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Former English Learner students in CPS graduate high school and enroll in college at rates higher than the district average

Long-term English Learner students could benefit from increased supports

CHICAGO—A new UChicago Consortium on School Research study released today provides insight into the high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence rates of English Learners, both those who are still English Learners in high school and those who were previously classified and attained English proficiency before starting high school.

High-level, the study found that:

1. **Most students who were formerly English Learners** graduated from high school and persisted in college at rates higher than the district average.
2. Students who were **long-term English Learners** had cumulative GPA and SAT scores that were lower than district average, and, among college enrollees, had lower four-year college persistence rates.
3. Students who were **late-arriving English Learners** to CPS (after third grade) had SAT scores that were lower than the district average, but higher cumulative GPA than the district average, and had high college persistence among students who enrolled in college.

“Often, the only available data on English Learners reports *current* English Learners. That misses a large group of students who reached English proficiency—who are very successful. We recognize and see their successes, and the strengths of the programs that helped them succeed. And, at the same time, we recognize that many high schoolers who are English Learners need more robust supports.”

Marisa de la Torre,

Lead report author;

Managing Director & Senior Research Associate at the UChicago Consortium on School Research

Authors Marisa de la Torre, Alyssa Blanchard, Kaitlyn Franklin, Carlos Angeles, and Elaine M. Allensworth published a new study, *English Learners in Chicago Public Schools: A spotlight on high school students*. The report looks at the high school and college outcomes of 1) former English Learners and 2) different groups of active English Learners: a) long-term English Learners with and without individualized education plans (IEPs), and b) late arrivals to the district (after third grade). The study used data for students who started ninth grade for the first time in the fall of 2014, 2015, and 2016, and therefore does not include the most recently-arrived English Learners.

Details from the report include:

- Students *formerly classified as English Learners* during their time in CPS, but who had demonstrated English proficiency and exited English Learner (EL) status by the ninth grade, were 23% of the ninth grade population.

- They had higher-than-district-average outcomes: cumulative GPAs and SAT scores; high school graduation rate; two-year college enrollment rate; and two-year college persistence rate (among all college enrollees).
 - Their enrollment rate into four-year colleges was similar to the district average.
- Students *still classified as English Learners in high school* (“long-term English Learners”) were 7% of the ninth grade population.
 - Their high school GPA and SAT scores were below the district average, and they were less likely to enroll in college, and were less likely to persist if they did enroll in college.
- Students classified as *Late-arriving English Learners* were 3% of the ninth grade population.
 - They were less likely to be Latinx than other English Learner groups (57% Latinx students for this group vs. around 90% Latinx for other English Learners).
 - Their high school graduation rate was 81%, close to the district average of 84%, but their SAT scores were lower.
 - They were more likely to enroll in a two-year college than the district average, and their two-year college persistence was higher than most other students who enrolled in college.
- Students never classified as English Learners were 67% of the ninth grade population.

“There are some key differences among different groups of English Learners in high school. We hope that our findings help policymakers and educators consider which strategies may best support different students.”

Kaitlyn Franklin,

Report author & Research Analyst at the UChicago Consortium on School Research

About the research

[English Learners in Chicago Public Schools: A spotlight on high school students](#)

Authors: Marisa de la Torre, Alyssa Blanchard, Kaitlyn Franklin, Carlos Angeles, and Elaine M. Allensworth
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About the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

With the goal of supporting stronger and more equitable educational outcomes for students, the UChicago Consortium conducts research of high technical quality that informs and assesses policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). We seek to expand communication among researchers, policymakers, practitioners, families, and communities as we support the search for solutions to the challenges of school improvement. The UChicago Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action and practice but does not advocate for particular policies or programs. Rather, we help to build capacity for school improvement by identifying what matters most for student success, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and conducting theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working.

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research is part of the Urban Education Institute, within the University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice.