

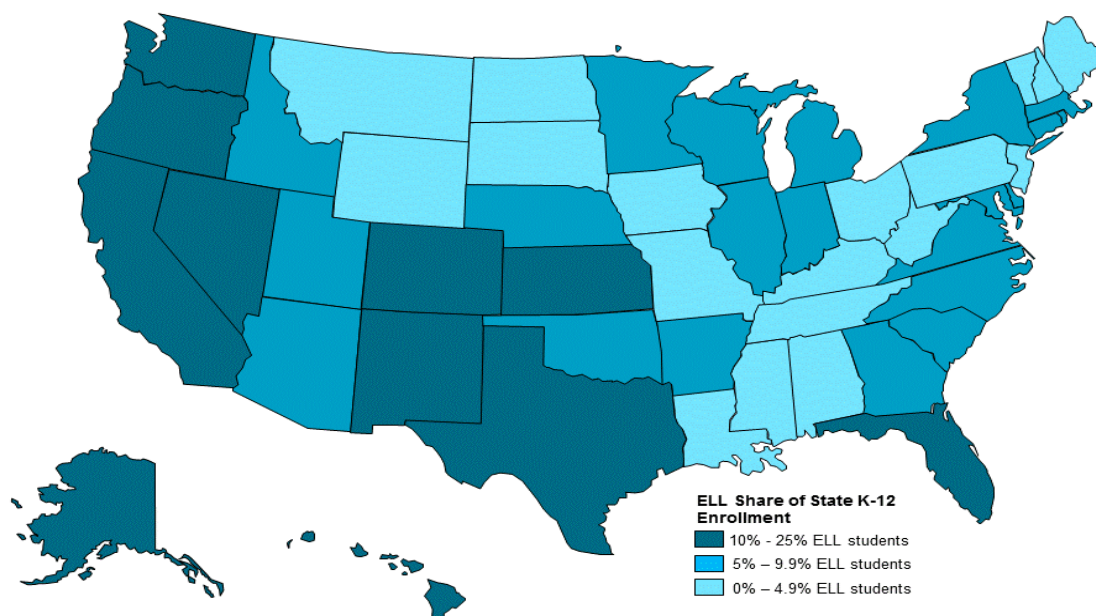


## States and Districts with the Highest Number and Share of English Language Learners

### I. States with Highest Share of English Language Learners

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 4.85 million English Language Learners (ELLs) were enrolled in public schools during the 2012-13 academic year, representing nearly 10 percent of the total K-12 student population.<sup>1</sup> While ELL students were spread throughout the country, their density, or the share they represent of total public school enrollment in a state, varied greatly (see Map 1). Western states had the largest shares of ELL students in the nation.

Map 1. States with the Highest ELL Student Density, SY 2012-13



*Source:* Migration Policy Institute (MPI) calculations based on data obtained through the U.S. Department of Education, “ED Data Express Tool,” accessed February 23, 2015. Data on total student enrollment derive from the Common Core of Data (CCD). Data on enrollment of ELL students by state derive from the “Consolidated State Performance Report” (CSPR).

To download this map in high resolution, click [here](#).

As shown in Map 1, California had the highest density of ELL enrollment, at 24 percent. In both New Mexico and Nevada, ELL students accounted for nearly one in five students (18 percent and 17 percent, respectively). Texas and Colorado followed, with 15 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Only two Eastern states—Florida (10 percent) and New York (9 percent)—and the District of Columbia (9 percent) ranked in the top 15 nationwide in terms of ELL student density.

## II. States with the Largest ELL Populations

In terms of size of ELL population, California, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois, Colorado, Washington, and North Carolina each had more than 100,000 ELL students enrolled (see Table 1). Together these eight states accounted for more than two-thirds of the nation's ELL student enrollment in public schools. The next seven states with the largest ELL student enrollments comprised an additional 12 percent of the nation's ELL population.

**Table 1. Top 15 States with Highest ELL Student Enrollment in Public Schools, SY 2012-13**

State	ELL Enrollment	Total K-12 Enrollment	Share of ELLs among K-12 Students (%)
United States	4,851,527	49,474,030	9.8
California	1,521,772	6,213,194	24.5
Texas	773,732	5,077,507	15.2
Florida	277,802	2,692,143	10.3
New York	237,499	2,708,851	8.8
Illinois	190,172	2,055,502	9.3
Colorado	114,415	863,121	13.3
Washington	107,307	1,051,694	10.2
North Carolina	102,311	1,506,080	6.8
Virginia	99,897	1,263,660	7.9
Georgia	94,034	1,703,332	5.5
Arizona	91,382	1,087,697	8.4
Michigan	80,958	1,513,153	5.4
Nevada	77,559	445,017	17.4
Massachusetts	71,066	954,507	7.4
Minnesota	70,436	845,291	8.3

Notes: National ELL enrollment totals in this fact sheet do not include outlying territories such as Guam, American Samoa, the Marshall Islands, or Puerto Rico. The share of ELLs among K-12 students was calculated by dividing ELL enrollment by total K-12 enrollment for all states and nation. Source: MPI calculations are based on data obtained through the U.S. Department of Education, "ED Data Express Tool," <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/index.cfm>. Data on total student enrollment derive from the Common Core of Data (CCD). Data on enrollment of ELL students by state derive from the Consolidated State Performance Reports (CSPR).

**For more detailed data for all states, [click here](#).**

## III. Top 25 ELL School Districts

At the local level, 25 school districts accounted for nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of all ELL students in K-12 public schools in 2011-12.<sup>2</sup> California had the highest concentration of ELLs in the United States, and not surprisingly, nearly one-third of the country's districts with the largest ELL populations (8 of 25 districts) were found in California (see Table 2). With enrollment of more than 150,000 ELLs, the Los Angeles Unified School District had the largest ELL population (152,592 students), closely followed by New York City<sup>3</sup> (142,572). Each of these two districts had higher ELL enrollment than the next two larg-

est districts combined: Nevada’s Clark County School District (68,577) and Florida’s Dade County School District (66,497).

**Table 2. Top 25 School Districts by ELL Enrollment, SY 2011-12**

District/Agency Name	State	ELL Enrollment	Total K-12 Enrollment	Share of ELLs among K-12 Students (%)
Los Angeles Unified	CA	152,592	659,639	23.1
New York City*	NY	142,572	968,143	14.7
Clark County	NV	68,577	313,398	21.9
Dade County	FL	66,497	350,239	19.0
Dallas Independent	TX	56,650	157,575	36.0
Houston Independent	TX	54,333	203,066	26.8
City of Chicago	IL	53,786	403,004	13.3
Fairfax County	VA	36,551	177,606	20.6
San Diego Unified	CA	36,453	131,044	27.8
Santa Ana Unified	CA	32,170	57,250	56.2
Orange County	FL	28,311	180,000	15.7
School District 1 County of Denver	CO	25,417	80,890	31.4
Hawaii Department of Education	HI	24,750	182,706	13.5
Broward County	FL	24,143	258,478	9.3
Hillsborough County	FL	22,474	197,041	11.4
Fort Worth Independent	TX	21,913	83,109	26.4
Austin Independent School District	TX	21,751	86,528	25.1
Long Beach Unified	CA	20,746	83,691	24.8
Garden Grove Unified	CA	20,743	47,999	43.2
Montgomery County	MD	20,580	146,459	14.1
Gwinnett County	GA	18,968	162,370	11.7
Palm Beach County	FL	18,698	176,901	10.6
Fresno Unified	CA	17,536	74,235	23.6
San Bernardino City Unified	CA	17,488	54,379	32.2
San Francisco Unified	CA	17,083	56,310	30.3

Notes: Data are based on district or agency reports. “New York City” includes 32 districts across the city’s five boroughs. The share of ELLs among K-12 students was calculated by dividing ELL enrollment by total K-12 enrollment for all districts or agencies.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey,” 2011-12 v.1a; “State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey,” 2011-12 v.1a.

<http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/default.aspx>.

The majority of these school districts were located within states that have been traditional immigrant destinations. For example, five were located in Florida and four in Texas. Meanwhile, several districts in new immigrant-destination states also ranked in the country’s top 25 ELL enrollment districts, including Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia (36,551), Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland (20,580), and Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia (18,968).

In many of these districts ELL students represented a large share of the overall student population. For instance, in Santa Ana, California, ELLs accounted for more than half of all students, and Garden Grove, California had an ELL enrollment share in excess of 40 percent. Overall, 15 of the top 25 districts had an ELL enrollment share of 20 percent or greater.

- 1 Migration Policy Institute (MPI) calculations of data obtained through the U.S. Department of Education, “ED Data Express Tool,” <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/index.cfm>. This source reports data on the total number of students in each state who are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, which derive from the Common Core of Data’s Elementary/Secondary Information System as of January 13, 2015, and data on the enrollment of ELL students by state, which derive from the Consolidated State Performance Reports. National ELL enrollment totals in this fact sheet do not include outlying territories such as Guam, American Samoa, the Marshall Islands, or Puerto Rico. The language of instruction in Puerto Rico’s public school system is Spanish. Therefore, the Puerto Rico CSPR reported students needing language assistance services as Limited Spanish Proficient (LSP). Puerto Rico identified 2,943 LSP students for the 2012-13 school year.
- 2 District-level data are based on the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey,” 2011-12 v.1a; “State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey,” 2011-12 v.1a., <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/default.aspx>. Although district-level data for school year 2012-13 were available as of this fact sheet’s writing, they were not used due to a high number of missing values and issues of data quality.
- 3 “New York City” refers to “New York City Geographic Districts,” which represents 32 districts across the city’s five boroughs.

This Fact Sheet was written by Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, Sarah Hooker, and Jeanne Batalova as part of the Migration Policy Institute’s English Language Learner (ELL) Information Center Fact Sheet series. The ELL Information Center, a project of MPI’s National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, was launched in 2010 to provide a wide range of easily accessible national and state-level information to educators, policymakers, and others concerned with English Language Learners. The ELL Information Center can be found at [www.migrationpolicy.org/ellinfo](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/ellinfo).

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