Characteristics of Long-Term English Learners

Los Angeles Unified School District
Independent Analysis Unit

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The views expressed herein are those of the Independent Analysis Unit and do not necessarily reflect those of the District, the Board of Education, or any individual Board Member.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In L.A. Unified, English Learners (ELs) who have been enrolled in a U.S. school for six or more years are considered long-term English learners (LTELs). This report identifies characteristics of the LTEL population, identifies trends of this population over time, and produces estimates of the likelihood of a student becoming an LTEL based on student characteristics. This study focuses on students from Spanish-speaking backgrounds as they comprise the majority of ELs in the District, and they have been historically underserved.

This study finds that certain student characteristics associated with being an LTEL have remained consistent over time, and that the likelihood of becoming an LTEL varies greatly by student characteristics:

- **Students who were dually identified** (students who are English learners and have special needs) are approximately *twice as likely* to become LTELs as their peers who are not dually identified.
- Female ELs are *11% less likely* to become LTELs than their male peers.
- **ELs whose parents attended some or more college** are *21% less likely* to become LTELs than ELs from households with lower levels of parent education.
- ELs who have gaps during their elementary school experience are *more likely* to become LTELs than their peers who do not have gaps.
- **Spanish-speaking ELs who enroll in kindergarten with higher levels of native language proficiency** are *less likely* to become LTELs than their counterparts.

Additionally, we find that the likelihood of becoming an LTEL varies by program participation. ELs who were only enrolled in the mainstream English program in elementary school were less likely to become LTELs than students exposed to a structured English immersion program or a bilingual program in elementary school. However, once an English learner has become an LTEL in middle school, previous program participation matters for reclassifying in middle school versus matriculating into high school as an LTEL. **We find that LTELs who participated in dual language, transitional bilingual, or structured English immersion programs are less likely to be LTELs in high school than LTELs who only participated in mainstream English programs.**

While we find that the mainstream English program is associated with a lower likelihood of becoming an LTEL, these findings should not be used as evidence of program effectiveness. The mainstream English program consists of students who may have greater access to resources than others. **More ELs with college-educated parents participate in the mainstream English program than the structured immersion or bilingual programs.** In addition, ELs in kindergarten participate in the mainstream English program by parent request or if students have high levels of English proficiency. **As a result, the mainstream English program has a greater share of students with high levels of initial English proficiency than the dual language, transitional bilingual, or structured English immersion programs.**

In our sample, dually identified students in L.A. Unified are more likely to become LTELs than their peers who are not dually identified. Additionally, dually identified students have a greater
long-term English Learners as they matriculate into high school. In our sample, almost 50% of all LTELs in high school in 2016-2017 were dually identified as English Learners and Students with Disabilities. The disproportionate rate at which dually identified students become LTELs in the sixth grade and remain LTELs in high school indicates a need for careful attention to the English proficiency and special needs identification processes from the early grades, and greater support in the English language development and reclassification processes in the secondary grades.

Given these findings, we recommend that the District make a concerted effort to:

- Build teacher capacity to strengthen native language supports for ELs and LTELs.
- Commit to monitoring, evaluating, and improving designated and integrated English language development (ELD) curriculum and content across EL programs.
- Ensure access to and participation in academically rigorous courses among ELs, and provide the ELD support needed for success.
- Strengthen the capacity of IEP teams working with dually identified students to distinguish learning disabilities from language needs, and investigate practices that could provide earlier support and better long-term outcomes for dually identified students.
- Report reclassification rates differently for dually identified students, since combining rates (as at present) could result in wide differences in reported reclassification rates among schools solely due to differences in the proportion of EL students with special needs.
## DEFINITIONS

**English Learner (EL)**
An English learner is a K-12 student who, based on the results of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), has not developed listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies in English sufficient for participation in the regular school program.

**Long-Term English Learner (LTEL)**
A student who has been an English learner for six or more years.

**Dually Identified**
A student who has been identified as being an English learner and as having special needs.

**California English Language Development Test (CELDT)**

**English Language Development (ELD)**
Specialized language support services and courses for English learners. Levels of ELD range from 1-5 and are determined by student performance on the CELDT.

**Designated ELD (dELD)**
Refers to protected time during the regular school day when teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards to develop English language skills.

**Integrated ELD (iELD)**
Refers to ELD taught throughout the day and across disciplines.

**Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT)**
A support team that uses a collaborative model to identify interventions for improved student performance.
PREFACE

IAU Projects about English Learners

The IAU is working on several projects about English language learners. The first report, *Reclassification Trends for English Learners*, was delivered to the Board in June 2018. The June 2018 study of reclassification rates followed a cohort of English learners from kindergarten until 12th grade. This was followed in August by an informative on principal and teacher survey results for dual language programs in the District.

The present report on long-term English Learners (LTELs) will be followed by a feasibility study of associating schools and teachers with LTEL outcomes. Another report will examine EL outcomes in one-way dual language, two-way dual language, transitional bilingual, and structured English immersion programs. A final report will discuss the implementation of dual language education and factors that support and/or impede implementation.

*Figure 1. IAU Timeline for English Learner Projects*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June 2018</th>
<th>October 2018</th>
<th>December 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reclassification Trends for English Learners</td>
<td>Long-term English Learner Trends</td>
<td>English Learner Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2018 Survey Results for Dual Language Programs</td>
<td>November 2018 Feasibility Study Associating Schools and Teachers with LTEL Outcomes</td>
<td>June 2019 Implementation of Dual Language Programs</td>
</tr>
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SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND

Long-term English learners (LTELs) comprise a diverse group of students who vary in language background, country of origin, and language and literacy skills. All ELs, including LTELs, arrive at school with vast cultural and linguistic assets that can be leveraged to promote college- and career-readiness.

Long-term English learners have been historically underserved in American public schools. Districts face several challenges in seeking to address the specific learning needs of LTELs. These barriers include, but are not limited to: shortage of teachers prepared to effectively teach LTELs, lack of designated programs for secondary LTELs, and inadequate data systems for tracking student progress. These challenges contribute to the negative consequences associated with being an LTEL. Research has shown that ELs who go on to become LTELs are at greater risk of dropping out of school, and LTELs who do complete high school often lack access to academically rigorous courses while in school. These barriers decrease the likelihood of LTELs to enroll in and complete college. In light of these challenges, state and federal guidelines have changed to better address the needs of LTELs.

In 2012, California became the first state in the nation to adopt a formal definition of long-term English learners, with the passage of Assembly Bill 2193 (A.B. 2193). The bill requires the California State Department of Education to annually report the number of students at each school and district who are currently, or are at risk of becoming, long-term English learners. In compliance with A.B. 2193, the District identifies and monitors students who are currently, or are at risk of becoming, long-term English learners. The Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department (MMED) Dashboard provides school and district staff with information on each student’s progress on the different recategorization criteria.

The U.S. Department of Education recommends that local education agencies analyze data longitudinally, or across time, to assess the efficacy of programs for LTELs. Cross-sectional analyses of LTELs, or analyses that only look at one year of data for many subjects, may lead to an incomplete picture of the educational trajectory of LTELs. For example, LTELs often participate in different EL programs over the course of their educational career. If our analysis only examined one year of data for each student, we would make assumptions about each student's schooling that would be inaccurate. To address this concern, this report analyzes data longitudinally by following several cohorts of LTELs in the District.

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How are Long-Term English Learners Identified in L.A. Unified?

In the District, students are typically identified as English learners based on the results of their Initial English Language proficiency assessment. Once identified, ELs are placed into one of the programs outlined in Table 1 and monitored by a member of the Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT). Parents have the option of withdrawing their EL student from these programs, in which case the student is placed in a mainstream English setting. However, ELs who are withdrawn from an approved EL program must be provided English language development (ELD) support.

This report focuses on the four main programs offered to all ELs identified by the District in kindergarten: mainstream English, Language & Literacy in English Acceleration Program (previously known as structured English immersion), transitional bilingual education, and dual language education.

According to the 2018 Master Plan for English Learners and Standard English Learners, ELs in grades K-5 who participate in mainstream or structured English immersion programs are required to receive daily designated English Language Development (dELD). Daily dELD associated with the structured English immersion program is designed for ELD levels 1-3. Daily dELD associated with the mainstream program is designed for ELD levels 4-5, although it is also available to ELs with ELD levels 1-3. ELs participating in dual language programs are also required to receive dELD.

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5 Teachers may recommend that a student goes through the EL identification process if they are demonstrating low levels of English proficiency in the classroom. This may happen for students whose families specify English as the primary language spoken in the home on the Home Language Survey, even though that may not be a true reflection of the student's home experience.


7 We use the term structured English immersion in this report because our statistical analyses uses data from 2002-2003 through 2016-2017 which is prior to the time during which structured English immersion was renamed Language & Literacy in English Acceleration Program.
Table 1. Master Plan Programs for English Learners and Long-term English Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Served</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>ELs are instructed in English. ELs acquire English language proficiency and master grade-level academic content through differentiated instruction and appropriate supports. The mainstream English programs is designed for ELs at ELD levels 4-5, or for ELs with a parent withdrawal request. However, ELs with ELD levels 1-3 may access the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>ELs are instructed in English. ELs acquire English proficiency and master grade-level academic core content through differentiated instruction and appropriate support. This program was formerly called structured English immersion and is designed for ELs at ELD levels 1-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Transitional bilingual programs use the student’s home language to support English language acquisition. This program is designed for ELs at ELD levels 1-3. The program is being phased out by 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Instruction is delivered in both English and a target language, but the student body is comprised of speakers from both languages. Program goals are to promote bilingualism, biliteracy, academic achievement, and sociocultural competency among participants. The program is designed for ELs at ELD levels 1-5, ELs who are reclassified English proficient, initially identified English proficient students, and English only students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>This one-year program is for students who have arrived in the United States within the past 2 years of enrolling in L.A. Unified. The program is designed to provide Newcomers academic content instruction in their primary language during their first year of instruction. The goal is for newcomers to rapidly acquire academic English and acculturate into school in the U.S. This program is designed for ELs at ELD levels 1-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>The goal of this program is to accelerate both academic English and content mastery for ELs who have been in the California school system for 6 years or more without meeting reclassification criteria. This program is designed for ELs at ELD levels 1-5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English learners who do not reclassify before their fourth and fifth years of schooling are flagged as "Potential Longer-Term English Learners" and monitored by an LTEL designee. In L.A. Unified, a student must meet the following two requirements to be labeled an LTEL:

1) Be enrolled in grades 6-12;
2) Have been a participant in EL programs for six or more consecutive years.

Figure 2 displays the trajectory of an LTEL. However, Figure 2 does not reflect how all ELs become LTELs, i.e. ELs who skip grades, repeat grades, or attend transitional kindergarten. For

9 An EL or LTEL designee can be a counselor, teacher specialist, coach, or faculty member. This school site administrator is charged with monitoring an EL or LTEL’s language status, test results, goals for meeting grade level standards, and reclassification. 2018 Master Plan for English Learners and Standard English Learners. (2018).
example, a student who entered the District in transitional kindergarten and was identified as an English learner for six consecutive years would not be labeled an LTEL because after the 6th year of school the student would be enrolled in 5th grade, not in grades 6-12. Similarly, a student who was identified in kindergarten as an EL and was retained in 2nd grade will have completed six years in the EL program by the end of 4th grade. However, at this point this student is not considered to be an LTEL because he or she is not yet in grade six. A student must meet all requirements (i.e. be enrolled in grades 6-12 and have been identified as an English learner for six consecutive years) to be labeled an LTEL in L.A. Unified.

According to District policy, L.A. Unified schools are to provide personalized supports for LTELs in the form of a site-specific EL/LTEL Designee, who is a part of the Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT). The role of the EL/LTEL Designee is to meet with all LTEL students and parents at least twice a year, monitor the progress of all LTELs towards reclassification, and maintain all the documentation of the aforementioned actions.1

Once students become LTELs, their approved program options change. The distinction between programs is important because research suggests that program models are associated with a student's likelihood of reclassification or of becoming an LTEL. LTELs who wish to participate in dual language programs in middle and high school are able to if their middle and high schools offer dual language programs. However, only 17 middle schools and three high schools in the District operate dual language programs, and language choices are limited. Generally, LTEL program participation is dependent on former program participation and ELD level. LTELs also have access to the Accelerated Program for Long-term English Learners. Course offerings related to this program are designed to serve LTELs at any ELD level. LTELs whose parents remove them from EL services participate in mainstream programming, but are still required to take dELD courses.  

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13 Once a school has received 30 or more Proposition 58 Dual Language Education Program Parent Request Forms the school is obligated to begin the process of creating a dual language program.
What factors play a role in a student becoming an LTEL?

ELs in L.A. Unified differ in a variety of ways that may affect whether or not they become LTELs. Across the District, students and families speak over 90 different languages.\(^\text{17}\) LTELs may have been born in the United States or in a foreign country. Typically, LTELs born in the U.S. acquire conversational fluency in English relatively quickly, but may require up to seven years to reach academic language proficiency.\(^\text{18}\) LTEL students may also move back and forth between the U.S. and a second country during their K-12 years. The exposure to two different types of school systems and cultures can influence an LTEL's fluency in English and their native language, through possibly inconsistent formal schooling and language lessons.\(^\text{19}\)

In addition to inconsistencies in formal schooling, LTELs vary in the quality of instruction they receive. Subtractive schooling occurs when schools fail to build on linguistic and cultural resources that students already possess. It is possible that the subtractive quality of prior years of education reduces the likelihood of reclassification by 6th grade. Research urges the importance of school-wide language policies that provide LTELs with support to develop skills in their native language as well as English.\(^\text{20}\) Clear and cohesive school-wide language policies that are implemented with efficacy in all classrooms provide English learners with consistent language support programming.\(^\text{21}\)

Teachers vary in their knowledge of the academic and linguistic needs of LTELs. Research indicates that LTELs learn best with teachers who are sensitive and responsive, both to the student and to the assets students bring to the classroom. As one researcher puts it,

[The most effective classrooms] establish an environment that affirms language and culture, invites students to make connections between their life experiences and the

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\(^\text{21}\) Menken, et. al (2012).
academic content, incorporates relevant issues and material into the curriculum, and maintains high expectations and intellectual rigor.\textsuperscript{22}

However, research conducted in classrooms in the U.S. show that a majority of those who teach LTELs are inexperienced and ill-prepared to meet the specific linguistic needs of the students.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{How is schooling different for LTELs?}

For LTELs in middle and high school, course options are differentiated by levels of English proficiency. According to L.A. Unified policy, LTELs in middle and high school have access to two ELD courses: Literacy and Language and Advanced ELD.\textsuperscript{24} \textsuperscript{25} \textsuperscript{26} LTELs in sixth grade as well as LTELs in the ninth grade who have demonstrated a lack of foundational literacy receive up to one year of additional supports in the form of focused intensive reading intervention. Additionally, District policy specifies, "students identified as LTELs for the third consecutive year MUST be referred to the SSPT or Individual Education Plan (IEP) team for review."\textsuperscript{27} \textsuperscript{28}

LTELs in high school have the dual task of meeting requirements for reclassification and graduation simultaneously. LTELs who have completed the sequence of ELD courses and are in high school are able to repeat ELD courses for credit until they reclassify. For high school LTELs, meeting "A-G" requirements and graduating within a four-year window is difficult and may require access to an extended school day (e.g. zero period). However, District policy specifies:

\begin{quote}
In the event that a grade 12 [LTEL] has not made sufficient enough progress in a-g courses such that placing the student in an LTEL course will prevent the student from completing the a-g courses in time for graduation, then the student should be placed in the a-g course and not the LTEL course. This is true for all graduating classes through 2019.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Issues such as ensuring that LTELs have access to academic core content make reclassification an important milestone for English learners to reach before high school, and are motivating factors behind reclassifying ELs prior to entry into secondary school.

In addition to systematic barriers towards graduating high school college and career ready, LTELs can experience stigmatization, which impacts their ability to learn. For example, in a report exploring the educational trajectories of LTELs in a medium-sized Californian district, LTELs reported feeling "dumb" when participating in EL-only courses at the secondary level. Conversely, LTELs felt "normal" when participating in mainstream classrooms mixed with both LTELs and non-EL students. In L.A. Unified, LTELs are required to take ELD courses separate from English proficient students, as outlined above. Further research may be necessary to

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{22} Olsen (2014).
\textsuperscript{23} Olsen (2014).
\textsuperscript{26} Dually identified students in middle and high school have access to ELD courses specifically designed for ELs with disabilities.
\textsuperscript{27} Gipson, et.al (2017).
\textsuperscript{28} Conversations with District staff indicate that District policy on this matter may have changed.
\textsuperscript{29} Gipson, et.al (2017).
\end{flushleft}
understand the conditions under which EL-only classes might empower LTELs rather than stigmatize them.30

Research Questions

Being identified as a long-term English learner (LTEL) has substantial implications for English learners (ELs) in L.A. Unified. High school LTELs are required to take one English language development (ELD) course per year until they reclassify. While these requirements are necessary to ensure acquisition of academic English, ELD courses take up space in a student’s schedule, potentially reducing access to other academic courses. Reduced access to core courses has implications for college and career readiness.

Since being labeled an LTEL can affect the long-term outcomes of a student, it is important to identify and understand the LTEL population within L.A. Unified. In that context, this report aims to address the following research questions:

1) What do we know about LTELs, and how has this changed over time?
2) What factors, if any, predict being an LTEL?
   a. Does the probability of becoming an LTEL differ by program?
   b. What is the relationship between native language proficiency and likelihood of becoming an LTEL?
   c. What is the relationship between inconsistent schooling and becoming an LTEL?

SECTION TWO: DATA AND METHODS

Data

To estimate the likelihood of becoming an LTEL in L.A. Unified, we followed eight cohorts of students who entered the District in kindergarten and were identified as English learners. The data span the years 2003-2004 through 2016-2017 and contain information for 351,011 students, most were ELs and the remainder were LTELs. Each cohort is defined by the year the students entered kindergarten. The earliest cohort entered kindergarten in 2003-2004 and the most recent cohort entered kindergarten 2010-2011.

Since we look at LTELs who enter the District in kindergarten, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to all LTELs in the District. Although it is important to assess the likelihood of being an LTEL for students who enter the District in other grades, we are missing important information from this group of students, such as years of formal schooling in the United States. LTELs who enter the District at other grades may have attended school in other districts in the United States or in other countries prior to enrolling in L.A. Unified. Limited information on prior schooling makes it difficult to accurately assess the likelihood of becoming

30 Thompson, K. D. (2015). Questioning the Long-Term English learner label: How categorization can blind us to students’ abilities. Teachers College Record, 117(12), 1-50.
LTELs. If the Board expresses interest, a future informative from the IAU may look specifically at the educational trajectories of these students.

To understand the proportions of ELs versus LTELs in the District, a snapshot of the population is shown in Figure 3 below. This sample shows that in 2016-2017, L.A. Unified enrolled approximately 89,000 ELs in grades K-12. Of the 89,000 students, 71,000 (80%) were enrolled in grades K-5, indicating that they were EL students and not LTEL students. The remaining 18,000 students (20%) were enrolled in upper grades, indicating that they were long-term English learners, as seen in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Long-Term English Learners in L.A. Unified (2016-2017)**

The data presented in Table 2 contain information on student background characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, grade level, participation in gifted and talented education, eligibility for special education services, free/reduced price meal eligibility, and parent education levels), reclassification dates, and participation in bilingual programs. As a reminder, the data discussed in this report are from a sample, or subset, of students within L.A. Unified. Thus, the numbers presented in Table 2 and throughout the report are not necessarily reflective of current L.A. Unified English learners.

Across all cohorts of students, approximately 87% of students come from Spanish-speaking homes and roughly 99% have qualified for free or reduced price meals. Additionally, 55% of students come from households with lower levels of parent education, 10% have qualified for gifted and talented programs, 14% have qualified for special education services, and 10% have participated in a bilingual or dual language program during their time in the District.

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31 Here, the lower level of parent education refers to parents whose highest level of education is high school or less. We refer to parents with some or more college as having higher levels education. Parents who declined to answer are reflected as missing in this table. Later in the report, we combine parents with high school or less education with parents who declined to state their highest level of education, since other studies have found this grouping valid for many purposes.

32 This study uses cross-sectional, one point in time, analyses to determine the likelihood of student characteristics to influence becoming a LTEL. While most students experience consistency in their participation in various programs during their time in the District, some students' participation changes over the years. For this reason, we identified students in our sample who ever qualified for free/reduced priced meals, gifted programs, and special education services. Similarly, we look at students who were ever exposed to a dual language or transitional bilingual program.
Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Sample by English Learner Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ELs (including LTELs)</th>
<th>LTELs only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>351,011</td>
<td>50,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other language</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free/reduced price meal eligible</strong></td>
<td>98.6%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitional bilingual program</strong></td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dual language program</strong></td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured English Immersion (L2EAP)</strong></td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent education level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or more</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Methods**

To estimate the relationship between various student level characteristics and the likelihood of being an LTEL, we use a statistical model that controls for a variety of student-level factors. This includes enrollment in gifted programs as well as demographic characteristics such as gender and home language background, all of which can influence educational outcomes. Our model estimates the probability that an EL who enters the District in kindergarten will become an LTEL when he or she enters the 6th grade.

As a secondary analysis, we identify the relationship between student level characteristics and being an LTEL in high school. This analysis is critical because of the added pressures high school level LTELs have of meeting both reclassification and graduation requirements. In addition, high school LTELs are more likely to feel stigmatization associated with their persisting EL status. Both of these barriers may negatively affect the likelihood of high school LTELs to graduate. To address concerns associated with being an LTEL in high school, we estimate the probability of a student who has become an LTEL in the 6th grade advancing to the 9th grade as an LTEL.

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33 All data in this report is sourced from the Office of Data and Accountability.
SECTION THREE: RESULTS

What do we know about LTELs and how has this changed over time?

Our analysis finds that the demographic makeup of the District’s LTEL population has stayed consistent over time. Figure 4 visually represents the percent share of LTELs who were male, eligible for special education services, Spanish-speaking, identified as gifted, and whose parents’ highest education level was high school or less. Each of these groups of students are disproportionately represented in the District’s LTEL population relative to the EL population, with the exception of gifted ELs. At the request of District staff, we included the percentage of gifted LTELs in Figure 4. It is worth noting that gifted students make up less than 1% of LTELs from 2009-2017.

Figure 4. Subgroups as a Percent of LTELs

From 2009-2017, over 90% of LTELs in the District came from Spanish-speaking households with parents whose highest education level was high school or less. In 2016-2017, 97% of all LTELs came from Spanish-speaking households, and 93% of all LTELs came from households with parents who never attended college. Additionally, male students make up a majority of 34 This definition of parent education includes parents who declined to state their highest level of educational attainment with parents whose highest level of education is high school or less. 35 In our sample, approximately 31% of data regarding parent education level is missing. This analysis assumes missing parent education level responses and “decline to answer” responses are reflections of no
LTELs in the District starting from 54% in 2008-2009 and increasing to approximately 60% of LTELs in 2016-2017. Dually identified students\(^{36}\) who become LTELs increased between 2008-2009 and 2016-2017, peaking at 44%.

The descriptive statistics shown in Figure 5 indicate that ELs from Spanish-speaking households, ELs whose parents’ highest education level was high school or less, dually identified students, and male ELs are all overrepresented in the LTEL population compared to the EL population in the District as a whole. For example, male students make up approximately 50% of the District. However, male students make up approximately 54% of the District's LTEL population. Thus male students are overrepresented in the District's LTEL population by four percentage points.

*Figure 5. Student Subgroups as a Percent of ELs vs as a Percent of LTELs in 2016-2017*

What factors predict becoming an LTEL and what factors predict continuing as an LTEL into high school?

We find that several demographic factors are associated with a student’s likelihood of becoming an LTEL. Students who attend a District school in kindergarten and are identified as gifted at any point in their schooling are far less likely to become an LTEL than their peers. In addition:

- Female ELs are 11% less likely to become LTELs than their male peers.
- Students with parents who have some or more college education are 21% less likely to become LTELs compared to students whose parents have no college education.
- Dually identified students are 2.3 times more likely to become LTELs than their peers.

\(^{36}\) While most students experience consistent special education status during their time in the District, some students’ status changes over the years. For this reason, we identified if students in our sample who ever qualified for special education services.
• ELs who have gaps in their elementary school experience in L.A. Unified are almost two times more likely to become an LTEL than their peers who do not have gaps.

Our findings suggest that neither racial nor ethnic identity are associated with the likelihood of becoming an LTEL in middle school.

Our study also estimated the association between student characteristics and the likelihood of advancing to the 9th grade as an LTEL. We found that dually identified students are almost two times more likely to enter high school as an LTEL than their peers. Recall that we use the term dually identified to refer to students who qualify for both English learner and special education services. Findings for gender and inconsistent schooling remain consistent. Specifically, students who have gaps37 in their educational experience within the District are two times more likely to advance to 9th grade as LTEls than their peers.

While there was no association between race and being identified as an LTEL in middle school, we found there is an association between race and the likelihood that a student will matriculate into high school as an LTEL. Students who identify as Asian are significantly less likely than their Hispanic peers to continue as an LTEL in high school.

It is important to be clear that these numbers do not suggest that Hispanic students come from linguistically impoverished backgrounds. In statistical analyses, race and ethnicity often function as proxy variables for greater social and historical contexts. The differences in the likelihood of becoming an LTEL across ethnic groups may be explained by systemic factors such as discrimination, which may lead to differences in income level or access to financial resources. As an example, 99% of Hispanic ELs in our sample have qualified for free/reduced meals compared to 85% of Asian ELs. There is a significant correlation between racial or ethnic identity and eligibility for free/reduced price meals.

These findings indicate that the likelihood of an EL becoming an LTEL, as well as the likelihood of an LTEL matriculating to high school still identified as an LTEL, is significantly associated with student background characteristics. Research suggests that school level characteristics, in addition to student characteristics, play a role in English language acquisition.38 For example, the percent of a school's student body who qualify for free or reduced priced meals may be a predictor of LTEL status.

For more details regarding the findings of this study, see appendices A and B.

Does the probability of becoming an LTEL differ by program?

Our findings suggest that program models are associated with the likelihood of becoming an LTEL. As shown in Figure 6, the majority of students represented in our sample (87%) have participated in the District's structured English immersion program at some point in their educational career. These students may have also participated in the District's mainstream English

37 Students with gaps are defined as those who enter the District, leave the District, and come back to the District at some point.
program, but at no time participated in the dual language program nor the transitional bilingual program. Additionally, 4% of our sample have participated in a dual language program, 7% have participated in a transitional bilingual program, and 2% have only participated in the mainstream English program.

**Figure 6. Program Participation Rates for Students Entering L.A. Unified as ELs in Kindergarten, 2002-2003 through 2016-2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language</td>
<td>4% (14,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>7% (25,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream English</td>
<td>2% (7,600)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured English Immersion</td>
<td>87% (305,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our study finds that students who participated in a dual language program, a transitional bilingual program, or a structured English immersion program are more likely to become an LTEL than students who only participated in a mainstream English program. These findings support the conclusions of the June 2018 IAU report on reclassification rates, *Reclassification Trends for English Learners in L.A. Unified*, which found that ELs in mainstream English settings were more likely to reclassify earlier in their educational career than ELs in other programs. *However, ELs who were exposed to dual language programs had a greater cumulative likelihood of reclassifying than their peers.* The study found that after 13 years in the District, 95% of ELs who had participated in a dual language program had reclassified compared to 88% of ELs who were only exposed to the mainstream program.39

We find that the relationship between entering high school as an LTEL and prior program participation is significant. When entering high school, students who were previously exposed to dual language programs, transitional bilingual programs, and English immersion programs were less likely to matriculate to high school as an LTEL, compared to LTEls in a mainstream English setting. These findings, along with the IAU’s reclassification rate findings, indicate that exposure to bilingual settings or structural English immersion settings are associated with more positive long-term outcomes than found for the mainstream English program.

English learners in our sample who have only participated in the mainstream English program are a unique group of students. To be eligible to participate in the mainstream English program in kindergarten, an EL must either be withdrawn from EL programs by his or her parent or

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demonstrate high levels of English proficiency. As a result, the mainstream English program contains more students with advanced, early advanced, and intermediate levels of English proficiency in kindergarten than the other EL programs. Of the students in our sample who have relevant test data, 66% of students in mainstream English program demonstrated early advanced or advanced levels of English proficiency in kindergarten or first grade. For comparison, only 35% of students in English immersion programs, 27% of students in transitional bilingual programs, and 34% of students in dual language programs demonstrated early advanced or advanced proficiency levels, as shown in Table 3. These initial English proficiency data indicate that ELs who have only participated in the mainstream English setting differ in quantifiable ways from ELs who participate in the other EL programs. This suggests a hypothesis that the earlier reclassification rates found for students in mainstream English might be due to these other characteristics and not to program effects; further research would be required to say more.

Table 3. Initial California English Language Development Test (CELDT) Proficiency Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Plan Program</th>
<th>Advanced and Early Advanced</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Beginning and Early Intermediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream English</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Immersion (L²EAP)</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the relationship between native proficiency and likelihood of becoming an LTELEL?

To estimate the relationship between native proficiency with becoming an LTELEL, we used data from the District's Spanish language assessment, pre-LAS, which is designed to assess language proficiency and pre-literacy skills of learners in early childhood. The preLAS Assessment System (preLAS) is designed to measure primary language proficiency and pre-literacy skills of learners in early childhood—students aged 3 to 6 years old. As of 2013, L.A. Unified does not require ELs to take the preLAS; however, the 2012 English Learner Master Plan does require ELs in bilingual and dual language programs to be assessed in their primary language.

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40 Nine students in the District are missing their initial CELDT proficiency scores; as a result, some percentages do not total 100%.

41 The preLAS Assessment System (preLAS) is designed to measure primary language proficiency and pre-literacy skills of learners in early childhood—students aged 3 to 6 years old. As of 2013, L.A. Unified does not require ELs to take the preLAS; however, the 2012 English Learner Master Plan does require ELs in bilingual and dual language programs to be assessed in their primary language.
Limitations

Since our study only includes students who started school with the District in kindergarten as ELs, the results should not be generalized to all ELs. While assessing the likelihood of becoming an LTEL is important for all ELs, we were missing important information for ELs who enter school at other grades at the time of the analysis, such as information regarding prior schooling. ELs who enter the District at other grades may have attended school in other districts in the United States or in other countries prior to enrolling in L.A. Unified. The limited information available for these ELs makes it difficult to accurately model their probability of becoming an LTEL. Therefore, the findings from this study only apply to students who enter the District in kindergarten as ELs.

While we attempt to take into consideration all student level characteristics that may influence an English learner's likelihood of becoming an LTEL, there are some characteristics for which our model could not control. For example, it is possible that the rate at which ELs attend school plays a role in their likelihood of reclassification. Although our model controlled for consistency in enrollment, we could not control for consistency in attendance. As a result, a future study assessing the relationship between student attendance and the likelihood of becoming an LTEL may be warranted.

Our model attempts to understand the relationship between student characteristics and the likelihood of becoming an LTEL. However, research indicates school and teacher characteristics may also be associated with the rate of English language acquisition. For example, the ability of a principal to advocate on behalf of his or her EL population is correlated with EL academic outcomes. As such, a model should account for principal leadership quality. However, it is difficult to systematically and accurately collect data on principal leadership. At best, we have survey data from teachers of English learners that indicate whether or not they feel supported by their principal. This is an imprecise and subjective measure for principal leadership. Our inability to accurately account for principal leadership, teacher abilities, and school characteristics indicate that our findings present an incomplete picture as to the factors that influence becoming an LTEL.

Additionally, the validity of the estimates produced in this report rely on the quality of District data. If students are missing information on important dimensions such as parent education, then there is a possibility that the results from this study are inaccurate. As an example, a large number of students were missing data on their parent's highest level of education. To adjust for the missing data, we assume parent education responses left blank and "decline to answer" responses are reflections of no college education. As a result, the lower levels of parent education label is inflated and likely prone to some degree of measurement error. While we believe this to be an informed assumption, measuring the relationship between parent education and likelihood of becoming an LTEL is difficult when we do not know the true highest educational attainment of parents for approximately 31% of our sample.


Despite these data limitations, there is reason to believe that our estimates are valid. Our statistical model is able to account for a variety of factors including, but not limited to, parent education level, student demographics, program model, and cohort characteristics.

SECTION FOUR: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In L.A. Unified, most ELs reclassify before they enter their seventh year of schooling, but roughly 20% go on to become LTELs. These students may truly require more years of language supports to reach academic English proficiency. No one solution exists to address the needs of the District's LTEL population because it consists of a diverse set of students with an equally diverse set of needs. To that end, we have identified several areas where the District can target its resources to improve services for ELs and LTELs.

As demonstrated in Figure 6, the majority of ELs in the District participate in the structured English immersion program, now referred to as the Language and Literacy in English Acceleration Program (L²EAP). Over 80% of dually identified students (i.e., ELs with special needs), ELs from households with lower levels of parent education, and ELs from Spanish-speaking households participate in the District's L²EAP program.

At present, the District is expanding its dual language programs in light of high parent demand. We believe the expansion of dual language programs is a promising step for the District. However, since the vast majority of ELs and LTELs in our sample participate in L²EAP settings, the District can recommit itself to ensuring EL and LTEL services provided by L²EAP are of high quality.

1. **Build teacher capacity to strengthen native language supports for ELs and LTELs.**

Our findings, as well as external research on ELs, suggest that the stronger students are in their native language at the beginning of their educational careers, the less likely they are to become LTELs. Providing more opportunities to develop and utilize skills associated with a student's native language may reduce the overall likelihood of a student becoming an LTEL. Of the EL programs offered by L.A. Unified, native language development almost exclusively occurs in dual language or bilingual programs. While the District is in the process of expanding dual language programs, most ELs participate in the L²EAP program.

In its current form, the L²EAP program does not provide ELs with instruction in their native language. According to the 2018 Master Plan for English Learner and Standard English Learners (hereafter referred to as the Plan), teachers can provide primary language supports to their students for clarification. However, the delivery, frequency, and efficacy by which teachers make use of primary language supports is unclear. Research on effective practices for teaching

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ELs and LTEls indicate the importance of the use of high quality and consistent primary language supports.\textsuperscript{45} \textsuperscript{46}

Site-specific staff (e.g., Title III coaches and/or EL Designees) provide voluntary professional development opportunities to teachers of ELs and LTEls throughout the school year.\textsuperscript{47} However, L.A. Unified teachers are only required to complete one hour per year of District-sponsored training that specifically addresses the needs of ELs and LTEls. Any additional training for teachers of ELs and LTEls that occurs throughout the school year is not mandatory. Moreover, trainings hosted by site-specific staff (e.g., Title III coaches and/or EL Designees) are not standardized across local districts. As a result, implementation of effective strategies for teaching ELs and LTEls are likely to be inconsistent across the District. L.A. Unified should consider revisiting policies regarding professional development for teachers of ELs and LTEls. Given the constraints around mandating EL-related professional development,\textsuperscript{48} the District might consider standardizing, in part, school-site professional development as a more feasible option. While it is important to give local districts autonomy to choose topics that address their specific needs, it is also important that professional development topics in each local district address the basic needs of ELs and LTEls. Standardized professional development across local districts could explicitly cover promising practices on integrating primary language supports into daily instruction.

\textbf{2. Commit to monitoring, evaluating, and improving designated and integrated English language development (ELD) curriculum and content across EL programs.}

Required daily designated and integrated ELD (dELD and iELD respectively) are critical components of programs serving EL students at all grade levels. Research asserts that the structure and content of time allocated to dELD is critical in the development of English proficiency in ELs. Additionally, the incorporation of language supports into every lesson is a primary component of iELD and creates greater access to core content for ELs. However, delivery of dELD and iELD must be consistent and well implemented for the program to be effective.\textsuperscript{49}

The Plan includes rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating District programs that serve EL students. According to the Plan, local district personnel are responsible for monitoring and evaluation procedures. Relevant local district personnel include EL coordinators, counseling


\textsuperscript{46} Orfield, G., and Gandara, P. (July 2010). A Return to the "Mexican Room": the Segregation of Arizona's English Learners. \textit{The Civil Rights Project}. Retrieved from https://cloudfront.escholarship.org/dist/prd/content/qt7m67q3b9/qt7m67q3b9.pdf

\textsuperscript{47} Conversations with District staff revealed the following: "According to state and federal EL requirements, all Districts (and their schools) must provide sufficient professional development specific to ELs. This PD requirement is communicated to all schools and we provide EL Specific PD to all EL Designees during the annual mandatory 4-day, summer Master Plan Institute (MPI) and during the monthly mandatory EL Designee meetings. MMED provides EL PD twice a month to LD EL Coordinators to enable them to deliver this PD to school-site EL Designees."

\textsuperscript{48} Any changes in mandatory professional development for teachers are subject to negotiations under the collective bargaining agreement.

coordinators, directors, administrators of instruction, and local district superintendents. Local
district directors are the personnel directly responsible for monitoring ELD practices within their
respective schools.

To monitor ELD practices, local district directors perform classroom observations using the ELD
Observation 5x8 Card and Form. It is unclear, however, how many classrooms local district
directors are able to observe within a specific school site. It is also unclear as to how much time
local district directors can devote to classroom observations. Research maintains that several
observations per year are necessary to provide a robust depiction of an individual teacher’s
instructional practice.\textsuperscript{50} District resources and employee capacity likely do not support conducting
more than two observations for a single teacher; however, the District should seriously consider
the number of classroom observations necessary to monitor ELD practices with rigor.

Given the resources allocated to the creation of the 2018 Master Plan for English Learner and
Standard English Learners, as well as the collective effort expended to produce such a document,
L.A. Unified should commit itself to implementing all aspects of the Plan with efficacy. To
implement with efficacy, the District should identify needs at the school site and local district
levels.

3. \textbf{Ensure proportional participation in academically rigorous courses among ELs.}

To increase participation in rigorous academic courses among LTELs, students must be able to
access such classes. Student access requires flexibility in student schedule. Additionally, student
access implies that school sites must offer rigorous academic courses. The Plan has introduced
"rigorous academics for all" as one of its guiding principles.\textsuperscript{51} The Plan states,

\begin{quote}
It is the District’s position that all students have the right to learn in an educational
environment where their potential can be fully realized and must have access to rigorous
coursework that helps prepare them for success in college and careers.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

The District should ensure proportional participation in academically rigorous courses for LTELs
to foster an environment in which all students can fully realize their potential.

Research indicates that students identified as ELs in secondary school\textsuperscript{53} report feeling
stigmatized.\textsuperscript{54} In a report examining within school segregation of ELs in an Arizona school
district, ELs expressed feeling intellectually inferior to their non-EL peers.\textsuperscript{55} Research suggests
the stigma associated with being an LTEL comes as a result of participation in EL-only courses at
the secondary level.

38(7), 518-521.
\textsuperscript{52} 2018 Master Plan for English Learners and Standard English Learners. (2018).
\textsuperscript{53} We refer to the students in this section as English learners in secondary school because we cannot be sure
these students met all of the criteria to be considered LTELs by the District.
\textsuperscript{54} Thompson, K. D. (2015). Questioning the Long-Term English learner label: How categorization can
blind us to students’ abilities. \textit{Teachers College Record}, 117(12), 1-50
\textsuperscript{55} Orfield, G. and Gandara, P. (July 2010). A Return to the "Mexican Room": The Segregation of Arizona's
English Learners. \textit{The Civil Rights Project}. Retrieved from
https://cloudfront.escholarship.org/dist/prd/content/qt7m67q3b9/qt7m67q3b9.pdf
Historically, separating students, both across and within schools, has negative consequences. However, ELD courses offer linguistic supports that are unavailable to LTELs in mainstream classroom settings. Rather than remove linguistic supports that students may still need, the District should increase participation rates of LTELs in more academically rigorous courses to improve the integration of ELs across campuses.

According to District data from 2015-2016, ELs made up 15% of high school students in the sample and only 1% enrollment in Calculus, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, and AP Physics respectively. Moreover, only 10% of students enrolled in Chemistry and Algebra II were English learners. Finally, only 6% enrolled in Physics and 3% of students enrolled in Advanced Math were English learners. None of these course offerings enrolled proportional rates of LTELs.

In 2016-2017, 44% of ELs in fifth grade were well below desired benchmarks for the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test. Put another way, approximately half of ELs in fifth grade in 2016-2017 were not reading at grade level. This finding has implications for current and future LTELs. An LTEL in the sixth grade will have difficulty accessing academically rigorous courses if he or she is not reading at grade level. To ensure proportional participation of future LTELs in rigorous courses in secondary school, the District must first improve EL services at the elementary school level, as expressed in recommendations one and two. This policy recommendation should not occur without first addressing recommendations one and two. However, it is an important step in holistically improving the educational experience of English learners in the District.

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4. Strengthen capacity of IEP teams working with dually identified students in secondary school to distinguish learning disabilities from language needs.

In 2016-2017, just under 50% of high school LTELs in our sample were dually identified students with active individual education plans (IEPs). Reclassification criteria for dually identified students in grades 6-12 varies from criteria for other LTELs.60 61

Even with modified reclassification criteria, however, the rate at which dually identified students become LTELs is disproportionate relative to the overall District. Moreover, disproportions exist along disability type. In our sample, 80% of dually identified students in high school had specific learning disabilities in 2016-2017. Additionally, nearly 98% of dually identified high school students with intellectual disabilities in our sample were LTELs.

According to the Plan, "[LTELs] should not be over-represented in special education." The Plan maintains, "[District] staff may require additional training to accurately distinguish disabilities from the normal language acquisition process."62 In recent years, the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department (MMED) within L.A. Unified, in collaboration with the Special Education Unit, has provided targeted professional development to teachers of LTELs with special needs.63 However, given our findings, the District should consider providing additional trainings to members of IEP teams for LTELs with special needs that focus on ways to assess the degree to which a student's learning difference impacts the language acquisition process. These trainings, in addition to the targeted professional development opportunities for teachers of LTELs with disabilities, can better equip District staff to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

5. Report reclassification rates differently for dually identified students.

Recall that dually identified students make up approximately 44% of all LTELs in the District while making up 14% of the general District population. Given these disproportions, the District should consider reporting the reclassification rates of ELs who do not have special needs separate from those who do. Disaggregating reclassification rates along special education status would be beneficial for all ELs and LTELs. Reclassification rates presented in the aggregate mask the severity of the reclassification problem for dually identified students while simultaneously deflating reclassification rates for ELs who do not have special needs. Reporting reclassification

60 According to L.A. Unified Policy Bulletin 6890.0, IEP teams are able to take into consideration the impact, if any, a student's disability has on his or her English language progress. These reclassification procedures are for dually identified students who meet the following criteria: (1) the student has been enrolled in U.S. schools for a minimum of five years; (2) the student is at least in Grade 6 and is attending school regularly; (3) the student has an active IEP and is eligible for special education services at the time this reclassification process is enacted.


63 Conversations with District staff revealed that these professional development opportunities include (1) exploration of the characteristics for LTELs with disabilities; (2) reclassification policy for LTELs with disabilities; (3) instructional strategies to meet the needs of LTELs with disabilities; (4) differentiated lesson planning to address the linguistics and academic needs of LTELs with disabilities.
rates for ELs with and without special needs separately would provide a more accurate depiction
of the rate at which both sets of students are acquiring academic English.

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSION

The likelihood of becoming a long-term English learner (LTEL) is significantly correlated with
student background characteristics and program model. English learners (ELs) in our sample who
speak Spanish, are male, whose parents did not attend college, and have special needs are more
likely to be LTELs than their peers. Whether or not a student has gaps in his or her elementary
school experience is also significantly correlated with the likelihood of becoming an LTEL in
middle school and remaining an LTEL as students matriculate into high school.

From 2003-2017, roughly 305,000 ELs (87%) in our sample were exposed to the structured
English immersion setting (also referred to as language & literacy in English acceleration
program). In 2016-2017, approximately 66,000 ELs from our sample participated in the
structured English immersion program. To make this number more tangible, more students
participated in the District’s structured English immersion program in 2016-2017 than were
enrolled in all of San Francisco Unified School District.**64** Approximately 22,000 of the ELs in
our sample who participated in the structured English immersion program in 2016-2017 were
identified as potential LTELs.**65**

L.A. Unified is in the process of expanding its dual language programs to meet the needs of the
growing EL population. However, most of the District’s current LTEL population will participate
in structured English immersion courses.**66** As a result, the District should ensure that the
expansion of the District’s dual language programs does not diminish the amount of resources
allocated to the structured English immersion program (now referred to as L²EAP) or detract
from the quality of its services.

Additionally, our study finds that only participating in the mainstream English program is
associated with a lower likelihood of becoming an LTEL. **However, this finding should not be
used as evidence for program effectiveness.** A substantial number of mainstream students start the
program with high levels of English proficiency compared to ELs who begin in the dual
language, transitional bilingual, or structured English immersion programs. In other words, a
greater share of kindergaten ELs from our sample who begin in the mainstream English program
are farther along the pathway to reclassification than ELs who start in other District EL programs.
Furthermore, a greater percentage of ELs who have been withdrawn from the District’s EL
services by their parents only participated in the mainstream English program than in the other

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**64** According to Ed-Data.org, San Francisco Unified School District enrolled 60,133 students in 2016-
2017.  
**65** Recall that a student who has been identified as an English learner for 4 or 5 consecutive years is flagged
as a potential long-term English learner. ELs identified in kindergarten can be flagged as potential LTELs
in third, fourth, or fifth grades.  
**66** Under Proposition 58, English learners can enroll in their school’s dual language program at any point
during their K-12 education. However, students are more likely to be successful in a dual language program
if their English and primary language proficiency rates are at grade level. Moreover, recall that only 17
middle school dual language programs and 3 high school dual language programs exist in the District,
making access an additional concern for most LTELs.
EL programs. These differences among the program participants are not accounted for in our analysis. As a result, this study does not allow for cause-and-effect statements.

Lastly, our study finds that students who have been dually identified in the District (students who are identified as English learners and have disabilities) are 2.3 times more likely to become LTELs than their peers who have never been dually identified. Dually identified students make up approximately 14% of our sample's EL population but make up approximately 44% of our sample's LTEL population. Such a large disparity indicates a need to improve services afforded to dually identified students.

Given these findings, we recommend that the District make a concerted effort to:

- Build teacher capacity to strengthen native language supports for ELs and LTELs.
- Commit to monitoring, evaluating, and improving designated and integrated English language development (ELD) curriculum and content across EL programs.
- Ensure proportional participation in academically rigorous courses among ELs.
- Strengthen capacity of IEP teams working with dually identified students in secondary school to distinguish learning disabilities from language needs, and provide appropriate supports for such students.
- Report reclassification rates differently for dually identified students.

Further study is warranted to understand the relationship between English language development and the needs of students with disabilities. Additional research is also suggested into the impact of program designs and practices in supporting English learners to achieve reclassification before secondary school if possible, and in supporting LTELs in secondary school to develop English proficiency while also accessing the advanced academic curriculum needed for graduation and college.
APPENDIX

Appendix A

This study employs two logistic regression analyses to answer the primary research question: what factors, if any, predict being an LTEL? The statistical model examines the likelihood students identified in kindergarten as English learners will become LTELs after six years of schooling. This model accounts for students' home language, gifted status, special education participation, initial Spanish language proficiency as determined by pre-LAS scores, participation in a bilingual program, parent education level, eligibility for free or reduced price meals, and cohort year. To interpret the results below, the reader should examine the odds ratio column. The odds ratio represents the odds that an English learner will become an LTEL given the variable of interest, compared to the odds an English learner will become an LTEL in the absence of the variable of interest. For example, dually identified students in our study have a 2.34 greater odds of becoming an LTEL than do ELs who are not dually identified. Odds ratios that are less than one indicate that ELs are less likely to become LTELs than their peers, given the variable of interest. To make an odds ratio that is less than one more tangible, divide the odds ratio into one. For example, female ELs in the District have 1.1 (1/0.90) lower odds of becoming an LTEL than male ELs in the District.

Table A. Odds Ratios from Primary Logistic Regression Model (N=57,905)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables of Interest</th>
<th>Odds Ratio (SD)</th>
<th>Z Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.90*** (0.02)</td>
<td>-3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dually Identified</td>
<td>2.27*** (0.07)</td>
<td>27.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted</td>
<td>0.13*** (0.01)</td>
<td>-18.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in Schooling</td>
<td>1.72*** (0.09)</td>
<td>10.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured English Immersion</td>
<td>1.67* (0.38)</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>2.06** (0.51)</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language</td>
<td>4.47*** (1.19)</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some or More College</td>
<td>0.83*** (0.04)</td>
<td>-4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1.82 (0.71)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.51 (0.95)</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.52 (0.51)</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results regarding Pacific Islander students were inconclusive due to the small sample size.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Filipino</strong></td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.58)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-LAS Proficiency Band 2</strong></td>
<td>0.89***</td>
<td>-3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-LAS Proficiency Band 3</strong></td>
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<td>-3.60</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-LAS Proficiency Band 4</strong></td>
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<td>-7.34</td>
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<td>(0.03)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-LAS Proficiency Band 5</strong></td>
<td>0.64***</td>
<td>-5.69</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Standard deviations are in parentheses. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001
Appendix B

This study employs two logistic regression analyses to answer the primary research question: what factors, if any, predict being an LTEL? The second model used in this examines the likelihood that students who become LTELs in middle school will matriculate into high school as LTELs. This model accounts for students’ home language, gifted status, special education participation, participation in a bilingual program, parent education level, eligibility for free or reduced price meals, and cohort year. For assistance interpreting the odds ratios in the table below, please refer to the description in Appendix A.

Table B. Odds Ratios from Secondary Logistic Regression Model (N=36,103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables of Interest</th>
<th>Odds Ratio (SD)</th>
<th>Z Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.86*** (0.02)</td>
<td>-6.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dually Identified</td>
<td>1.90*** (0.05)</td>
<td>23.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted</td>
<td>0.25*** (0.03)</td>
<td>-10.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in Schooling</td>
<td>1.47*** (0.05)</td>
<td>11.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured English Immersion</td>
<td>0.04*** (0.09)</td>
<td>-4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>0.42*** (0.10)</td>
<td>-3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language</td>
<td>0.44*** (0.12)</td>
<td>-3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some or More College</td>
<td>0.92 (0.05)</td>
<td>-1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/ Alaska Native</td>
<td>1.02 (0.40)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.47 (0.07)</td>
<td>-5.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.58 (0.54)</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>0.72 (0.14)</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.33 (0.84)</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1.05 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Standard deviations are in parentheses. *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001