

the Sillerman Center

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHILANTHROPY

K-12 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAMS: A Guide to High Impact Investments



One out of every 11 K-12 students in America is learning to speak English. There are about 4.5 million English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States, approximately 9% of the nation's K-12 public school enrollment. It takes 3-5 years for students to gain oral English proficiency and 4-7 years to gain academic English proficiency. Long term, effective programs are needed to give these students the opportunity to learn in parity with their non-ELL counterparts.

Federal Guidelines require that every school district with more than 5% national-origin minority children, with no or limited English proficiency, take progressive steps to remedy the language deficiency. However, programs and resources vary according to state guidelines and funding. Many schools do not have appropriate funding for a successful ELL program. District-level and site-level program implementation and reform are critically needed at this time.

English Language Learners: The Facts

In school year 2011-2012, 59% of ELLs graduated high school while the national average was 80%. In addition, ELLs have lower academic performance, a higher incidence of being held back, and lower test scores in math and reading based on the 2013 NAEP exam.** Most ELL students are from low-income families.

There is 1 ESL instructor for every 150 ELLs nationally

In grades 9-12, ELLs comprise 5% of student body, but 11% of those held back

By 2020, 50% of all public school students will have non-English speaking backgrounds

Examples of K-12 ELL Programs: Structured English Immersion, Traditional ESL, Transitional Bilingual Education, Dual Language or Two-Way Immersion

For more on the rights of ELL students please visit [The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights](#).

For more Quick Facts on ELL demographics please see the [Educating English Language Learners](#) study by [Grantmakers for Education](#).

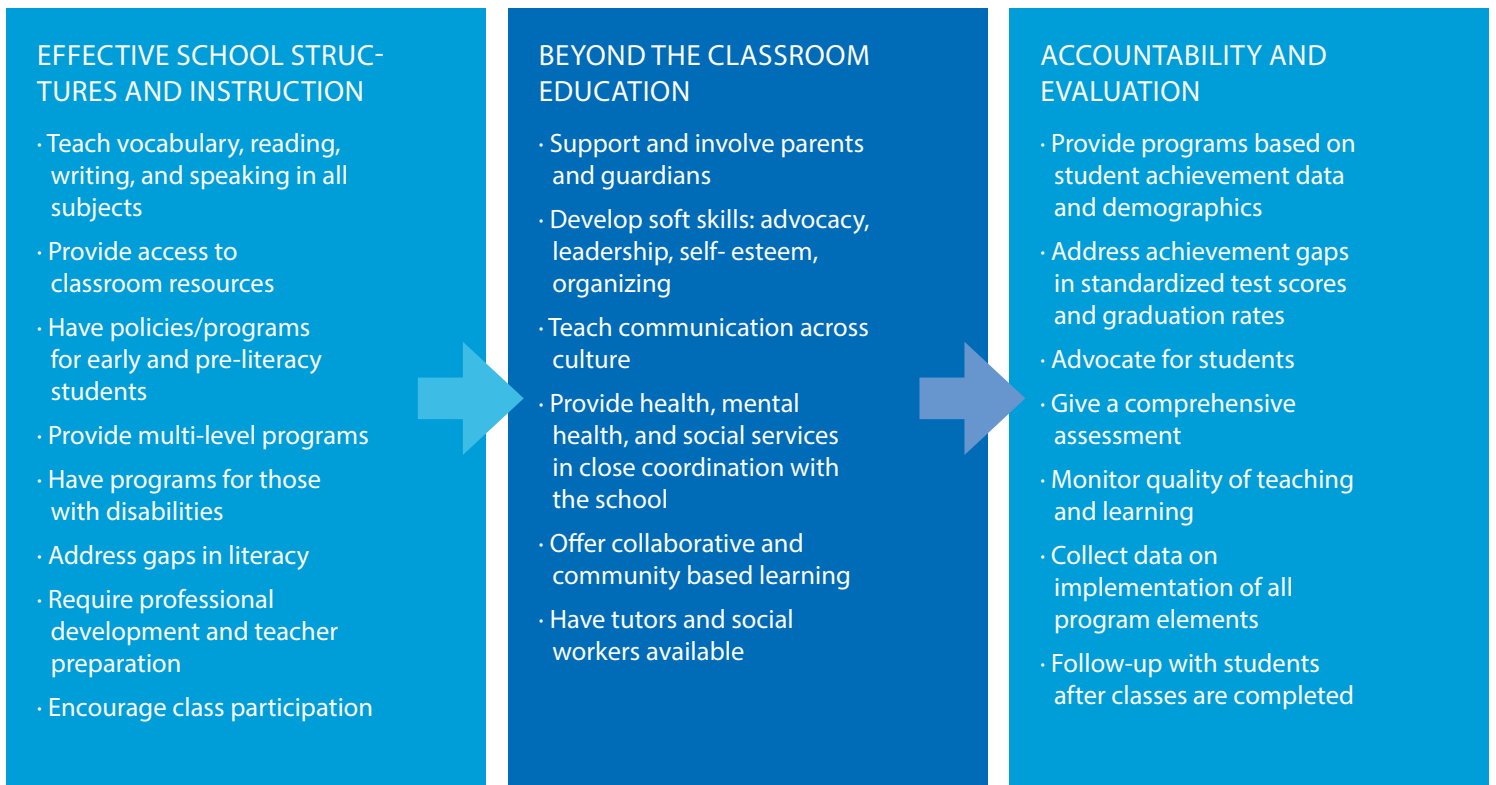
*[How Long Does it Take English Language Learners to Attain Proficiency](#); study from Stanford University.

**Scores from the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress exam obtained from the [Office of English Language Acquisition](#).

What is a Strong K-12 ELL Program?

- VALUES students' primary language and home culture
 - INDIVIDUALIZES ELL learning plans and programs recognizing that there is no "one size fits all" model
 - WORKS to address teacher preparation, lack of classroom resources, students at different levels of language acquisition
 - BUILDS knowledge of the English language,
- decoding, and fluency along with life skills
 - PROVIDES RIGOROUS SUPPORT, COMMUNICATION AND GUIDANCE for student and parent/guardian involvement
 - UTILIZES DATA on learning, teaching attendance, behavior, and outcomes to inform work

High Performing Programs Should Demonstrate:



While not all programs will successfully address each of these areas, high performing programs with appropriate funding should aim to focus on as many as possible. When programs are successful, ELL students should meet the overall national average on test scores, high school graduation, and college entry.

For more information please visit:

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