 percent of current English learners received services from Migrant Education Programs in 2020-21.

Across the state in the 2020-21, 5,930 current English learners participated in migrant education programs. That number translates to 11.0 percent of all current English learners. It also means that approximately half (49.7 percent) of the 11,943 students in migrant education programs were current English Learners in 2020-21. Moreover, 39.0 percent of students in migrant education programs in 2020-21 were former English learners. This also implies that 88.7 percent of the 11,943 students who received services from migrant education programs were ever English learners.⁸

⁷ A specific learning disability refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language that may manifest itself in difficulties in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or doing math calculations. A speech or language impairment refers to a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, or a language or voice impairment that adversely affects a students' learning or educational performance.

⁸ The data for this portion of the report relies on student enrollments as of the first school day in May 2021.

Approximately 103 districts received federal funds in the 2020-21 school year to support their migrant education programs. Districts that did not receive federal funding in 2020-21 did not have eligible students enrolled in their schools and programs. Ten districts had more than 150 current English learners participating in their migrant education program in 2020-21 (see table 5).

Table 5. Districts with over 150 current English learners participating in migrant education programs in 2020-21.

District	Number of Current ELs in Migrant Education	District	Number of Current ELs in Migrant Education
Salem-Keizer	616	Nyssa	244
Hillsboro	482	Beaverton	184
Woodburn	447	Hood River County	173
Medford	346	Canby	160
Forest Grove	302	North Wasco County	155

Talented and Gifted

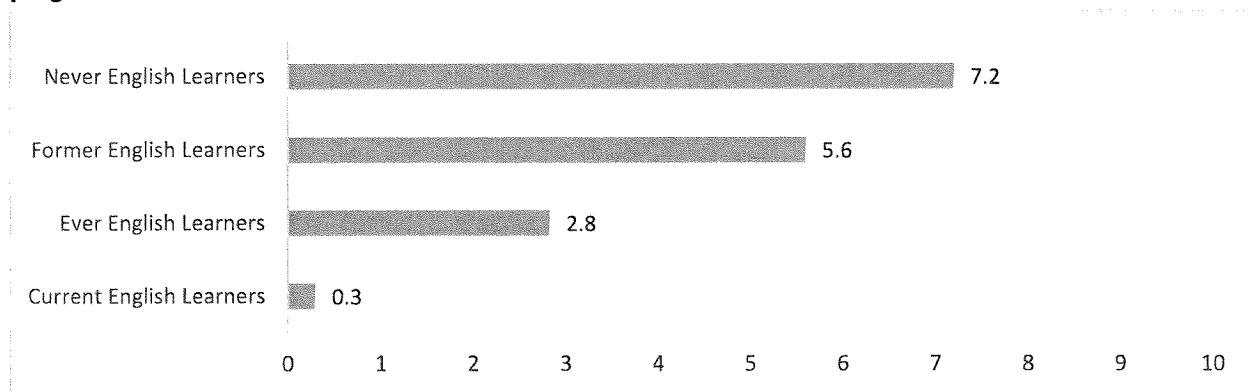
The state requires that all school districts establish policies and procedures to identify students to participate in TAG programs. These students may have high general intelligence and/or demonstrate unusual academic ability in one or more particular areas. State law requires districts to develop a plan to provide programs and services beyond regular school programs in order to ensure that eligible students can develop and realize their potential.

Correctly identifying students for TAG programs and providing specialized services is important because these students may have both unique talents and face unique challenges. For example, some TAG students struggle with perfectionism and the ability to cope with failure. Others engage only selectively at school and have high levels of absenteeism. Recent findings from the ODE suggest that approximately 10 percent of TAG students drop out of high school (Allen, 2016).

Current English Learners were rarely eligible for TAG Programs.

According to figure 13, 7.2 percent of never English learners (32,616 students) were eligible for TAG programs in 2020-21. While 5.6 percent of former English learners were eligible (2,725 students) and 5.9 percent of ever English learners were eligible (2,893 students), less than 1 percent of current English learners were eligible for TAG programs in 2020-21 (168 students). Never English learners were 24 times more likely to be eligible than current English learners in 2020-21 ($7.2 \text{ percent} \div 0.3 \text{ percent} = 24$).

Figure 13. Percentage of current, former, ever, and never English learners who participated in a TAG program in 2020-21.



Section 3: Language Development and Academic Outcomes for English Learners

Students who are current English learners have to develop proficiency in English. In addition and at the same time, they must learn all the same academic content as other students in Oregon. This section of the report provides data about English language proficiency and academic outcomes of current English learners (with comparisons to former, ever, and never English learners).

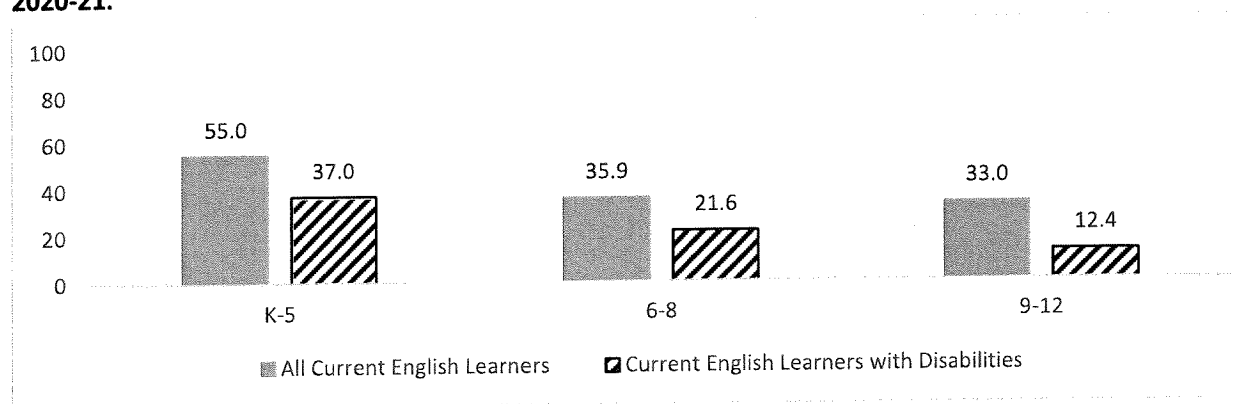
Progress towards English Language Proficiency

Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires current English learners to take an English language proficiency assessment (ELPA) annually. The ELPA measures a student's proficiency in the domains of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Students who demonstrate proficiency on all four ELPA domains are ready to exit the ELD program. Since 2016-17, the ODE monitors whether current English learners are on track to attain English language proficiency using a trajectory expectation model. Current English learners are on track if their current ELPA domain performance meets or exceeds trajectory expectations given (1) initial ELPA domain performance, (2) years identified as a current English learner, and (3) disability and/or an interrupted formal education status.

According to figure 14, as the grade level increases, the percentage of current English learners on track to attain English language proficiency decreases from 55.0 percent in elementary school grades to 33.0 percent in high schools grades. Furthermore, the same pattern is evident for current English learners with disabilities where the percentage decreases from 37.0 percent in elementary school grades to 12.4 percent in high school grades. To some extent, the decrease in the percentage of current English learners on track to attain English language proficiency from elementary to high school grades is not a surprise due to the annual exiting of current English learners. This has a considerable impact on the composition of current English learners across grade levels. Thus, inferences and comparisons across grade levels and between groups of current English learners (e.g., those with and without disabilities) must use caution.⁹

⁹ It is also important to note that ELPA participation was low and uneven in 2020-21 (i.e., the participation rate was approximately 38 percent). Not all current English learners had a safe and in-person opportunity to take the ELPA.

Figure 14. Percentage of all current English learners and current English learners with disabilities on track to attain English language proficiency by elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school grades (9-12) in 2020-21.



Long-term current English learners made up 20.0 percent of all current English learners.

Parents and communities have concerns about the ability of Oregon’s schools and districts to ensure current English learners attain English language proficiency and exit an ELD program within an appropriate amount of time. Current English learners who are unable to meet proficiency expectations after a period of time are known as long-term current English Learners. The ODE defines a long-term current English learner as a student who receives English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program for more than seven years.

In 2020-21, most current English learners (80.0 percent) were not long-term current English learners; however, this means that 20.0 percent of current English learners received English language instruction, supports, and services for more than seven years. This is a concern because slower development of English language proficiency is highly predictive of other academic challenges (Menken & Kleyn, 2009). An important point to consider is the ability of Oregon’s schools and districts to meet the needs of current English learners. This is particularly salient given that 37.8 percent of current English learners with disabilities received English language instruction, supports, and services for more than seven years in 2020-21.

Approximately 15 percent of current English learners receiving special education services and supports developed English language proficiency in six years.

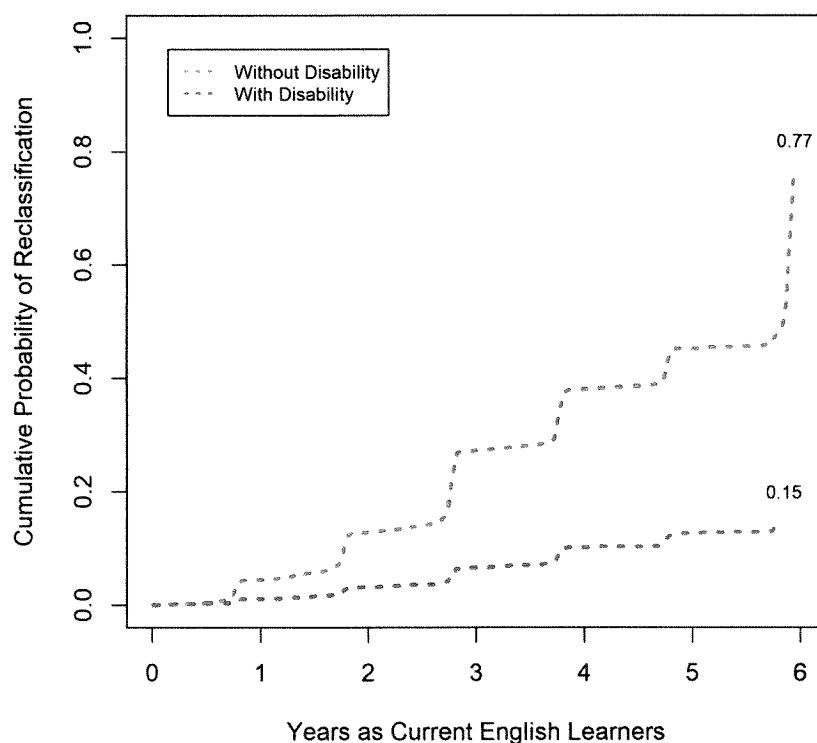
It is also useful to look at the development of English language proficiency from another angle, namely, what proportion of current English learners develop proficiency within a particular amount of time?

This measure uses data for all current English learners who received English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program in 2020-21 regardless of the length, start, or end of enrollment. While most of the data in this report rely on the first school day in May 2021 as a snapshot, this measure includes all current English learners (even those not enrolled on the first school day in May 2021).

Figure 15 addresses this question for current English learners with and without disabilities. For current English learners without disabilities who began receiving English language instruction, supports, and services

on or after July 1, 2015, the probability of reclassification (i.e., attaining English language proficiency and exiting an ELD program) after six years is 0.77 (or, after multiplying by 100, 77 percent). That is, 77 percent of the current English learners without disabilities attained English language proficiency and exited an ELD program after six years. On the other hand, only 15 percent of current English learners with disabilities attained English language proficiency and exited an ELD program after six years.

Figure 15. Probability of reclassification for current English learners with and without disabilities after six years (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2021).



Student Academic Outcomes in English Language Arts and Mathematics

Per the ESSA, all students must take annual summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and 11. Although these assessments provide tools, supports, and accommodations for current and former English learners (e.g., English/Spanish language side-by-side in mathematics, glossaries available in 12 languages¹⁰, and test directions available in 20 languages¹¹), they may be challenging for students who are still developing English language proficiency.

In the 2020-21 school year, the ODE received an assessment waiver from the U.S. Department of Education. The waiver provided temporary flexibility in terms of the administration of summative assessments in certain grades. That is, instead of taking English language arts and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 8

¹⁰ Glossaries are available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Cantonese and Mandarin, Ilokano and Tagalog, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

¹¹ Test directions are available in Arabic, Burmese, Cantonese, Dakota, Ilokano and Tagalog, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Lakota, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Yup'ik.

and 11, the waiver only requires students to take the English language arts assessment in grades 3, 6, 7, and 11, and the mathematics assessment in grades 4, 7, 8, and 11. Despite the flexibility, assessment participation was very low and uneven across grades for current, former, and never English learners in 2020-21¹². Thus, English language arts and mathematics achievement is only representative of the students who had a safe, in-person opportunity to participate in each assessment and is not comparable across schools, districts, student groups (e.g., current, former, and never English learners), and school years. For these reasons, this report will not display English language arts and mathematics achievement for the 2020-21 school year. Please see [statewide assessment results](#) for more information about the assessment waiver, participation, and achievement.

Section 4: Attendance, Progress toward Graduation, Graduation, and Beyond

This section of the report examines several important outcomes for English learners. These are attendance, ninth grade progress towards graduation, four-year graduation, earning a Seal of Biliteracy, and post-secondary enrollment.

Regular Attendance

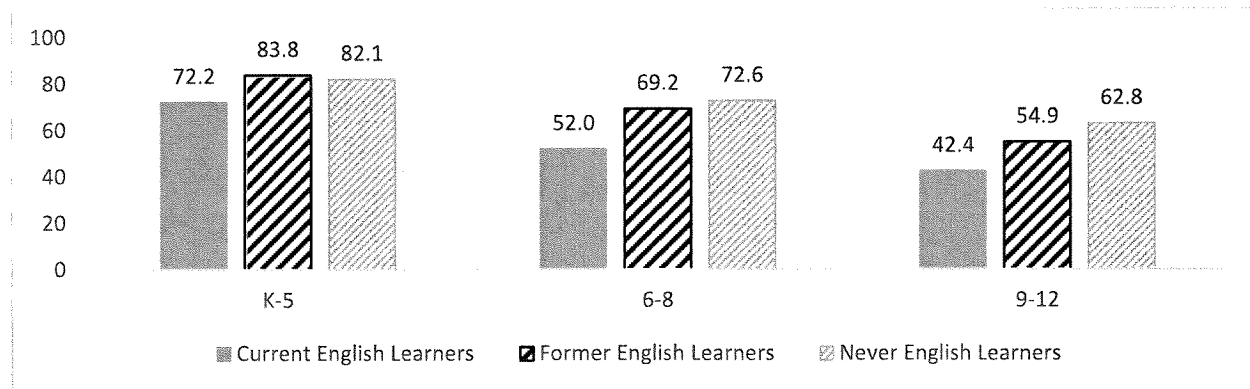
In recent years, researchers and educators alike have devoted increasing attention to ensuring students attend school on a regular basis. Research has shown that even moderate levels of absenteeism can have a profound impact on students' grades, performance on standardized assessments, graduation rates, and success in college (Allensworth & Evans, 2016; Ginsburg, Jordan, & Chang, 2014). In Oregon, students exhibit "regular attendance" at school if they attend more than 90 percent of school days during the school year.¹³

Among elementary grades in 2020-21, former and never English learners have the highest levels of regular attendance (see figure 16). Current English learners, on the other hand, have rates of regular attendance lower in elementary, middle, and high school grades. In fact, regular attendance rates decline considerably for current, former, and never English learners in middle and high school grades (with current and former English learners declining by approximately 30 and 29 percentage points between elementary and high school grades).

¹² English language arts assessment participation ranges from approximately 7 percent in 11th grade for current English learners to 40 percent in 3rd grade for never English learners. Mathematics assessment participation ranges from approximately 6 percent for current English learners to 40 percent in 4th grade for never English learners.

¹³ Note that regular attendance in 2020-21 is not comparable to prior years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and substantive policy changes to support remote learning.

Figure 16. Percentage of current, former, and never English learners regularly attending school by elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school grades (9-12) in 2020-21.



On Track to Graduate

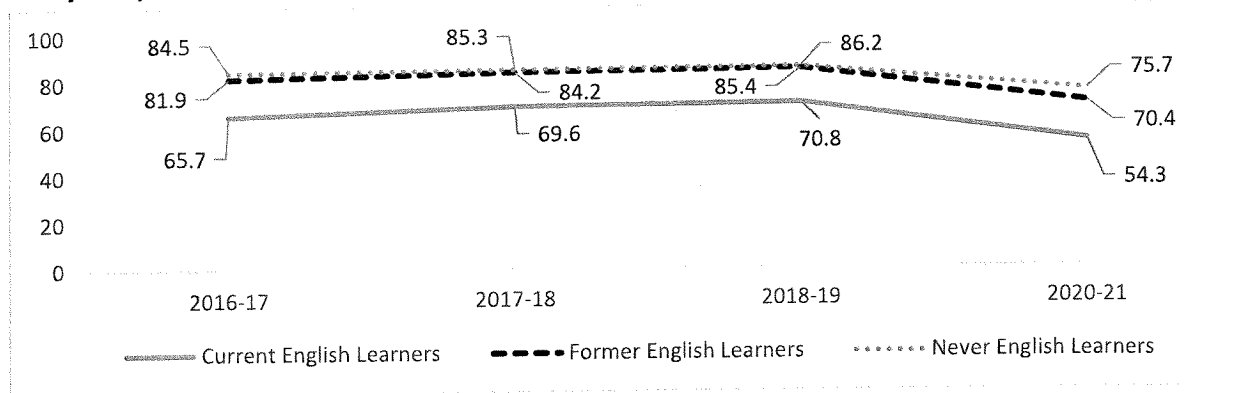
Around the country, states and districts track whether students in the 9th grade are on track to graduate within four years. They do this because ninth grade is a critical year for determining whether students will ultimately graduate from high school; identifying students who are not on track allows schools to provide supports and interventions to help keep students in school and progressing towards graduation. In Oregon, students in the 9th grade are on track to graduate if they earn at least six credits or 25 percent of the credits their district requires for graduation.

From 2016-17 to 2020-21, a higher percentage of former and never English learners were on-track to graduate in comparison to current English learners.¹⁴

According to figure 17, former and never English learners in 9th grade are on track to graduate at substantially higher percentages than current English learners from 2016-17 to 2020-21. Former and never English learners have very similar percentages. Their gap shrinks from 2.6 percentage points in 2016-17 to 0.8 percentage points in 2018-19; however, the gap between former and never English learners widens in 2020-21 (i.e., 5.3 percentage points). From 2016-17 to 2018-19, current, former, and never English learners exhibited considerable improvement in the percentage of students on-track to graduate. Current English learners demonstrated the largest improvement with 5.1 percentage points. However, all three groups of students experience a sizeable decline in 2020-21 with current and former English learners decreasing by 16.5 and 15.0 percentage points since 2018-19. The considerable decline is due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, families, communities, and schools.

¹⁴ Data representing the percentage of current, former, and never English learners who were on track to graduate in ninth grade were not available during the 2019-20 school year. The reason for the unavailability is due to the State of Oregon's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., the cancellation of data collections that either capture the specific data or support the calculation of this measure at the district and state levels).

Figure 17. Percentage of 9th grade current, former, and never English learners on track to graduate within four years (2016-17 to 2020-21).



Four-Year Graduation

The ODE uses a cohort adjusted graduation rate to examine and monitor the percentage of students graduating within a specific number of years. The data for this section relies on the four-year cohort adjusted graduation rate for current, former, and never English learners.¹⁵

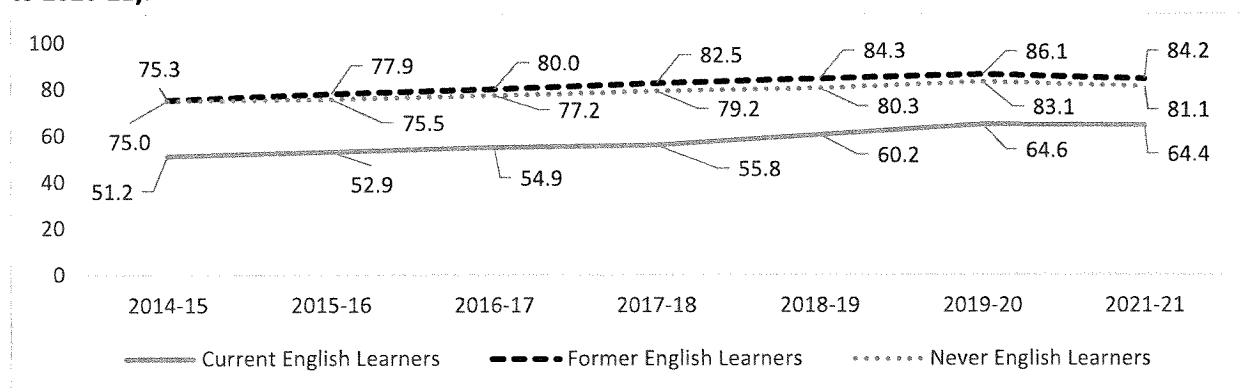
Former English learners graduated at rates similar to or better than never English learners; however, substantially fewer current English learners graduated in four years.

According to figure 18, former and never English learners graduate in four years at relatively similar rates; however, although similar, the rate for former English learners was higher from 2014-15 to 2020-21. In some years (e.g., 2018-19), the four-year graduation rate for former English learners was higher than the rate for never English learners (84.3 percent vs. 80.3 percent).

Current English learners, on the other hand, graduated in four years at lower rates than former and never English learners; however, it is important to note that the four-year graduation rate for current English learners has grown considerably from 2014-15 to 2020-21 (an increase of 13.2 percentage points).

¹⁵ For the purposes of reporting graduation data to the public, current English learners are multilingual students who received English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program at any time during high school. Note that current English learners included students who were eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program but did not participate because their parents or guardians waived services. Former English learners are multilingual students who attained English language proficiency and exited an ELD program prior to entering high school. Lastly, never English learners are monolingual English or multilingual students who were not eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program at any time in grades kindergarten through twelve.

Figure 18. Percentage of current, former, and never English learners graduating within four years (2014-15 to 2020-21).



Oregon State Seal of Biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy offers recognition of the many cognitive, academic, and economic benefits of bilingualism. Students can earn a Seal of Biliteracy on their diplomas if they meet the following requirements:

- meet all graduation requirements, and
- score at the intermediate high level in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a partner language.

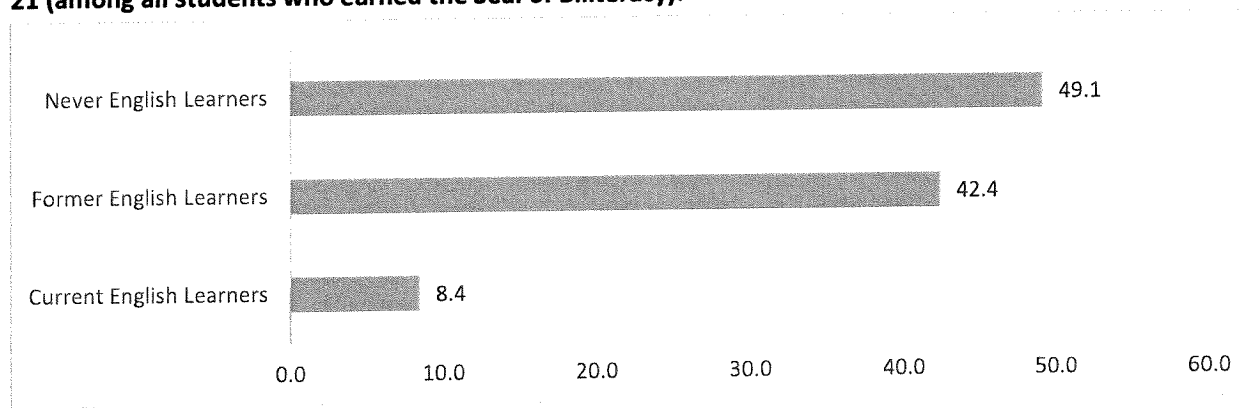
The data for this section relies on students who graduated in 2020-21 (and were part of the four-year cohort adjusted graduation rate) as the denominator in calculations. Moreover, this section will examine the count and percentage of current, former, and never English learners¹⁶ who earned the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21.

The majority of students who earned the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21 were ever English learners and never English learners who are native speakers of languages in addition to English.

Of the 37,320 students who graduated in 2020-21, 1,874 students (or 5.0 percent) also earned the Seal of Biliteracy. Among those 1,874 students, 49.1 were never English learners, 42.4 percent were former English learners, and 8.4 percent were current English learners (see figure 19). Note that the majority of students who earn the Seal of Biliteracy are (1) ever English learners and (2) never English learners who are native speakers of languages in addition to English.

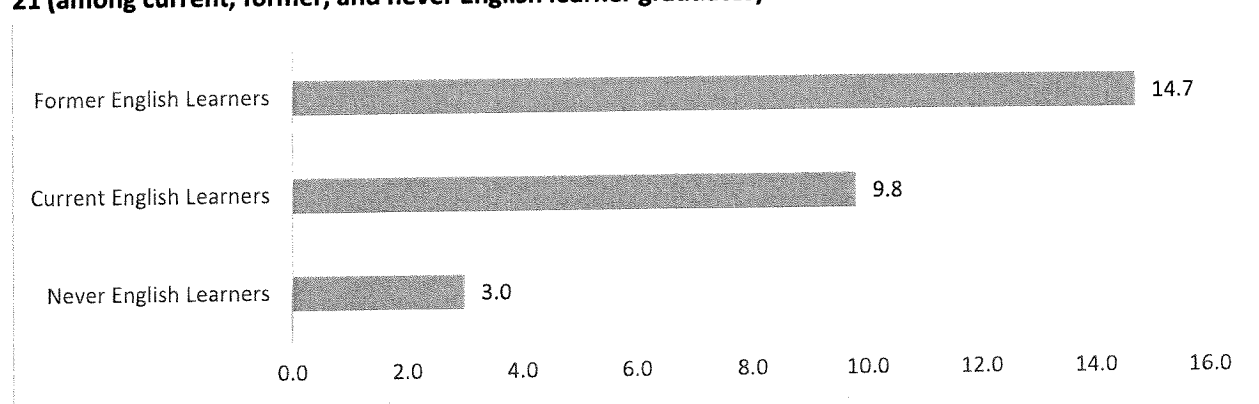
¹⁶ For the purposes of reporting Seal of Biliteracy data in this report, current English learners are multilingual students who received English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program at any time during high school. Note that current English learners included students who were eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program but did not participate because their parents or guardians waived services. Former English learners are multilingual students who attained English language proficiency and exited an ELD program prior to entering high school. Lastly, never English learners are monolingual English or multilingual students who were not eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program at any time in grades kindergarten through twelve.

Figure 19. Percentage of current, former, and never English learners earning the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21 (among all students who earned the Seal of Biliteracy).



According to figure 20, among former English learners who graduated in 2020-21, 14.7 percent earned the Seal of Biliteracy. Moreover, 9.8 percent of current English learner graduates earned the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21. This means that, among ever English learners who graduated in 2020-21, 24.5 percent also earned the Seal of Biliteracy.

Figure 20. Percentage of current, former, and never English learners earning the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21 (among current, former, and never English learner graduates).



Students earned the Seal of Biliteracy for their knowledge of 20 different partner languages; however, Spanish was the most common partner language.

More than three-quarters of students earning the Seal of Biliteracy (79.2 percent) had Spanish as their partner language. The next three partner languages, in order of the number of students, were French, Chinese, and Japanese, all with 50 or more students earning the Seal of Biliteracy in that language. Spanish, Russian, and Chinese were the partner languages with the most current and former English learners earning the Seal of Biliteracy. On the other hand, the top three partner languages among never English learners who earned the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21 were Spanish, French, and Japanese.

Nine districts had 50 or more students earning the Seal of Biliteracy.

In 2020-21, nine districts had 50 or more students earning the Seal of Biliteracy (see table 6). Moreover, among Woodburn's students who graduated in 2020-21, 60.1 percent earned the Seal of Biliteracy. Six other districts in 2020-21 had 10 percent or more of their high school graduates earning the Seal of Biliteracy.

Table 6. Districts with 50 or more students earning the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21¹⁷.

District	Number of Students	District	Number of Students
Portland	350	Hillsboro	73
Beaverton	242	West Linn/Wilsonville	71
Woodburn	184	Corvallis	62
Salem-Keizer	170	North Clackamas	60
Eugene	143		

Post-Secondary Enrollment

The ODE annually examines and publicly reports the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in post-secondary education institutions in Oregon and across the U. S. (e.g., public and private, 2-year and 4-year, etc.). A post-secondary education affords students a wide range of advantages, including greater employment opportunities, financial security, opportunities to contribute in their community, and greater life satisfaction. However, it is important to be clear that enrollment in a post-secondary institution is not the only meaningful and advantageous post-high school opportunity available to students. Others may include military service, community or religious service, and competitive employment. The data for this measure uses students who graduated in 2018-19 (and were part of the four-year cohort adjusted graduation rate) as the denominator in calculations.¹⁸ Moreover, this portion of the report will examine the count and percentage of current, former, and never English learners¹⁹ who enrolled in a post-secondary education institution within sixteen months after graduation.

Never English learners were more likely to enroll in post-secondary education institutions than current English learners; however, former English learners had comparable post-secondary enrollment rates as never English learners.

Figure 21 shows the post-secondary enrollment rates by graduation year for three groups of Oregon students. The post-secondary enrollment rates for never English learners, represented by the gray dotted line, ranged from 61.9 to 62.6 percent from 2012-13 to 2018-19. The salmon line displays the same information for students who were current English Learners. Current English learners enrolled in post-secondary institutions at substantially lower rates than never and former English learners. The post-secondary enrollment rates for current English learners annually increased from 41.2 percent in 2012-13 to

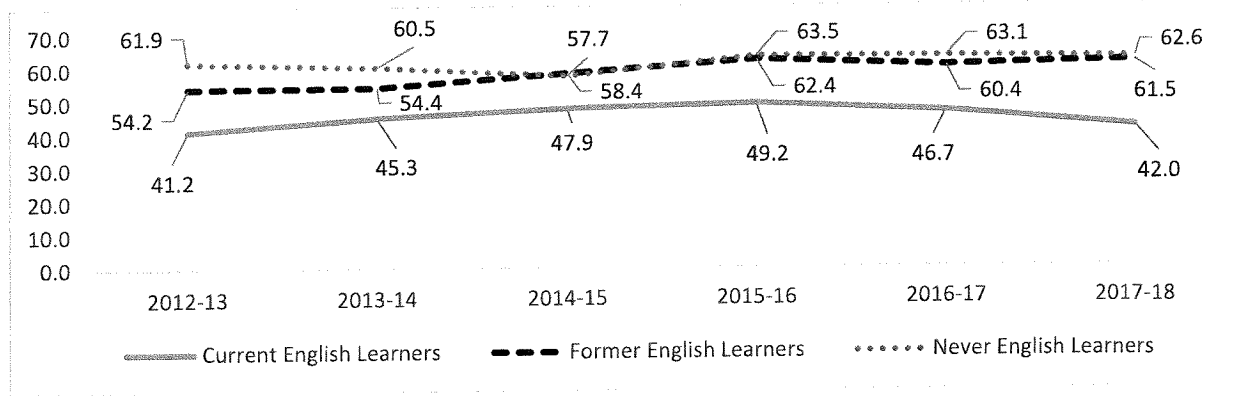
¹⁷ Note that the counts in this table reflect students who graduated in 2020-21 (and were part of the four-year cohort adjusted graduation rate) and earned the Seal of Biliteracy. There were students who earned the Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-21 but were part of the five-year cohort or another cohort.

¹⁸ Post-secondary enrollment data for current, former, and never English learners who graduated from high school in 2019-20 were unavailable as of the publication of this report.

¹⁹ For the purposes of reporting post-secondary enrollment data in this report, current English learners are multilingual students who received English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program at any time during high school. Note that current English learners included students who were eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program but did not participate because their parents or guardians waived services. Former English learners are multilingual students who attained English language proficiency and exited an ELD program prior to entering high school. Lastly, never English learners are monolingual English or multilingual students who were not eligible to receive English language instruction, supports, and services in an ELD program at any time in grades kindergarten through twelve.

49.2 percent in 2015-16; however, they decreased in both 2016-17 and 2018-19 to levels similar to 2012-13. The black dashed line shows the post-secondary enrollment rates for former English learners. The post-secondary enrollment rates for former English learners increased from a low of 54.2 percent in 2012-13 to a high of 62.4 percent in 2015-16. Moreover, since 2015-16, former English learners had post-secondary enrollment rates that were reasonably comparable to never English learners.

Figure 21. Percentage of current, former, and never English learners enrolling in post-secondary institutions within 16 months of high school graduation (2012-13 to 2018-19²⁰).



Section 5: State Revenues and Expenditures for Current English Learners

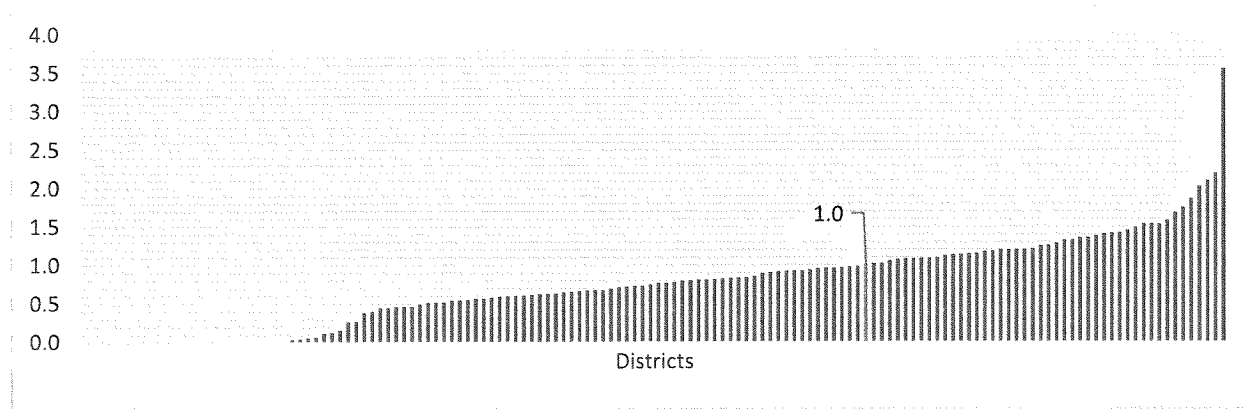
Each year, Oregon's State School Fund provides funding to districts through General Purpose Grants. The amount of the grant relies on a formula that considers the number of students in the district (known as average daily membership weighted or ADMw). On average, the per-pupil funding amount in 2020-21 was \$8,754.²¹ In addition to this basic funding, districts receive additional state funds for each student enrolled in an ELD program. This amount is $0.5 \times \$8,754$ or \$4,377 per current English learner. Altogether, the state allocated \$217,742,292 for these additional English learner funds in the 2020-21 school year.

Figure 22 depicts the relationship between current English learner revenues the state allocated to districts via the State School Fund Formula and the total current English learner expenditures from the General Fund expressed as a ratio. Statewide, the ratio of expenditures to revenues in 2020-21 was 1.0, meaning that district expenditures on current English learners reflected 100 percent of the funds the state allocated to districts via the State School Fund Formula. Some districts spent more than this percentage (up to 355%), while others spent less (as little as 0%). The values on the extreme ends of the range, however, may reflect variations in the way that some districts report data. Some districts with few current English learners report revenue received from the state, but do not identify expenditures specific to current English learners, even though they may expend funds for English learner services. Other districts on the high end of the spending ratio may include expenses for dual-language programs that also educate former and never English learners, rather than calculating the percentage spent solely on current English learners.

²⁰ The year (e.g., 2012-13) represents the school year in which students graduated from high school.

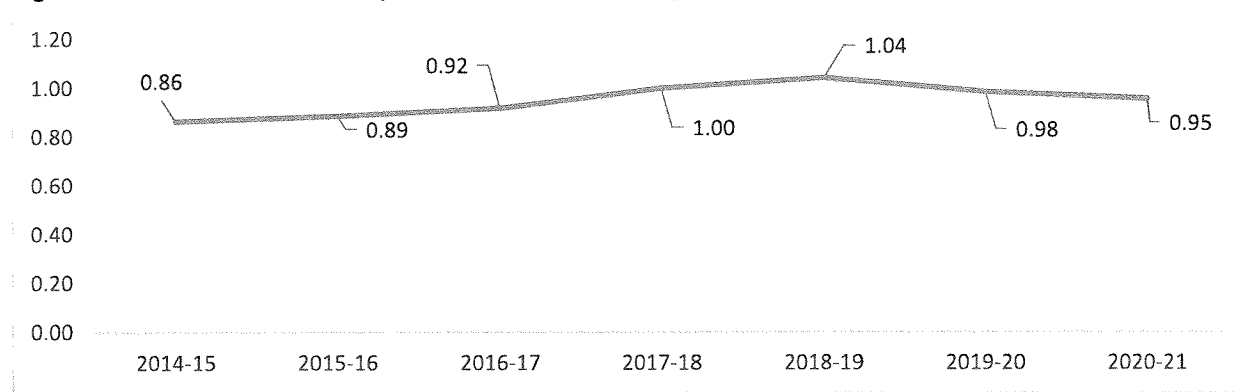
²¹ While \$8,754 is the average amount, the grant amount can vary a bit for different districts because of the way the formula is set up.

Figure 22. Ratio of current English learner expenditures to revenues across districts in 2020-21.



As figure 23 illustrates, the statewide ratio increased steadily from 2014-15 to 2018-19; however, in 2019-20 and 2020-21, the ratio decreased below 1.0.

Figure 23. Ratio of statewide expenditures on current English learners to revenues (2014-15 to 2020-21).



Expenditures from the General Fund on current English learners either belong to Function 1291 (covering expenditures for instruction and interventions to help current English learners learn English) or Area of Responsibility 280 (other supports for current English learners, such as interpretation services or transportation).²²

Current English learner expenditures for 2020-21 totaled \$207,663,788. Districts accounted for approximately 80 percent of the expenditures (\$166,065,893) using Function 1291 and 20 percent of the expenditures (\$41,597,895) using Area of Responsibility 280.

In addition to this state funding, districts with at least 69 current English learners may access federal Title III grants, which in 2020-21 provided an additional \$135.58 per student for supplemental current English learner services²³. A description of these federal funds is beyond the scope of this report but information on the grant amounts are available on the [ODE website under Title III Allocations](#).

²² For a more detailed description of the accounting system categories, see [Oregon's Program Budgeting and Accounting Manual](#).

²³ Districts with fewer than 69 students can join other districts in a consortium to access these grants.

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