

Idaho at a Glance: ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS

In the 2016-17 school year, 16,177 Idaho students qualified as English Learners.¹ The Idaho State Department of Education is required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 to support the educational needs of all English Learners, and school districts must provide equal educational opportunities to all students regardless of English language proficiency. Despite challenges like teacher retention and the diversity of languages spoken by Idaho's English Learners, educators use a variety of curricula and teaching strategies to build bridges to help students learn English, succeed in school and unlock their full potential.

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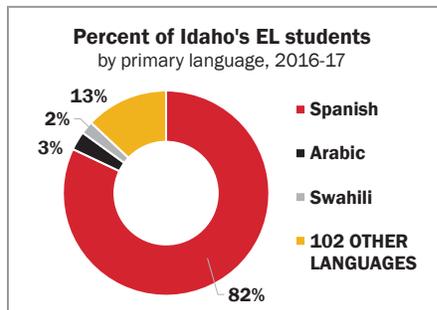
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English Learners are a varied group

An English Learner (EL) is any student whose primary language is not English, whose English skills are not sufficient to be successful in the classroom and who has not yet tested proficient in English. Once a student meets Idaho criteria for exiting from EL services, they are no longer considered an EL. Not all of Idaho's ELs are Spanish speakers, immigrants or refugees, and many have U.S. citizenship. ELs make up about 5.3% of all students in Idaho and about half live in Region 3, and another fourth live in Region 4.^{1,2}

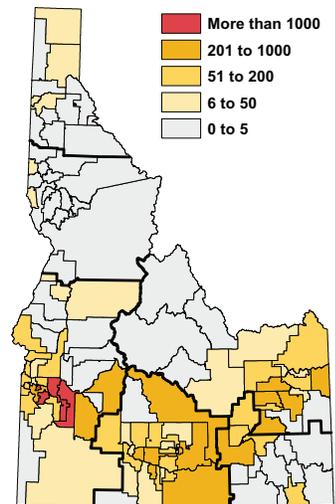
■ Districts with **high percentages of ELs**

- Wendell (29%)
- Shoshone Joint (27%)
- American Falls (23%)
- Valley (19%)
- Jerome Joint (18%)
- Blaine County (18%)
- Aberdeen (17%)¹



■ Idaho's ELs speak a total of **105 different languages from all over the world.**¹

Number of English Learners
 Unduplicated count, 2016-17¹



The English Learner Program makes it possible for school districts to serve a growing English Learner population

The Idaho State Department of Education's (SDE) English Learner Program supports school districts as they help students learn English while simultaneously meeting state academic standards.

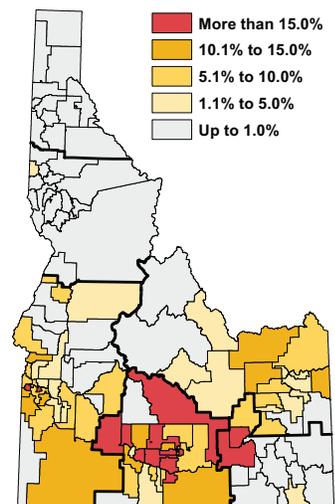
The work of the SDE is increasingly important as the number of EL students grows in Idaho and nationwide. Contributing to this growth are more Idahoans speaking languages other than English combined with a more rigorous assessment of English language proficiency that must be met before students exit the program.^{1,4,5,6}

■ **Support for districts** comes in the form of:

- Ongoing technical assistance
- Professional development for educators, administrators and staff
- Idaho state funding
- Federal Title III funds
- An advisory panel that conducts statewide planning and support
- State and national partnerships
- Assistance with evaluation
- A Title III Consortium to provide support to districts with small numbers of ELs⁴



Percent English Learners
 2016-17¹



SOURCE: Idaho Department of Education

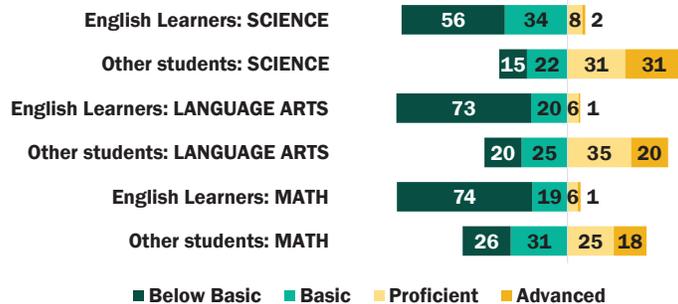
Gaps in academic achievement and attainment are more likely for English Learners

EL students learn to speak English at the same time as they are taught other subjects, so they often lag behind their peers. Gaps can be found in standardized test scores, as well as graduation and go-on rates.

The Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) is a literacy skills assessment that is administered bi-annually, primarily in English, to Idaho's students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. In 2016-17, ELs were **about half as likely as other students to have reading skills at grade level**: 34% compared to 61%, respectively.³

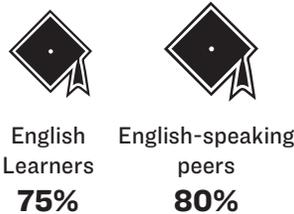
The Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) measures proficiency in science, language arts and math. The ISAT is administered annually in grades 3-8 and 10. Primary language supports are provided when appropriate. In 2017, ELs were **less likely than other students to have proficient or advanced scores** in all tested subject areas.³

Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores 2017, % of students, all grades combined



ELs are **only slightly less likely than other students to graduate** from high school **and many go on** to some form of postsecondary education. However, while 45% of 2016 EL graduates went on within one year of graduation, only 35% of 2017 EL graduates went on within one year.^{3,7}

Graduation rates, 2017



Teacher turnover and increasing student enrollment affect the ability to serve English Learners

Teachers are in high demand in Idaho as increasing student enrollment is paired with teacher retirement and attrition. In response, less experienced, early-career teachers make up an increasing share of Idaho's public K-12 teacher workforce, and many teachers in specialty areas like the EL Program have high caseloads.²

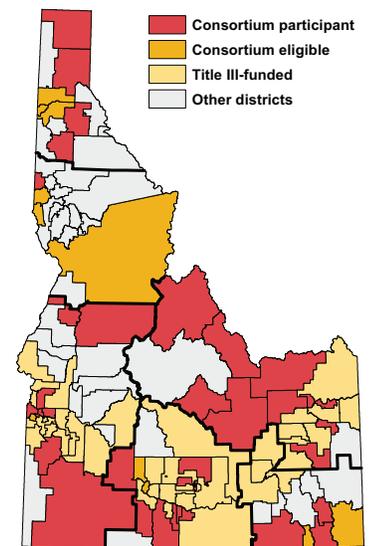
An increasing number of ELs has intensified the caseload of EL teachers across the state, especially in **high-poverty and Community Eligibility Provision⁸ schools**. In these schools, **the ratio of ELs to EL teachers was 38:1**, compared to 9:1 in low-poverty schools in 2016-17. That same year

- 40% of schools with at least one EL had no EL teacher, and
- 23% of schools with at least 20 ELs had no EL teacher.²

To provide equal opportunity education to the growing EL population, there is a need for increased professional development for all teachers (both pre- and in-service), additional financial support for districts and new strategies or policies to increase the number of EL teachers.²

Idaho's **Title III Consortium** supports school districts and charters that do not have enough ELs to garner their own federal Title III allocation. As a participating consortium member, districts and charters qualify for technical assistance provided by two traveling EL coaches. In 2016-17, **44 districts and charters participated in the Title III Consortium**, and another **36 received their own Title III allocation**. Idaho's Title III Consortium was implemented in 2014.⁴

School district participation in the Title III Consortium 2016-17¹



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SOURCES:

- ¹ Idaho State Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Report: Part I, 2016-17
- ² Idaho State Department of Education, Idaho's Educator Landscape: How is the State's Teacher Workforce Responding to its Students' Needs?
- ³ Idaho State Department of Education, Migrant Student Information System
- ⁴ Idaho State Department of Education, Idaho Consolidated State Plan, 2018
- ⁵ Idaho State Department of Education, State EL Guidance for School Districts
- ⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
- ⁷ Idaho State Board of Education, Go-on Rates, 2017
- ⁸ Community Eligibility Provision allows schools with at least 40% of students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch during the previous school year to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students

