

LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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English Language Education Program
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Memorandum

To: Jeannine Durkin, Acting Superintendent and Robin Desmond, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

From: Phala Chea, Coordinator of English Language Education Program

Re: English Learners

Date: March 1, 2019

As of March 1, 2019, the district has identified 3,648 (25%) as English Learners (see Figure 1). Approximately 50% of the English Learners (ELs) are in middle and high school (grades 5-12). The racial makeup of ELs includes 5% African American/Black, 46% Asian, 37% Hispanic, and 11% White. The most common languages spoken by ELs are: 37% Spanish, 31% Khmer, 8% Portuguese and 24% low incidence languages such as Vietnamese, Gujarati, Lao, Arabic, Burmese, Karen, Dari, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Kinyawandu, Lingala, Luganda, Nepali, Somali, Swahili and various ethnic languages from Burma and African countries (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. LPS Enrollment Data

LPS Enrollment Data	
Total LPS PreK-12 Enrollment	14,918 (including 119 placed out of district)
Total ELs	3,648
Born in U.S.	2,352 (297 born in PR)
Born outside of U.S.	1,296
Immigrants ¹	931
Refugees ²	156
ELs with Disabilities	607
ELs under McKinney-Vento	260
ELs placed outside of district	5

¹ Immigrant students ages 3–21 who were not born in the U.S., and who are in his/her first three years of schooling in the U.S. Many are from Brazil, Dominican Republic, Cambodia, India, Afghanistan, Colombia, Haiti, Kenya, Honduras, Vietnam, Portugal, El Salvador, Syria, Guatemala, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Uganda, Iraq, Jordan, China, and Laos.

² Refugee students ages 3–2 who have arrived in the U.S. within the last five years. Many are from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Burma, Nepal, Haiti, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Somalia and other African countries.

Figure 2. Languages Spoken by Students

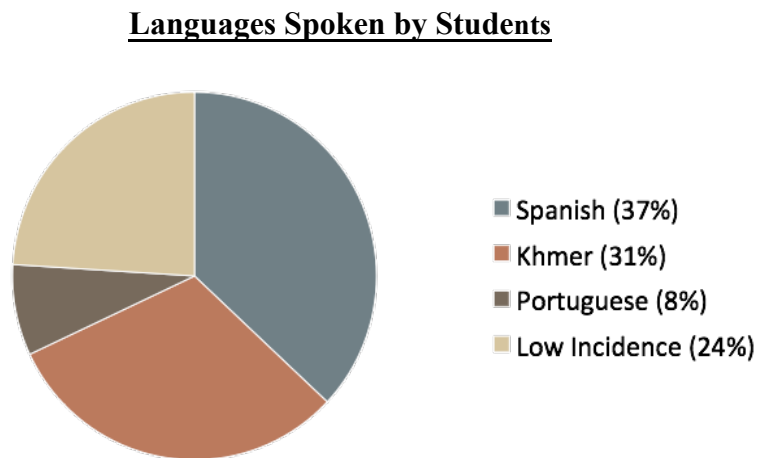
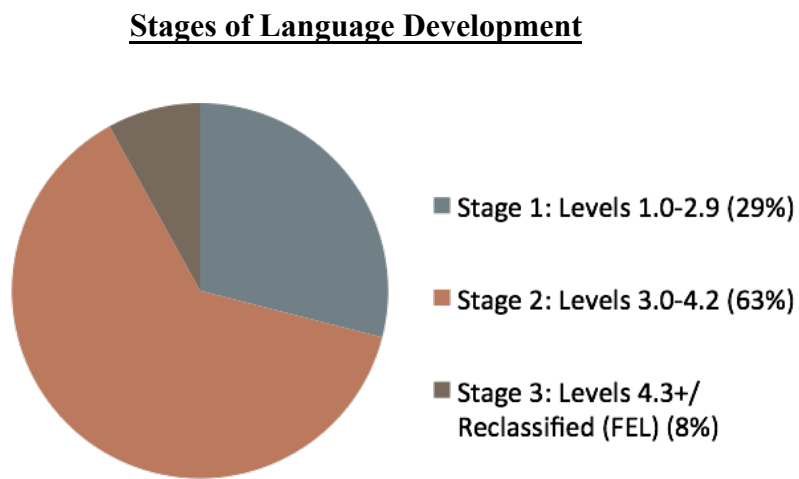


Figure 3. Stages of Language Development



Currently, the district has 58 ESL teachers hired to provide direct ESL instruction. Out of 58 ESL teachers, 21 of them provide English language development support to students who are at Stage 1 (see Figure 3). Many of the ELs at Stage 1 are refugee students who have been identified as Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and many of them experienced trauma. Also, a large percentage of middle and high school aged SLIFEs have had only one to two years of formal education in refugee camp schools or have had their formal education interrupted because of war or civil unrest. Furthermore, a majority of the older students lack age-appropriate literacy and numeracy skills even in their native language. These students require at least 90 minutes to a full day of ESL instruction, depending on their limited or interrupted schooling.