

A Framework for English Learner Data: Five Key Lenses



1. The EL subgroup is not static.

- **Problem:** EL outcomes are a moving target in data systems, which biases data interpretations against current ELs.
- **Related data points:** Current EL academic achievement, graduation rates.
- **Solution:** Report all EL outcomes disaggregated by former and current ELs. Create an “ever-EL” group to track the entire group of current and former ELs over their K–12 years.



2. Learning a language takes time—but not forever.

- **Problem:** It is unrealistic to set a one-size-fits-all timeframe for language acquisition.
- **Related data points:** Reclassification rates, or English language proficiency (ELP) achievement.
- **Solution:** Use reclassification data with extreme caution. Monitor and report on ELs who have not exited after five to seven years.



3. ELs at different stages progress at different rates.

- **Problem:** It is unrealistic to set one-size-fits-all expectations for year-to-year ELP growth.
- **Related data points:** ELP growth.
- **Solution:** Use growth models that account for contributing factors like initial ELP level and grade of entry.



4. English skills impact academic performance.

- **Problem:** Below a certain threshold of English proficiency, it is impossible to make valid claims about academic proficiency in English.
- **Related data points:** Current EL academic achievement.
- **Solution:** In general, use academic *achievement* data with extreme caution. Emphasize academic growth models for current ELs. Set different academic targets based on ELP level.



5. Poverty affects most ELs and, as a result, their educational outcomes.

- **Problem:** Without consideration of how poverty impacts the EL population, interpretations of EL data may misdiagnose root causes.
- **Related data points:** All outcomes.
- **Solution:** Report demographic needs data alongside outcomes data to bring awareness to the realities of school and district needs.