

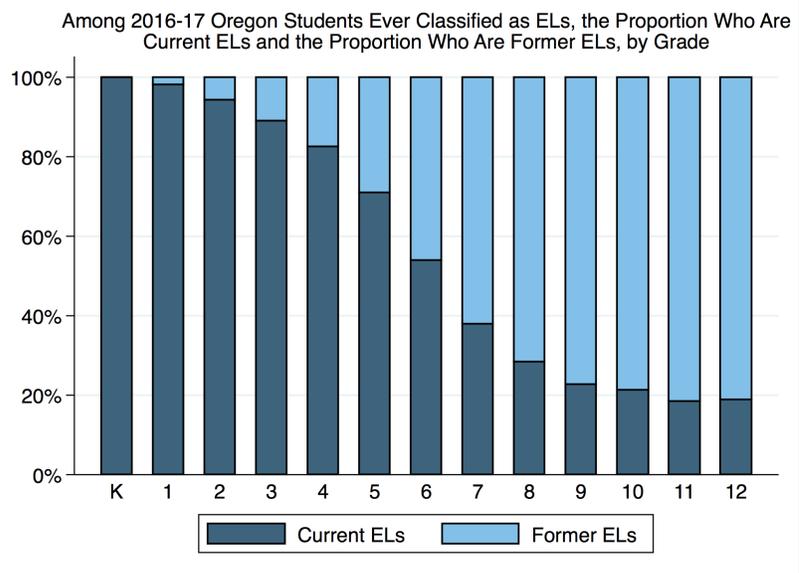
POLICY BRIEF

BETTER UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

Framework to Better Understand Outcomes for English Learners

The vast majority of students who enter school classified as English learners (ELs) develop English proficiency and exit EL services. Therefore, to better understand outcomes for all students who enter school classified as ELs, it is important to report outcomes for four groups:

- **Current ELs** are students currently classified as ELs.
- **Former ELs** are students who were previously classified as ELs but have attained English proficiency and exited EL services.
- **Ever ELs** are all students who were ever classified as ELs. This is the *combined group of current and former ELs*.
- **Never ELs** are students who were never classified as ELs. This includes students who only speak English and also students who speak a language other than English at home but were proficient in English at school entry.



By High School, Former English Learners Far Outnumber Current English Learners

When the ODE/OSU English Learner Partnership began in 2014, a first goal was to determine the number of former English learners in Oregon schools. This was an essential first step to understanding outcomes for current, former, ever, and never ELs.

As the above figure illustrates, the relative size of the current EL and former EL groups changes dramatically across grades. By high school, former ELs outnumber current ELs by more than three to one. For example, among students who were 9th graders in 2016-17 and were ever classified as ELs, 77% were former ELs and 23% were current ELs.

The Current EL Group at the High School Level Includes Many Newcomers and Many Students with Disabilities

Among students in grades 9-12 in 2016-17 who were classified as current ELs:

- 40% had been enrolled in Oregon schools for three years or less.
- 15% had been enrolled in Oregon schools between four and six years.
- 45% had been enrolled in Oregon schools for seven years or more.
- Among those who had been enrolled in Oregon schools for seven years or more, 56% were identified as having a disability.

Graduation Rates for Current ELs Are Concerning, But Former ELs Graduate at Higher Rates than Students Never Classified as ELs.

The table below shows 2016-17 four-year cohort graduation rates for current ELs, former ELs, ever ELs, and never ELs and also reports the number of students in each group.

Language Proficiency Group	Graduation Rate	Number of Students
Current ELs	54.9%	1,884
Former ELs	80.0%	5,868
Ever ELs (Current + Former)	73.9%	7,752
Never ELs	77.2%	38,403

It is very concerning that just over half (54.9%) of the current EL group graduates from high school within four years. However, it is important to note that former ELs graduate at rates higher than students never classified as ELs (80.0% compared to 77.2%). Because the former EL group outnumbers the current EL group more than three to one, that means that the graduation rate for the combined ever EL group, which includes both current and former ELs, is quite similar to the graduation rate for never ELs (73.9% compared to 77.2%).

Policy Implications

- Reporting outcomes only for current ELs fails to provide sufficient information for education systems to effectively understand and respond to students’ needs.
- To better understand students’ needs and system performance, it is important to report outcomes for current, former, ever, and never ELs.
- Oregon has already integrated reporting about current, former, ever, and never ELs into several systems. However, there are still additional opportunities to extend and deepen this practice.
- Oregon has shared its work on reporting outcomes for current, former, ever, and never ELs with other states, and some states have shown strong interest in implementing this practice.
- A requirement to report outcomes for current, former, ever, and never ELs should be incorporated into the next reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.