Nevada's English Learners

Prepared for the English Learner Advisory Council

June, 2026

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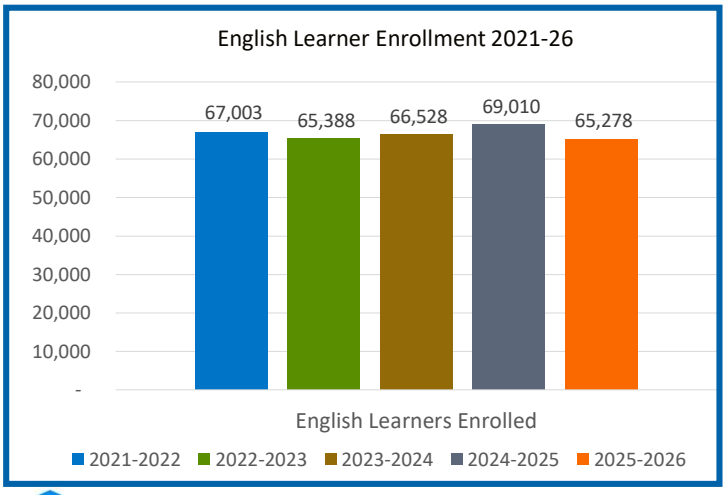
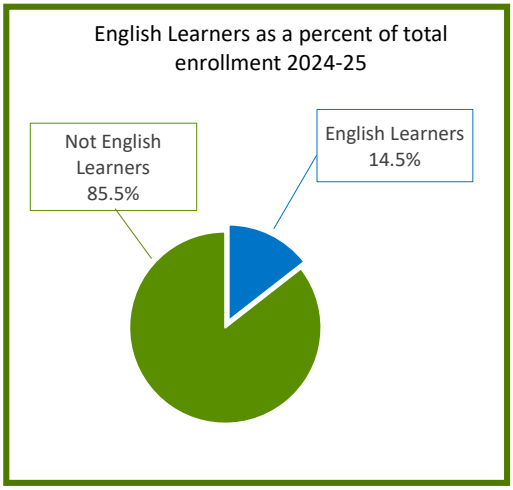
The goal of this presentation is to provide a comprehensive, objective overview of current demographic and academic data regarding Nevada's English Learners (ELs).

K-12 English Learners





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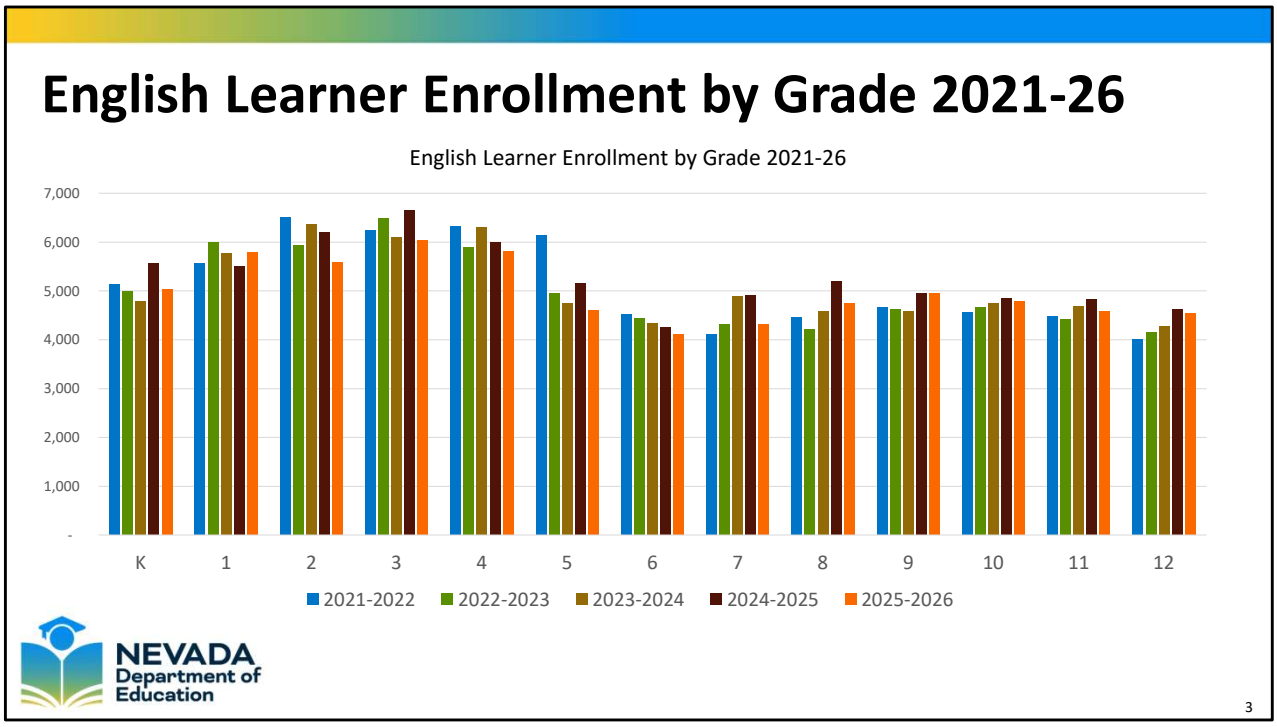
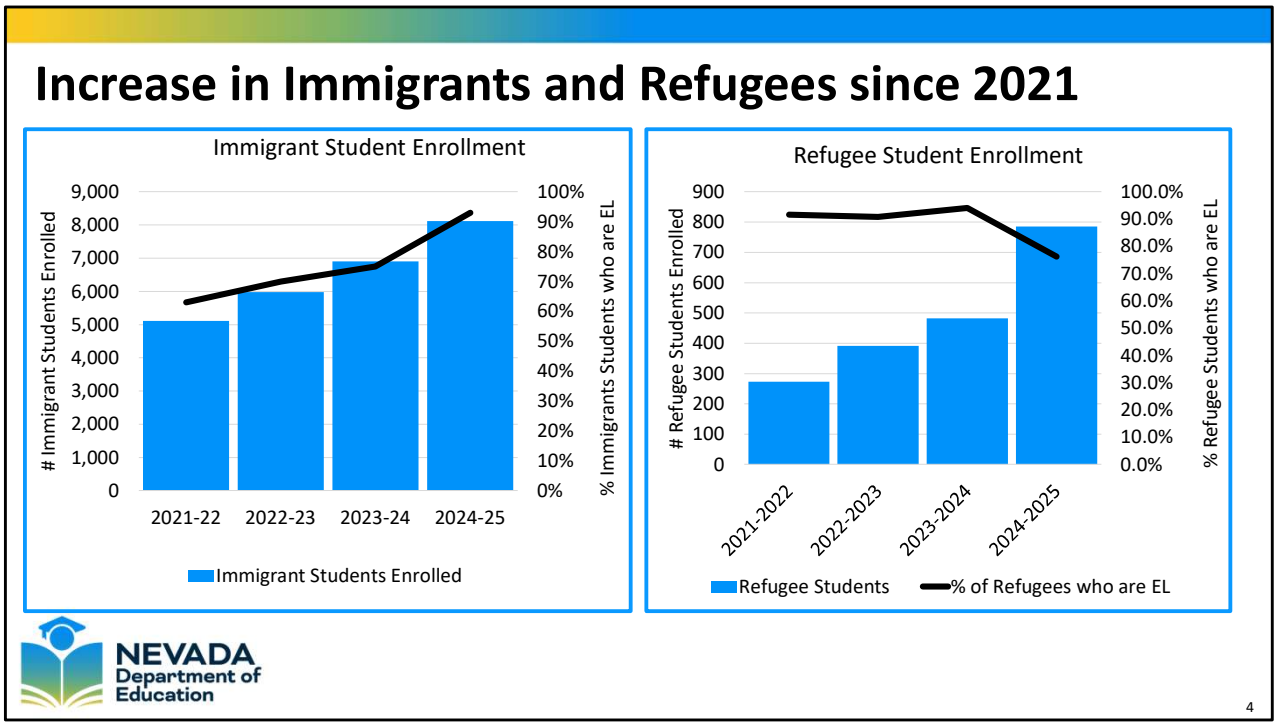
This slide establishes the scope of our EL population.
For the 2024-25 school year, English Learners represent 14.5% of the total student enrollment in Nevada.
Looking at the bar chart, while there are slight fluctuations year over year, our EL enrollment consistently remains a significant and integral segment of our statewide student body, currently sitting at just over 69,000 students.



Here we see the distribution of EL students across grade levels over the past five years.

Notice the trend: our highest concentrations of English Learners are in the elementary grades (K-5). As students progress into middle and high school, the total number of identified ELs tapers off slightly, though it remains steady between 4,000 and 5,000 students per grade level in high school.

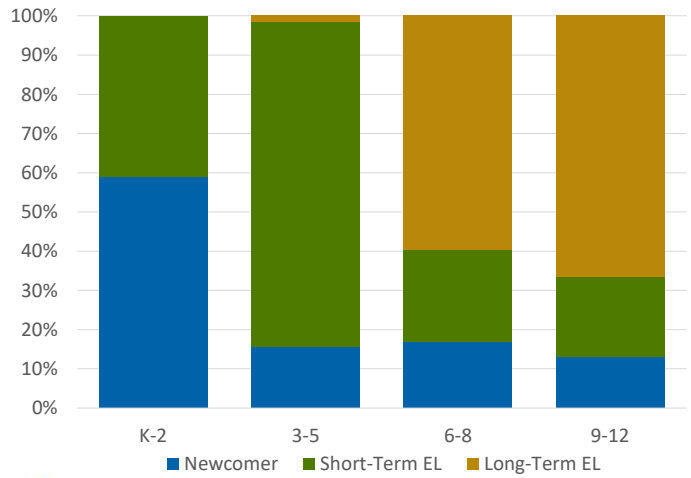


These charts illustrate the recent, sharp increases in our immigrant and refugee student populations.

Immigrant Students: Enrollment has grown from roughly 5,000 in 2021 to over 8,000 today. Notably, the percentage of these students who require EL services has climbed from 60% to over 90%.

Refugee Students: We see a similar enrollment spike, growing from under 300 to nearly 800. A high percentage of these students (roughly 75% to 90%) also carry the EL designation.

EL Student Groups Definitions and Distribution



Student Group	Definition
Newcomer	An English Learner who has been enrolled in a U.S. public school for a cumulative total of not more than 20 school months.
Short-Term English Learner	An English Learner who is no longer a Newcomer and is not yet a Long-Term English Learner
Long-Term English Learner	A student who has been an English Learner for more than six consecutive years since their initial identification

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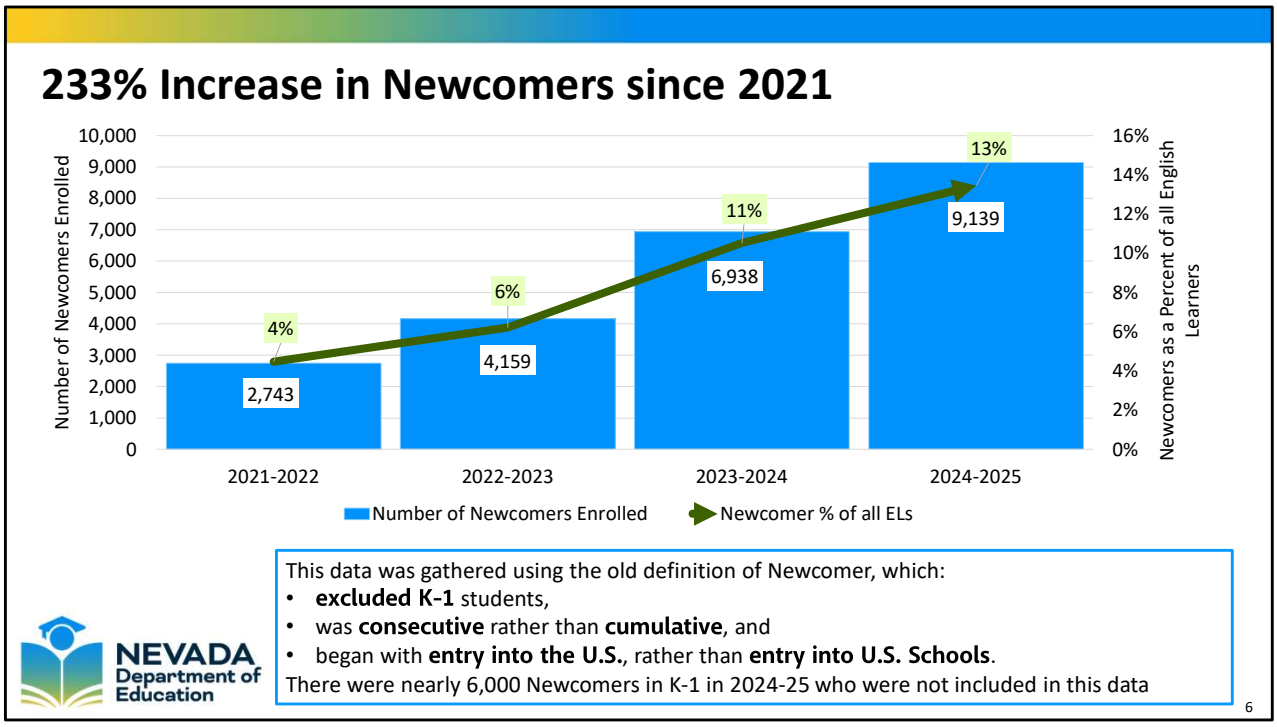
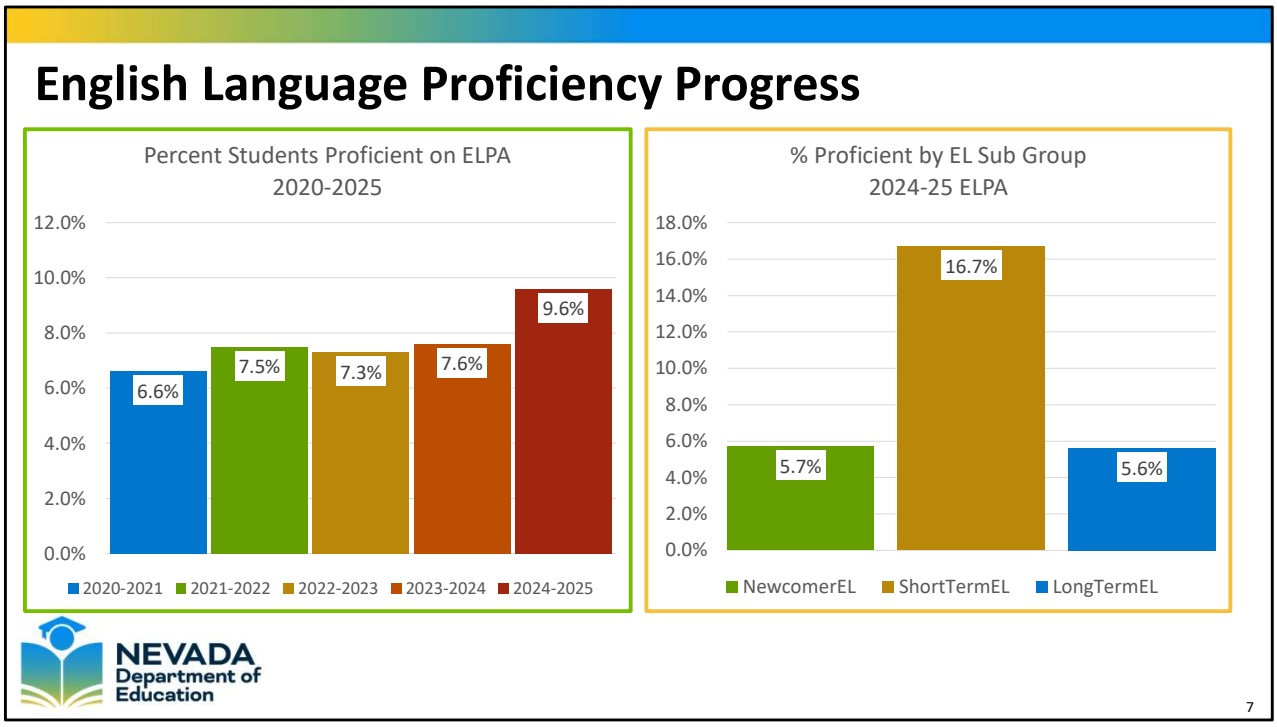
Before we look at sub-group data, we need to ground ourselves in the new standardized definitions we wrote in response to Assembly Bill 335.
Newcomer: Enrolled in a U.S. public school for a cumulative total of not more than 20 school months.
Short-Term EL: No longer a newcomer, but not yet a Long-Term EL.
Long-Term EL (LTEL): An English Learner for more than six consecutive years since initial identification.

This stacked bar chart shows how the composition of our EL population shifts as students age.
In the elementary grades (K-5), Short-Term ELs make up the vast majority.
However, by middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12), Long-Term English Learners become the dominant majority of our EL population.

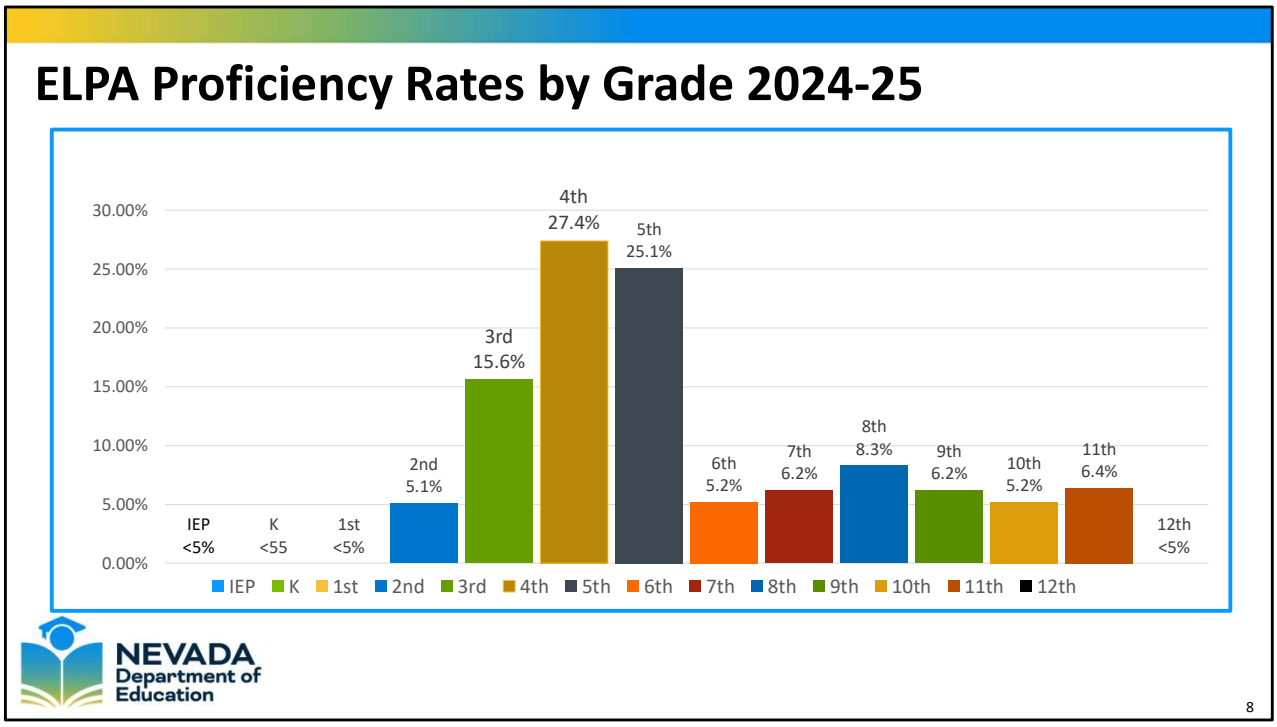


Important Context: It is vital to note that this enrollment shift is heavily impacted by the change in the definition of a Newcomer (shifting to a cumulative count and including entry into U.S. schools rather than just the country). Furthermore, there are nearly 6,000 Newcomers in grades K-1 for 2024–25 who are not captured in these historical data, meaning the actual impact on primary classrooms is even higher than the chart suggests.



Looking at the ELPA (English Language Proficiency Assessment), we see a positive statewide trend. Over the last five years, the overall proficiency rate has grown from 6.6% to 9.6%.

When we break down the 2024-25 data by subgroup, Short-Term ELs are driving a significant portion of this success, achieving a 16.7% proficiency rate, compared to roughly 5.6% for Newcomers and Long-Term ELs.



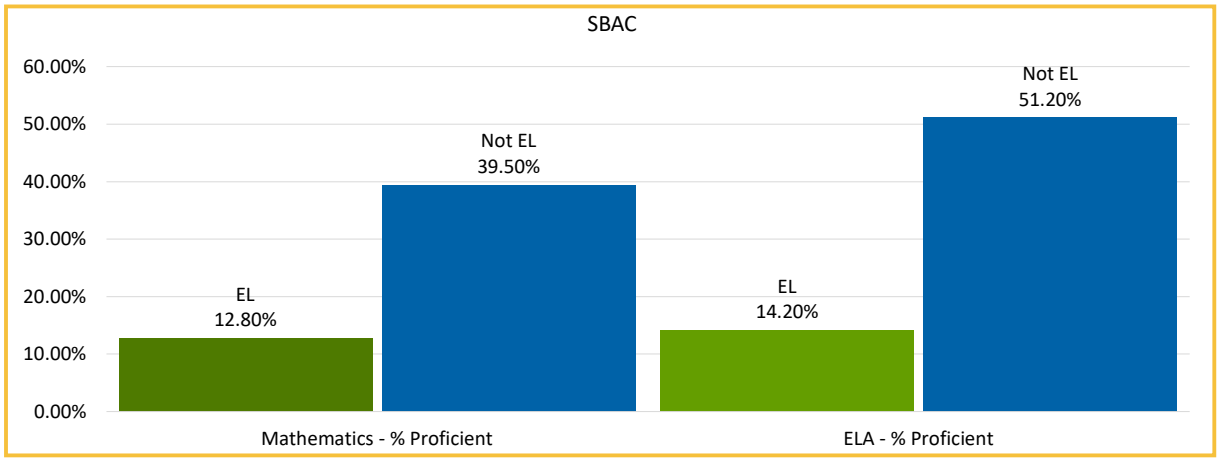
This slide provides a granular look at proficiency by grade level. As expected, our Kindergarten baseline is low, at less than 5%, because these students are just beginning their language acquisition journey.

We see a clear reclassification window opening in grades 3 through 5, peaking at 27.4% in 4th grade and 25.1% in 5th grade. For the students exiting here within that 4-to-6-year window, our elementary programming is effectively meeting their needs. However, notice the sharp drop-off as students enter grade 6, where proficiency falls to 5.2% and then plateaus all through middle and high school.

This plateau highlights a critical structural dynamic of the assessment itself: WIDA raises the bar every year. To maintain the same proficiency level as they age, a student must constantly master increasingly complex language. When proficiency rates stall out here, it shows that while students successfully develop early-childhood literacy, our secondary structures are perhaps failing to explicitly teach them the advanced, abstract academic language skills required to keep pace with the test's increasing difficulty.

Students with Disabilities (IEP Subgroup): While our overall state proficiency is 9.6%, our students with IEPs have a proficiency rate of less than 5%. Because dually identified students make up nearly 20% of our entire EL population, these data signal a critical need for tighter collaboration between our language and special education teams.

SBAC Proficiency Grades 3-8 2024-25



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This slide compares core academic proficiency between ELs and non-ELs on the SBAC.

The data highlights significant achievement gaps. In Mathematics, EL proficiency sits at 12.8% compared to 39.5% for non-ELs. A similar gap exists in ELA, at 14.2% versus 51.2%.

Long-Term English Learners & High School English Learners

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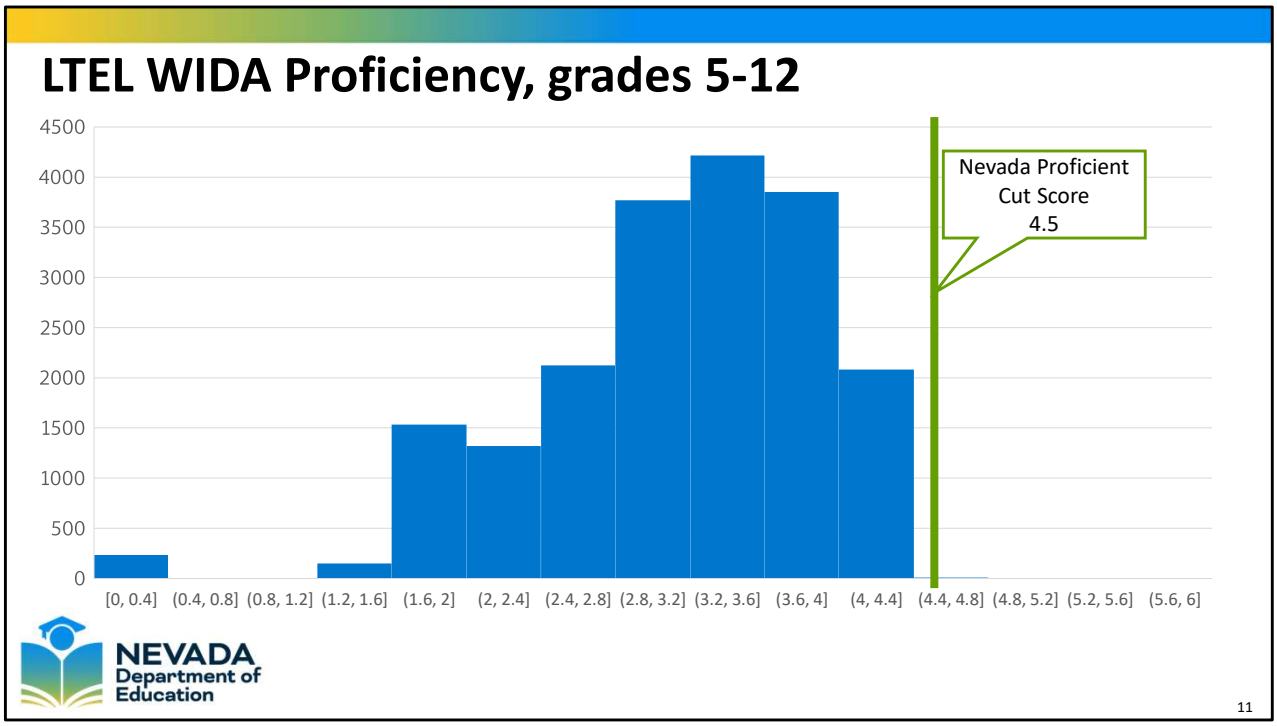
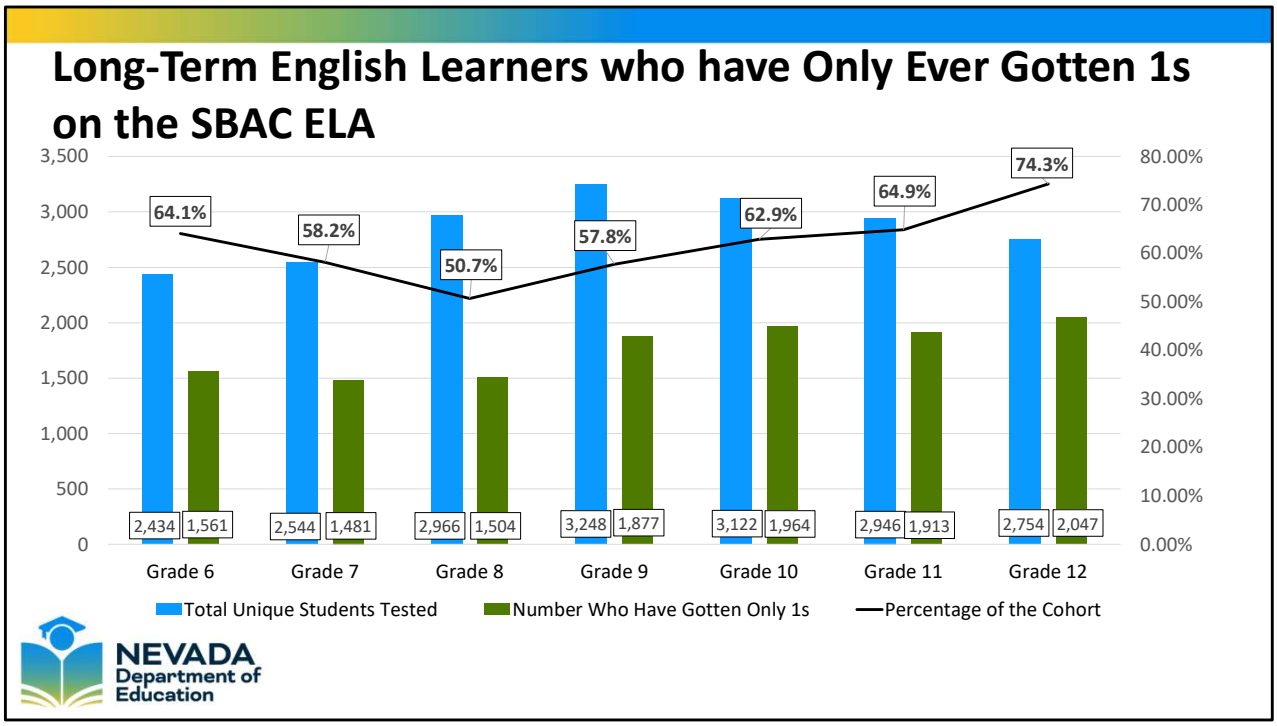


Focusing on our Long-Term English Learners, this histogram shows the distribution of their WIDA scores.

The green line represents the Nevada Proficient Cut Score of 4.5. As the bell curve visually demonstrates, the vast majority of our LTEL students are clustered in the 2.8 to 4.0 range, struggling to cross that final threshold to proficiency.

To understand why our secondary students are heavily clustered here between scores of 2.8 and 4.0, it is helpful to look at WIDA's standard principle of language acquisition: 'Lower is faster, higher is slower.' Students often gain initial, conversational language proficiency rapidly. However, crossing past a level 4 requires mastering dense, domain-specific academic vocabulary and complex text structures, which naturally takes significantly longer. What we see in this histogram is the manifestation of that linguistic slowdown

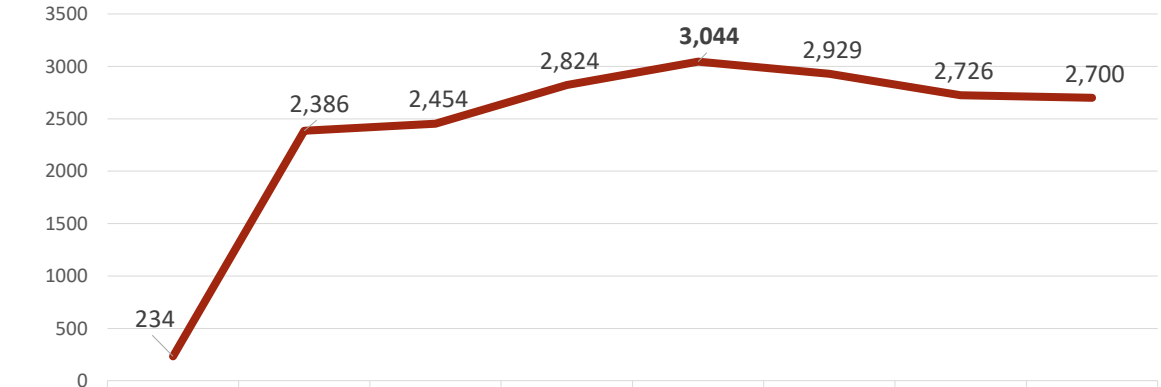


Building directly on the WIDA plateau we just evaluated, this slide tracks the academic manifestation of that linguistic block, isolating our long-term students who have exclusively scored a Level 1—the lowest performance tier—on the SBAC ELA throughout their educational history.

As the data show, this is a sustained, systemic trend across the secondary continuum. In the 6th grade, 64% of the tested long-term cohort has a historical profile consisting entirely of Level 1 scores. While we see a minor structural dip to 51% in the 8th grade, the trend line accelerates significantly as students navigate high school.

By the time these students reach the 12th grade, nearly three-quarters of the tested cohort—74%—has never broken out of the Level 1 performance band on this assessment. These data underscore that the upper-level academic literacy barriers we noted on the WIDA histogram are directly impacting our students' ability to access and demonstrate proficiency on core standardized ELA metrics. It provides a vital piece of context as we move forward to look at when these cohorts first entered our system.

Count of Long-Term English Learners 2024-25



	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Total LTEL	234	2,386	2,454	2,824	3,044	2,929	2,726	2,700

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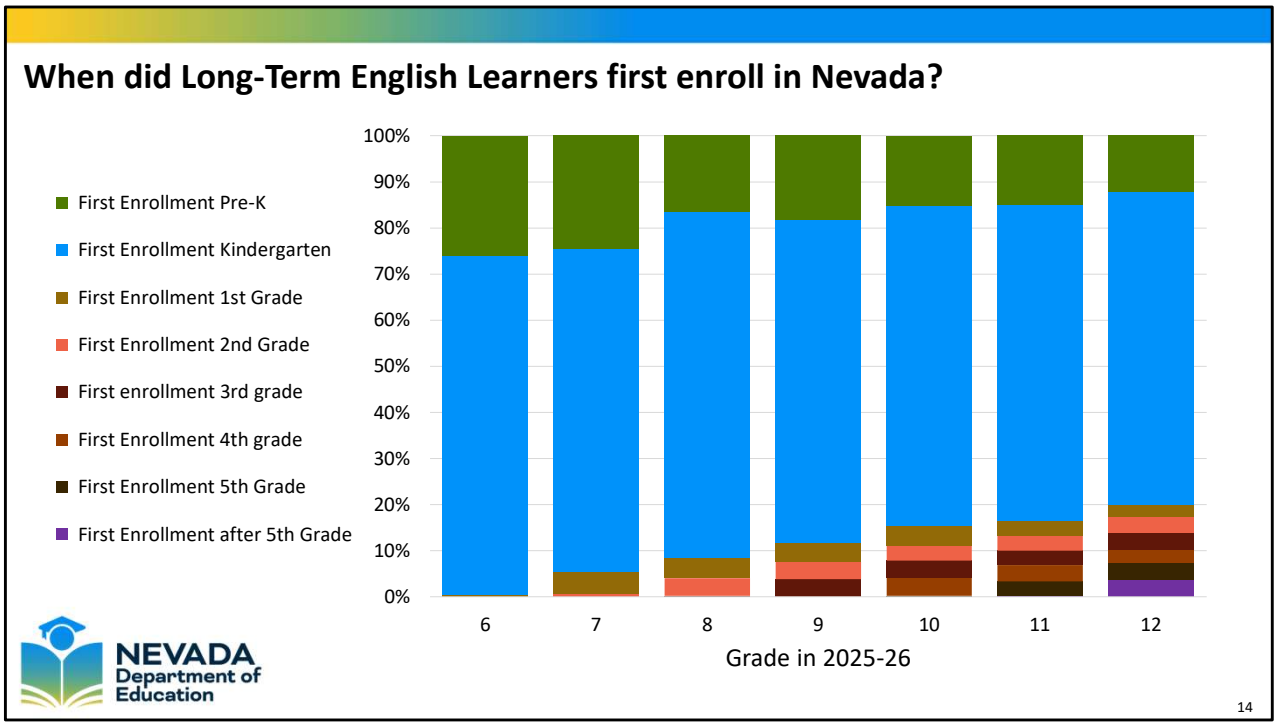
This slide maps the total volume of students carrying the LTEL designation during the 2024–25 school year.
*As we look at the distribution, we can see how the raw numbers shift across the secondary grade levels. This count represents the operational scale of our long-term student population.
Establishing this baseline allows us to transition directly into our next slide, where we will examine exactly when these specific high school cohorts first entered our public school system.



This slide establishes the foundational baseline for our longitudinal analysis by mapping exactly when our current Long-Term English Learners first entered Nevada public schools.

When we look across the entire secondary continuum from grade 5 through grade 12, the data from **image_826c27.png** show an incredibly consistent pattern. The moment a student crosses the threshold to carry the LTEL designation in the 6th grade, **99.60%** of that cohort is comprised of children who started with us in either Pre-K or Kindergarten.

As we track these cohorts into high school, we see the expected, gradual emergence of later arrival segments—representing students who moved to Nevada during later elementary years or after 5th grade. Yet, even when we isolate our graduating seniors in the 12th grade, **80.01%** of that entire cohort consists of students who began their academic journeys with us in early childhood.

Statewide, out of the 21,056 long-term language learners currently sitting in our classrooms, **88.56%** grew up directly within our system. These data demonstrate that our long-term demographics are not a byproduct of student transiency or late-arriving international migration.

Specialist-Led LIEPs (Endorsement Required)

LIEP Model	Core Instructional Focus	Required Endorsement	# Enrolled	% of Total
Newcomer	Foundational language and transition for recent arrivals.	ELAD or Bilingual	3,808	5%
ELD Pull-out / Push-in	Explicit English language instruction provided by an EL specialist.	ELAD or Bilingual	9,954	13%
Co-Teaching	Collaborative grade-level instruction by both a content and EL teacher.	ELAD (for EL teacher)	1,486	1.9%
Content-Based ESL	Core content taught by a dual-certified teacher.	ELAD (Dual-certified)	369	0.5%
Structured English Immersion	Content immersion led by a bilingual/ELAD-endorsed teacher.	ELAD or Bilingual	1,662	2.2%
Advanced ELD	Targeted academic writing and reading support for Long-Term ELs.	ELAD	5,081	6.7%
Transitional Bilingual	Primary language instruction used to transition to English-only.	Bilingual	0	0%
Maintenance Bilingual	Instruction intended to sustain both native and English proficiencies.	Bilingual	0	0%
Dual Language / Two-Way	Biliteracy development for both ELs and native English speakers.	Bilingual	190	0.2%
Specialist-Led Subtotal			22,550	29.5%

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This table maps out our Specialist-Led LIEPs. LIEPs—or Language Instruction Educational Programs—are the state-recognized instructional frameworks districts use to structure language development and academic content access for English Learners. The models on this first slide are defined by their reliance on a specialized personnel pipeline, requiring educators who hold a state ELAD or Bilingual endorsement.

The 2024–25 data show where this specialized workforce is currently deployed across the state. Newcomer programs serve 5.0% of our EL students, while Advanced ELD—designed for the long-term cohorts we evaluated earlier—serves 6.7%.

In total, models relying on a specialized endorsement pipeline account for 22,550 students, or 29.5% of our statewide population. These data establish a clear baseline of our current specialist-led capacity. To see how the remaining 70.5% of our population is served through general education delivery, let's look at our integrated models.

Integrated Content & Language LIEPs (General Education Delivery)

LIEP Model	Core Instructional Focus	Required Training	# Enrolled	% of Total
Sheltered English Instruction	Grade-level content made accessible through linguistic scaffolds.	State-approved training	10,110	13.20%
Academic Language Acquisition (ALA)	Structured academic discourse and peer-to-peer engagement.	State-approved training	42,607	55.80%
Heritage Language	Formal literacy development in a student's cultural or family language.	District-approved training	2	<0.1%
Integrated Delivery Subtotal			52,719	69.00%

Monitoring / Opt-Out	Academic progress tracking for opt-out students or students who are succeeding with no support; no direct services.	Progress monitoring only	1,009	1.30%

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This table shifts to our Integrated Delivery models, where language acquisition is facilitated within the general education content classroom.
Sheltered English Instruction accounts for 13.2% of our students. **Academic Language Acquisition (ALA)** through content is our largest single model by a wide margin, tracking **42,607 students—nearly 56% of the state pool**.
Combined, these frameworks represent **69% of all English Learners** in Nevada. From a civil rights perspective, federal guidance mandates a dual obligation: students have a right to meaningful access to core academic content, and they have a right to specialized language development support.
The data show we are meeting the access requirement through mainstream inclusion. The structural question these data surface is how we optimize resource distribution to meet the second half of that mandate. Because nearly 70% of our students are in mainstream classrooms, our general education teachers are carrying the primary day-to-day lift.

ELAD and Bilingual Endorsements

Bilingual	ELAD	Total
235	4,505	4,740

4,740 ELAD and Bilingual Endorsed Educators Statewide
66.7% are in Clark
95% are in three LEAs: Clark, Washoe, and SPCSA

LEA	Bilingual	ELAD	Total
Clark	208	2,955	3,163
Washoe	9	710	719
SPCSA	10	272	282
Carson	2	253	255
Lyon		75	75
Douglas		54	54
Nye	2	48	50
Elko		44	44

LEA	Bilingual	ELAD	Total
Churchill		26	26
Humboldt		24	24
White Pine		13	13
Mineral	4	7	11
Storey		9	9
Pershing		5	5
Lincoln		4	4
Eureka		3	3
Lander		2	2
Esmeralda		1	1

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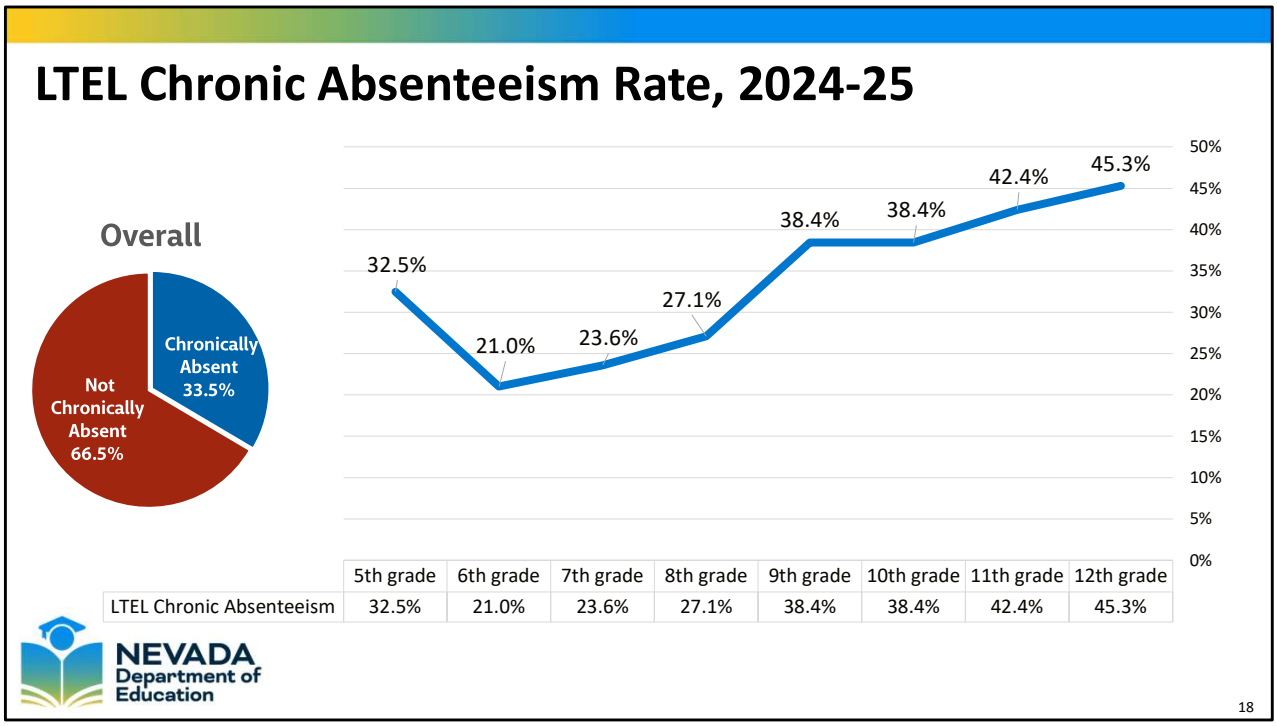
To ground our operational understanding of workforce capacity, this slide inventories our 4,740 actively employed endorsed educators across individual school districts for the current school year.

As the summary callouts at the top highlight, these data demonstrate the highly centralized nature of our personnel pipeline. Exactly 66.7% of our state's entire specialized workforce is concentrated within Clark County School District alone, with 3,163 total endorsed teachers. When we combine Clark, Washoe, and the State Public Charter School Authority, those three entities account for 95% of the total active endorsement footprint in Nevada.

The split tables below illustrate the exceptionally lean personnel frameworks within which our rural systems must operate. Outside of Carson City and Lyon County, the remaining rural districts are managing their language programming with fewer than 50 total endorsed individuals across their entire geographic systems, with several entries tracking in the single digits.

Evaluating these personnel distributions alongside our previous program enrollment tables provides this council with an explicit map of our structural capacity. Our ability to deploy specialist-led instruction is directly tied to this concentrated teacher pipeline. This structural reality serves as our final baseline context as we transition to our next section to evaluate secondary student engagement, credit accumulation, and graduation pathways.

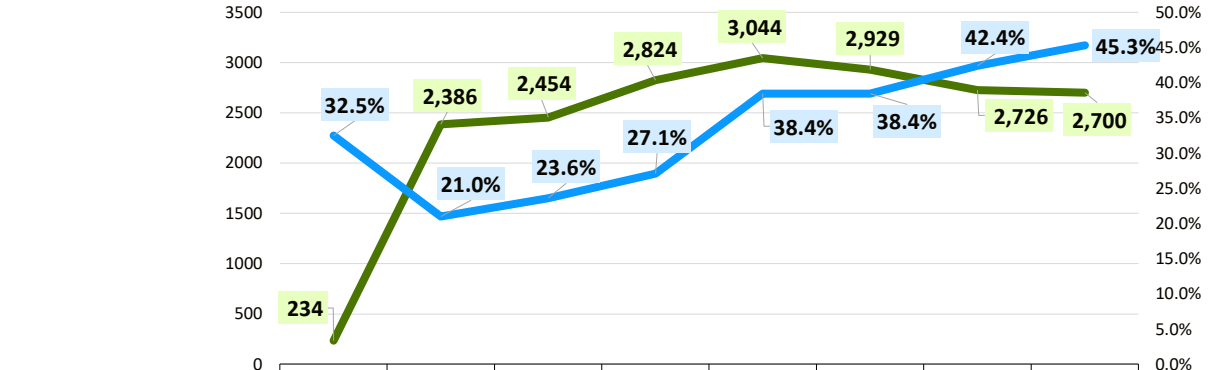


On paper, the overall chronic absenteeism rate for our Long-Term English Learners sits at 33.5%.

However, that single number doesn't tell the whole story across grade levels. Look at the line graph: there is a steady increase all through middle school, followed by a steep increase the moment students hit high school.

By the time they reach 11th and 12th grade, nearly half of all LTEL students are chronically absent. This is a pattern seen in many states, perhaps pointing to a compounding effect where students have sat in classes year after year without their foundational literacy needs being fully met, leading to a disconnect as they grow older.

Long-Term English Learner Count and Chronic Absenteeism by Grade Level



	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Total LTEL	234	2,386	2,454	2,824	3,044	2,929	2,726	2,700
Chronically Absent Percent	32.5%	21.0%	23.6%	27.1%	38.4%	38.4%	42.4%	45.3%

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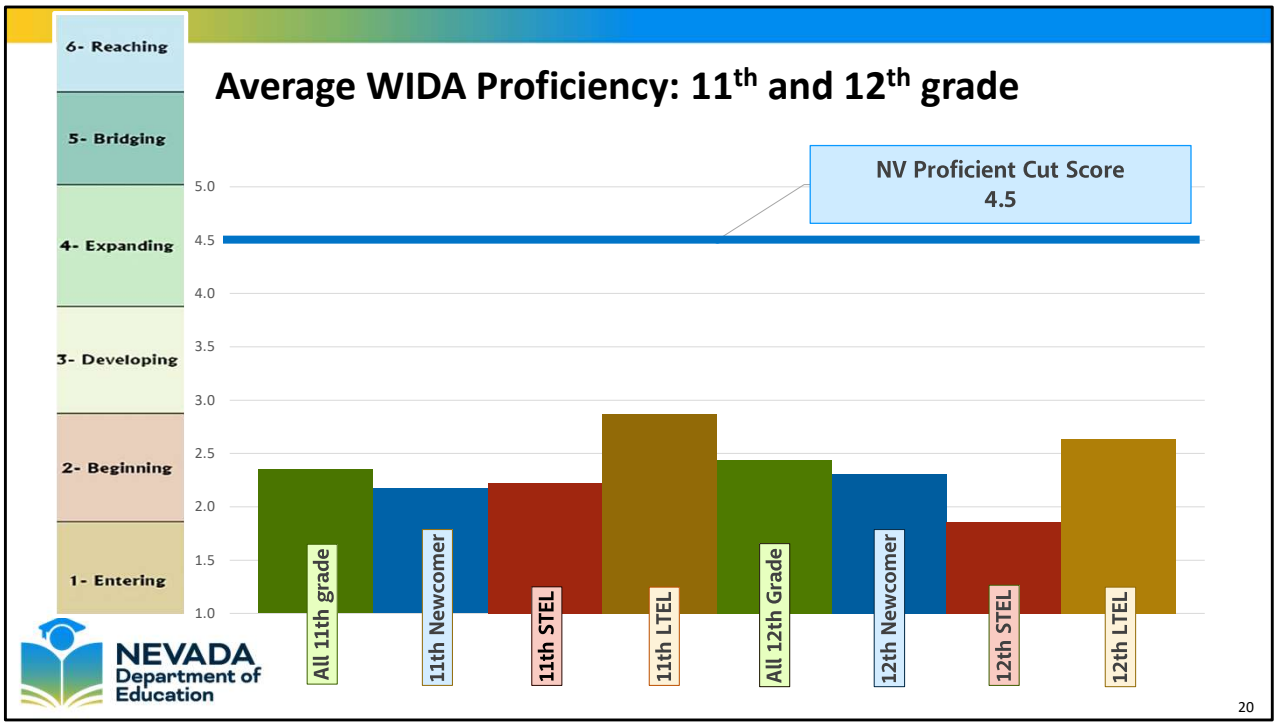
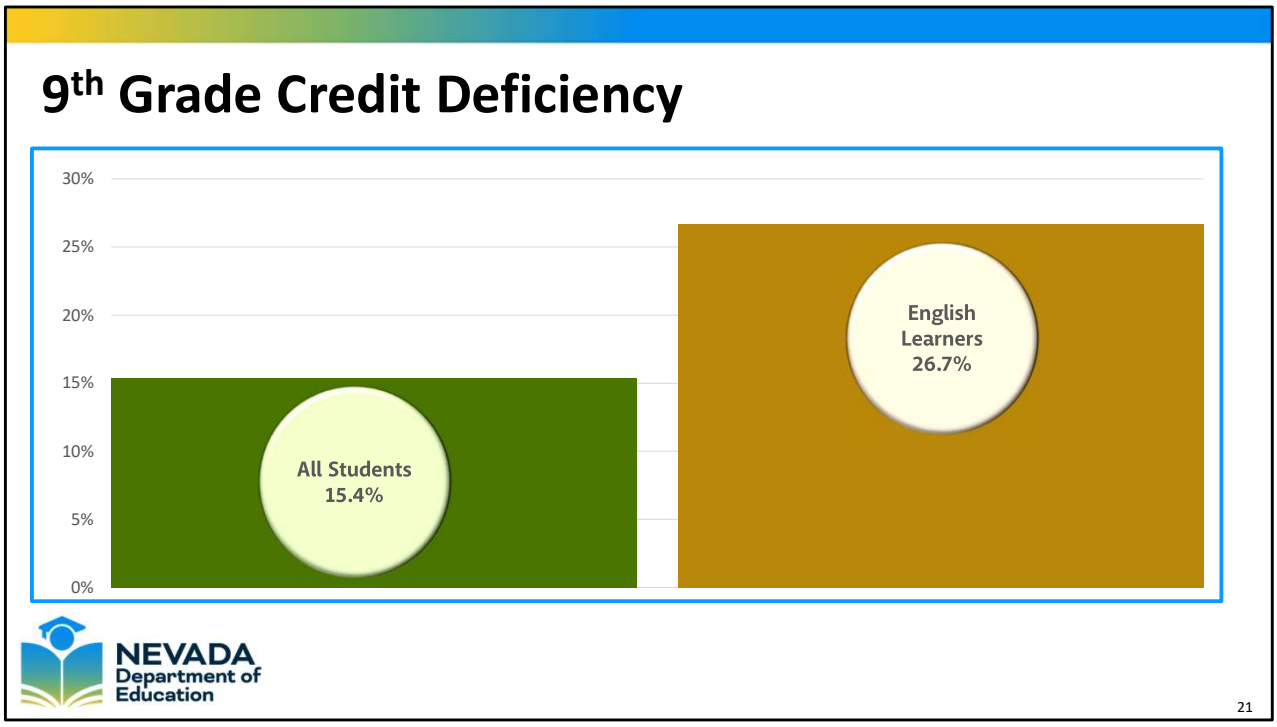
When we layer the enrollment counts and the chronic absenteeism rates on top of each other, we get a clearer look at student engagement.

Right as the number of identified LTEL students begins to decrease in the upper grades, the absenteeism rate climbs sharply. The drop in student count directly mirrors the rise in chronic absenteeism.

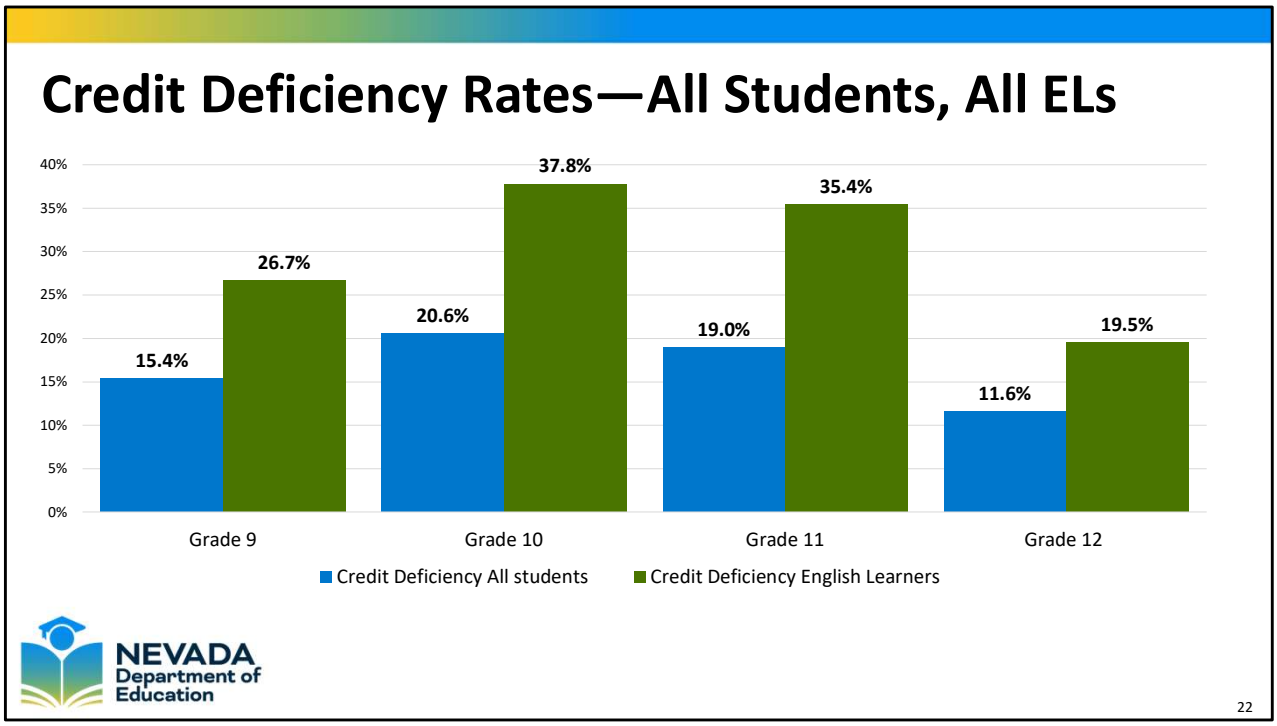
This correlation highlights a complex national issue: it suggests that when language and literacy gaps from earlier grades go unresolved, it becomes increasingly difficult for secondary schools to offer these students a path forward that feels meaningful to them. It likely shows where our systems, rather than the students, are struggling to provide the right fit.



This slide establishes the linguistic baseline for our Long-Term English Learners across grades 5 through 12, using our annual WIDA Access scale scores.
The data show the distribution of domain proficiencies—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. As we evaluate these cohorts longitudinally, we see a typical leveling-off pattern where receptive language skills often outpace expressive literacy metrics, particularly in academic writing.
These data provide a clear view of where our students' linguistic development stands before we look at the raw counts per grade level.



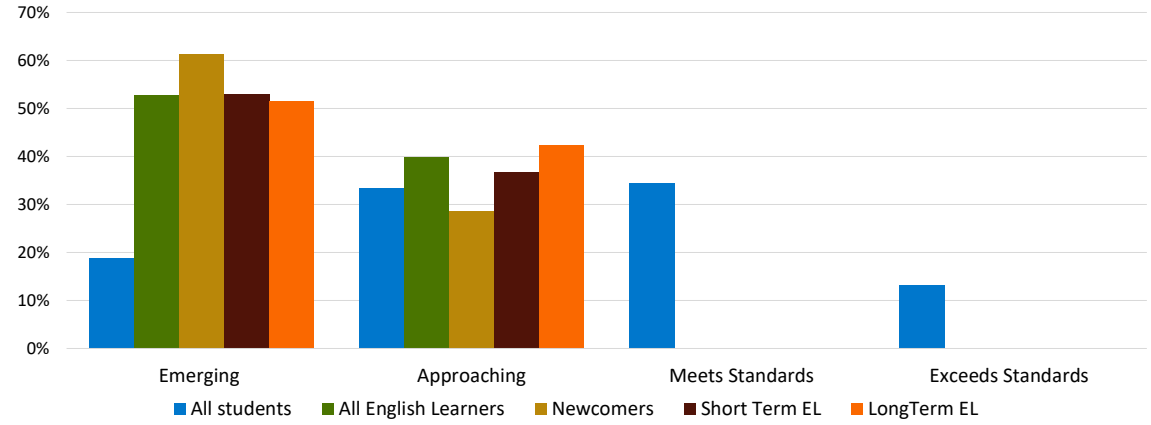
Looking at high school readiness, we see a major bottleneck. EL 9th graders face a 26.7% credit deficiency rate, which is nearly double the 15.4% rate for the general student population. While we are seeing growth in College and Career Ready (CCR) diplomas, ELs remain significantly underrepresented in rigorous diploma pathways.



This slide broadens our credit analysis across the entire high school continuum, comparing credit deficiency rates between our general student population and our English Learners from 9th through 12th grade.

The data show that credit gaps compound rapidly after the freshman year. The widest disparity occurs in the 10th grade, where the English Learner deficiency rate climbs to 37.8%, compared to 20.6% for the general population. While these rates begin to drop by the 12th grade as cohorts adjust, the persistent gap highlights the intense academic recovery lift our language learners perform as they concurrently work to acquire academic English

ACT English Language Arts Proficiency 2024-25



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	Emerging	Approaching	Meets Standards (Proficient)	Exceeds Standards (Proficient)
ACT ELA Score Range	2-11	12-16	17-23	24-36

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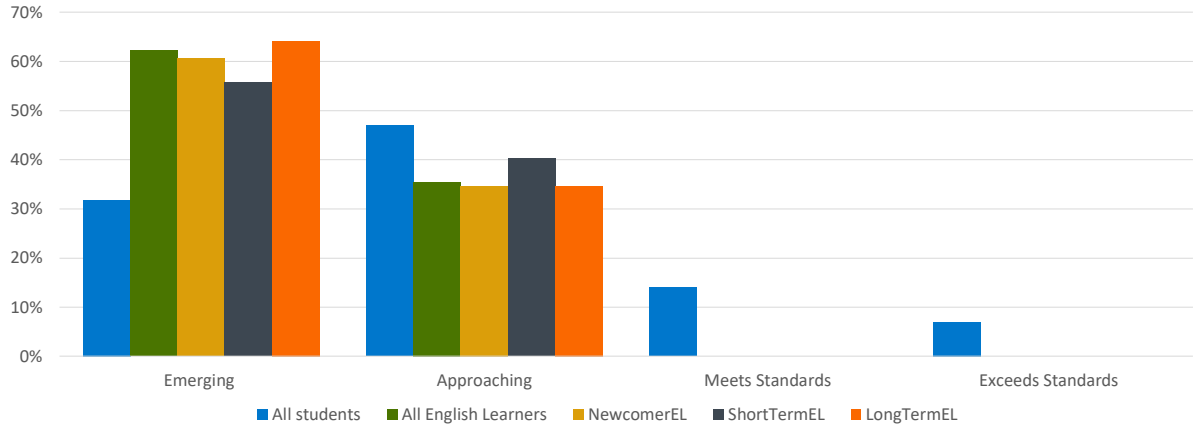
Moving to junior-year accountability, this slide evaluates performance on the ELA portion of the ACT, broken down by our newly standardized EL subgroups.
The ACT represents an exceptionally high linguistic load. As these data illustrate, the vast majority of all English Learners—including our long-term and newcomer cohorts—are concentrated within the 'Emerging' and 'Approaching' performance bands. There is virtually zero representation in the 'Meets' or 'Exceeds' standards categories, underlining how heavily timed, complex standardized assessments intersect with ongoing language development.

ACT Math Proficiency 2024-25



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	Emerging	Approaching	Meets Standards (Proficient)	Exceeds Standards (Proficient)
ACT Math Score Range	1-14	15-19	20-25	26-36

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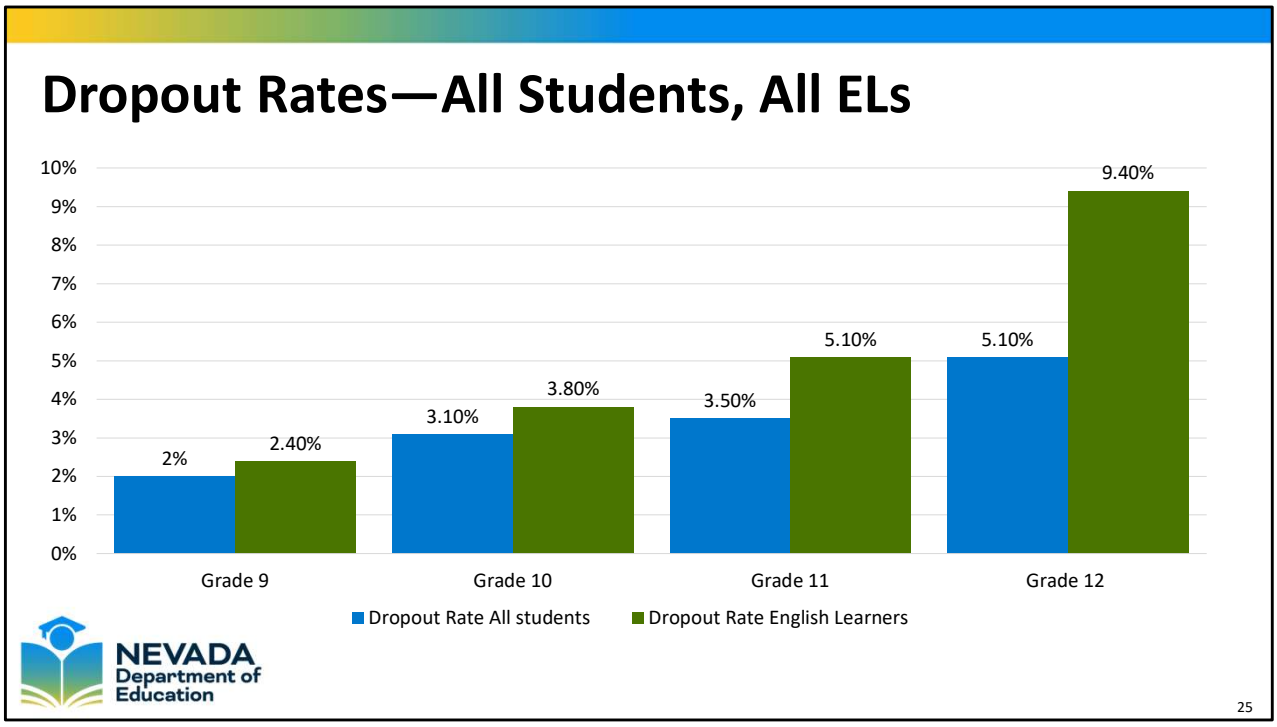
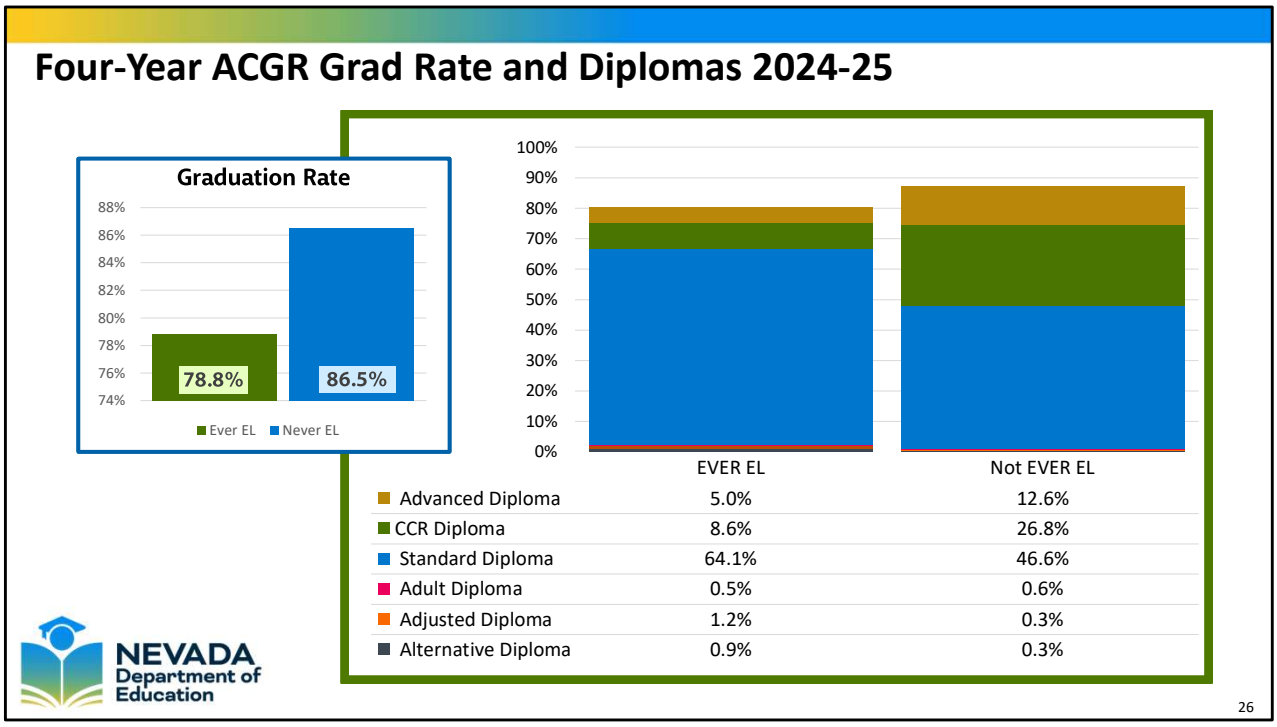
This slide maps the corresponding 11th-grade ACT performance within the Mathematics domain.
Evaluating math proficiency independently allows us to look at technical conceptual knowledge. However, as these data indicate, the heavy linguistic load of secondary word problems and mathematical reasoning tasks means that language acquisition remains an active factor in math assessment outcomes.



When credit deficiencies compound without structural intervention, it increases systemic attrition. This slide tracks annual dropout rates across grades 9 through 12. The data show that English Learner dropout rates exceed the general population baseline at every single high school grade level. This trend culminates in the 12th-grade year, where the EL dropout rate reaches 9.40%, compared to 5.10% for all students statewide.



We conclude our secondary outcome section with our long-term tracking metric: the four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, paired with an inventory of the specific diploma types earned by our graduates.

Our 'Ever EL' student population—which includes any student who ever held an EL designation during their K–12 career—achieves a 78.8% graduation rate, compared to 86.5% for students who were 'Never EL'.

When we look at the stacked bar chart on the right, the structural story becomes clear. While our systems successfully guide 64.1% of our Ever EL graduates to a Standard Diploma, these students are significantly underrepresented in advanced pathways. Only 5.0% attain an Advanced Diploma and only 8.6% secure a College and Career Ready Diploma. These data give this council a clear look at our ultimate output baseline as we consider how to better align specialized personnel and resources to support these student pathways.