Fact Sheet

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Enrollment

- Georgia educates the eighth-highest number of ELs in the nation (FY 2017).[1]
- 108,752 total students in ESOL in Georgia (FY 2019).[2]
- EL enrollment in ESOL grew by 61 percent FY 2011 to 2019.[3]
- Spanish is the most common home language for ELs (78 percent), followed by Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic.[4]
- 6.3 percent of all Georgia students are in ESOL.[5]
- In FY 2019, 11.6 percent of Georgia students participated in gifted courses but only 1.2 percent of students in the ESOL program also took a gifted class.[6] There is no evidence of a connection between home language and intelligence.

Program

- "The purpose of the ESOL language program is to provide English language development instruction and language support services to identified K-12 English Learners (ELs) in Georgia's public-school system for the purpose of increasing their English language proficiency and subsequently their academic achievement."[7]
- Students identified for ESOL are offered several different models for program delivery based on school district decisions and the needs of the child.
- Georgia programs overwhelmingly rely on subtractive bilingualism, where the new language acquisition replaces or de-prioritizes the home language and culture.[8]

Terms

EL: English Learner. Student who is learning English in school as an additional language.

ESOL: English to Speakers of Other Languages. Instructional program offered to students learning English.

NOTE: The majority of ELs in Georgia are in ESOL, but not all. This fact sheet does not use the acronyms "EL" and "students in ESOL" interchangeably. Often data sources, legal definitions or other criteria will necessitate the use of one term over the other.

Funding Limited by State Board Education Caps

Grade	Maximum State-Funded ESOL Segments Per Day	Funding Amount	Number of Students Needed to Fund One ESOL Teacher
K-3	1	$1,196.31	42
4-8	2	$2,392.62	21
9-12	5	$5,981.55	8.4

Source: GBPI Analysis of Weights for FTE Funding Formula; FY 2021 and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-5-.02.

In FY 2020 the state's ESOL programs "earned" enough state funding for 3,500 teacher positions but school districts employed 2,600 to 2,900 ESOL teachers.[9] ESOL is not unique in this staffing difference—gifted education also shows a large discrepancy.[10]

Budget and Policy Considerations

Provide adequate funding to meet the needs of children in ESOL

To meet needs that the state does not account for, school leaders pull money from wherever it is available—ESOL is one of many programs that face the consequences of underfunding.

Promote programs that treat home languages as an asset

Georgia's ESOL program uses subtractive bilingualism that ignores and devalues an integral part of a child. Curriculum and delivery methods exist that can treat the home language as a valuable asset to be invested in instead.

Eliminate state laws and rules that require English-only standardized tests

By relying on a subtractive model and English-only assessments, Georgia hurts children while reaping no tangible benefit.

Protect the rights of English Learners by including these students in gifted programs

The fact that there were only 3,313 ELs in gifted programs in FY 2019 is at best a glaring missed opportunity and at worst the foundation for a civil rights investigation.[11]

Sources

[1]National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). English language learner (ELL) students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2017. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_204.20.asp

[2]Governors Office of Student Achievement. (2019). Student enrollment data. https://gosa.georgia.gov/report-card-dashboards-data/downloadable-data

[3]GBPI analysis of Governors Office of Student Achievement Student Enrollment Data, FY 2011 and FY 2019. https://gosa.georgia.gov/report-card-dashboards-data/downloadable-data

[4]U.S. Department of Education. (2017). Consolidated state performance report: Parts I and II for state formula grant programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act As amended in 2001 for reporting on School Year 2015-16. Georgia. https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/consolidated/sy15-16part1/ga.pdf

[5]Governors Office of Student Achievement. (2019). Student enrollment data. https://gosa.georgia.gov/report-card-dashboards-data/downloadable-data

[6]Based on a GBPI analysis of Georgia Department of Education. (2019). English learner (EL) students in gifted courses, by EL status/monitoring level, system and state level school year 2018-19 student class data collection system, end of year signoff cycle (SC 2019-L)

[7]Georgia Department of Education. (2020). A resource guide to support school districts' English learner language programs. (p. 3). https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/English%20Learner%20Programs/EL%20Language%20Programs%20-%20State%20Guidance%20Updated%2027%20Sept%202020.pdf

[8]Fédération des parents francophones de Colombie-Britannique. bilingualism - types of bilingualism. http://developpement-langagier.fpfcb.bc.ca/en/bilingualism-types-bilingualism#:~:text=Subtractive%20bilingualism%20refers%20to%20the,language%20is%20a%20minority%20language.

[9]Depending on classification of employees. See: Georgia Department of Education. QBE allotment sheet FY 2020; Georgia Department of Education. ESOL-subject matter teacher head counts, system and state level October 2019, Certified Personnel Information Data Collection System (CPI 2020-1)

[10]Based on a GBPI analysis of Georgia Department of Education. (2019). Gifted teacher counts (head counts and full time equivalent positions), system and state level October 2018, Certified Personnel Information Data Collection System (CPI 2019-1) and Georgia Department of Education. QBE allotment sheet FY 2019.

[11]Georgia Department of Education. (2019). English learner (EL) students in gifted courses, by EL status/monitoring Level, system and state level school year 2018-19 student class data collection system, end of year signoff cycle (SC 2019-L)