

(Five Year Plus) English Learner Re-Designation Rate

The academic, social and emotional learning and school climate experiences of English Learner (EL) students is featured prominently in all domains of the CORE index. California has the highest number of ELs in the nation,¹ and studies show that these students are a historically low-performing academic group.² In addition to tracking learning outcomes, the CORE Districts are committed to monitoring school efforts to advance the reclassification of before they become Long-Term English Learners (LTEL), or as quickly as possible once such students become LTELs.

LTEL children and youth are of particular concern because they are often among the lowest performing ELs. LTEL students are also often effectively excluded from access to higher level courses, or courses that are critical for college and career readiness.³ Consequently, CORE districts will monitor the re-designation of students once they have experienced five or more years of US schooling in order to create data-driven incentives to accelerate LTEL progress and success in the core curriculum.

Research indicates that EL students require 3 to 5 years to achieve oral fluency and 3 to 7 years to develop grade-level academic literacy skills in a second language.⁴ Consequently, some school districts aim to re-designate ELs after 3 years. CORE leaders have elected to focus on re-designation after year 5 as a prudent demarcation point when it is safer to presume, as a matter of policy, that re-designation is favored over continued EL status. This 5-year mark also reflects a desire to avoid creating adverse incentives to re-designate socio-economically disadvantaged EL students while they may still benefit from the targeted academic supports and interventions associated with EL status (CORE Waiver Request, p.103).

The NCLB Waiver situates the EL re-designation rate in the Social-Emotional/Culture-Climate domain of the Index. This placement suggests a concern with achievement outcomes for LTELs who have mastered the content of the California English Language Development Test—and for whom school-level discretion, teacher perceptions, and the subjective beliefs or expectations of parents and educators may operate with greater effect than in the first three years of EL status.⁵

¹ Margo Gottlieb, *Assessing English Language Learners: Bridges from Language Proficiency to Academic Achievement* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press, 2006).

² Kenji Hakuta, "How Long Does It Take English Learners to Attain Proficiency," *University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute*, January 1, 2000, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/13w7m06g>; Jamal Abedi and Patricia Gándara, "Performance of English Language Learners as a Subgroup in Large-Scale Assessment: Interaction of Research and Policy," *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice* 25, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 36–46, doi:10.1111/j.1745-3992.2006.00077.x.

³ Rebecca Callahan, Lindsey Wilkinson, and Chandra Muller, "Academic Achievement and Course Taking Among Language Minority Youth in U.S. Schools: Effects of ESL Placement," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 32, no. 1 (March 1, 2010): 84–117, doi:10.3102/0162373709359805.

⁴ Hakuta, "How Long Does It Take English Learners to Attain Proficiency"; Liguanti, (2001). "The Redesignation Dilemma *Challenges and Choices in Fostering Meaningful Accountability for English Learners* (WestEd, San Francisco, CA)." It should also be noted that earlier studies make estimates of up to 10 years for full oral and academic fluency. Also see, Laurie Olsen, *Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners* (Californians Together Research & Policy, 2010).

⁵ Robert Liguanti (2001). *The Redesignation Dilemma: Challenges and Choices in Fostering Meaningful Accountability for English Learners* (WestEd, San Francisco, CA)

Calculation Method

For purposes of the Index, the current CORE business rules define LTELs as those who have been in the US Education System for 5 years or more and have not been reclassified to as fully English proficient (RFEP) status. We have therefore chosen to examine re-designation in terms of the percentage of year-five-plus English Learners who have re-designated at their current school:

$$\text{(Year 5+ RFEPs)} / \text{(Year 5+ ELs \& RFEPs)}$$

The calculation rules further focus on producing a re-designation rate that can most fairly be attributed to factors within a school's control. Thus, the calculation method excludes from a school's re-designation rate those students who were (1) not *continuously enrolled* during the school year in question at the school in question (as defined by the state) and (2) those who entered the school in question *already having been designated* as RFEP by a prior school. Students are associated with the school in which they were continuously enrolled.