



Putting English Language Learners on the Educational Map

The No Child Left Behind Act Implemented

CLEMENCIA COSENTINO DE COHEN AND BEATRIZ CHU CLEWELL

To expand knowledge about young immigrant populations and to document how the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) affects the education of English language learner (ELL) and limited English proficient (LEP) students, the Urban Institute was funded by the Foundation for Child Development to undertake a series of reports.¹ The series includes

- A demographic profile of LEP children and children of immigrants with a special focus on pre-K to 5th grade.
- A statistical portrait comparing elementary schools with high enrollments of LEP students to schools with low or no enrollments of LEP students to examine differences that might affect schools' abilities to meet NCLB requirements.
- A report on the effect of NCLB requirements on high-LEP elementary schools (pre-K through 5th grade) based on case studies of six schools in three school districts.
- A "road map" that acts as a guide to negotiating the complexities of NCLB.

This policy brief draws on this work to address the main question guiding the series: *has NCLB improved education for ELLs as schools have become accountable for these students' performance?*² This question applies not only to the educational levels subject to the law but to pre-K as well, for which there have been spillover effects. After presenting an overview of the ELL population's demographic profile, this brief focuses on the findings of the statistical portrait of schools and the case studies to answer the main research question. The findings reveal that, while implementation of NCLB in high-LEP schools has resulted in some problems for ELL students' education, the net effect of the

law has been positive because it has (a) increased attention paid to ELL students; (b) increased the alignment of curriculum, instruction, professional development, and testing; and (c) raised the bar for ELL student achievement. The brief discusses the implications of the findings and gives recommendations for strengthening the potentially positive effects of NCLB on the education of ELL students. By documenting the benefits of spillover effects of the law on pre-K education, the brief also looks ahead to the reauthorization of NCLB and the implications of expanding the law to include this educational level.

FINDINGS

Our findings, based on the school profile and case study reports, provide an opportunity to view the conditions under which ELL students have been educated before and after the enactment of NCLB. The school profile is based on nationally representative data collected in 1999–2000, just before NCLB went into effect. The case study data were collected during the first implementation years of NCLB. Given the timing of the data collection, therefore, it is possible to see how high-LEP schools may have built on preexisting conditions and policies in implementing the provisions of the new law.

English Language Learners: Where Are They? Limited English proficient students are the most rapidly growing population in U.S. elementary schools. Between 1980 and 2000, the share of English language learners in elementary schools increased by over 50 percent, from 4.7 to almost 7.4 percent of all children (or almost two million children). This rising trend should not be surprising given record-high immigration rates over the same period.³ In 2000, over half of immigrant children in grades pre-K

to grade 5 were from Latin America, and one-quarter from Asia. These children add to the growing numbers of English language learners or limited English proficient students educated in the nation's schools. This is particularly true in kindergarten, where LEP students constitute a larger share of students (10 percent) than in other grades (6 to 7 percent).⁴

Limited English proficient students are concentrated in a few states but are spreading rapidly throughout the nation. While five states—California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois—are home to almost 70 percent of all LEP students in elementary school, growth in this student population has been more rapid in other destinations. Between 1990 and 2000, the number and share of LEP students grew most rapidly in states in the Southeast and Midwest. Some states had growth rates above 200 percent (Nevada and Nebraska were at the top with 350 percent growth). This marks an important shift in this population away from traditional receiving states (Florida, New York, and others) in favor of other destinations (such as Arkansas and Georgia).⁵

The majority of LEP elementary school students are concentrated in a small number of schools: nearly 70 percent of the nation's LEP students enroll in only 10 percent of elementary schools (figure 1). Labeled “high-LEP,” in these 5,000 schools LEP students account for almost one-half of the

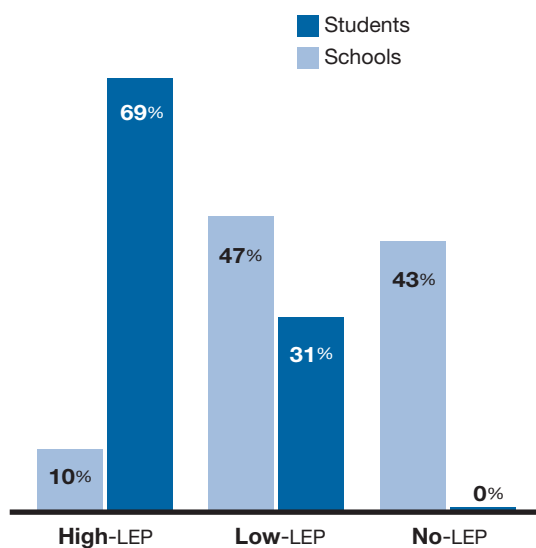
student body (on average), a striking contrast to the 5 percent average of LEP students enrolled in the remaining elementary schools that serve English language learners (called “low-LEP”). Also striking is the fact that nearly half of elementary schools in the United States enroll no limited English proficient students. These findings show that English language learners are highly concentrated in a limited number of schools serving primarily ELL and immigrant students.

Schools Serving ELLs

Schools serving high concentrations of English language learners (high-LEP) tend to be large, urban, and serve minority students—while other schools (low-LEP and no-LEP) tend to be smaller, serve a predominantly white student population, and are mostly suburban and rural, respectively (figure 2). Enrollment at high-LEP schools tended to be higher than enrollment at low-LEP and particularly no-LEP schools (about 600 versus 500 and 350 students, respectively). This difference is partly explained by location. High-LEP schools were more likely to be in urban areas than the other school types; about 46 percent of high-LEP schools were in urban settings, versus about 24 percent of the low- and no-LEP schools. Low-LEP schools, on the other hand, were more apt to be in suburban areas, while schools not serving ELL students were more often found in rural parts of the country. The latter served a mostly white student population (76 percent), while at high-LEP schools, minority students accounted for 77 percent of the student body. Low-LEP schools were somewhat more evenly distributed, enrolling 35 percent minority students. Not surprisingly, these differences were largely driven by Hispanic students, who made up 53 percent of the students enrolled in high-LEP schools.

The incidence of poverty and health problems is significantly higher in high-LEP than in other schools (figure 2). The percentage of poor children, represented by the share qualifying for free and/or reduced-price school lunches, was significantly higher in high-LEP schools (72 percent) than in either low- or no-LEP schools (about 40 percent). The high concentration of Hispanic children in urban areas—many of them immigrants or children of immigrants—helps explain the high incidence of poverty in high-LEP schools. Urban Institute researchers estimate that of the 11 million immigrant children and children of immigrants accounted for the by 2000 Census, about half were low-income

FIGURE 1.
Concentration of LEP Students in Elementary Schools

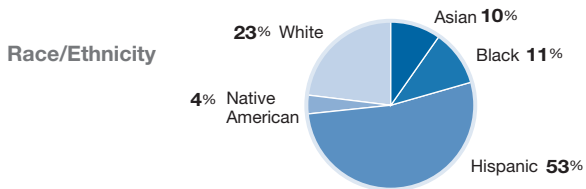


Source: Urban Institute analysis of NCES Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999–2000.

FIGURE 2.
Demographic Description of Elementary Schools

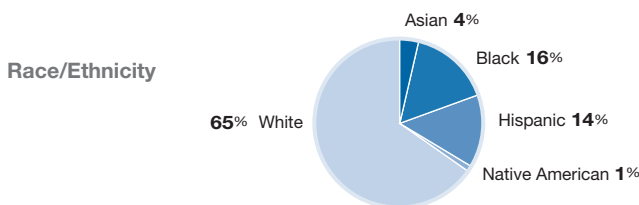
LEP Concentration: **High**-LEP schools >45% urban

Poverty Free and reduced lunch eligible **72%**



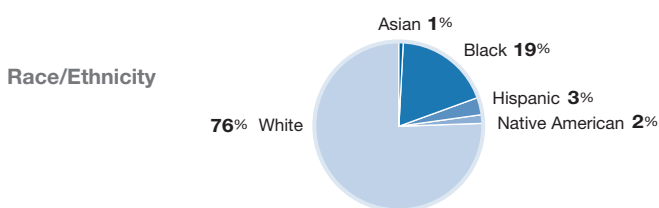
LEP Concentration: **Low**-LEP schools >50% suburban

Poverty Free and reduced lunch eligible **40%**



LEP Concentration: **No**-LEP schools >40% rural

Poverty Free and reduced lunch eligible **41%**

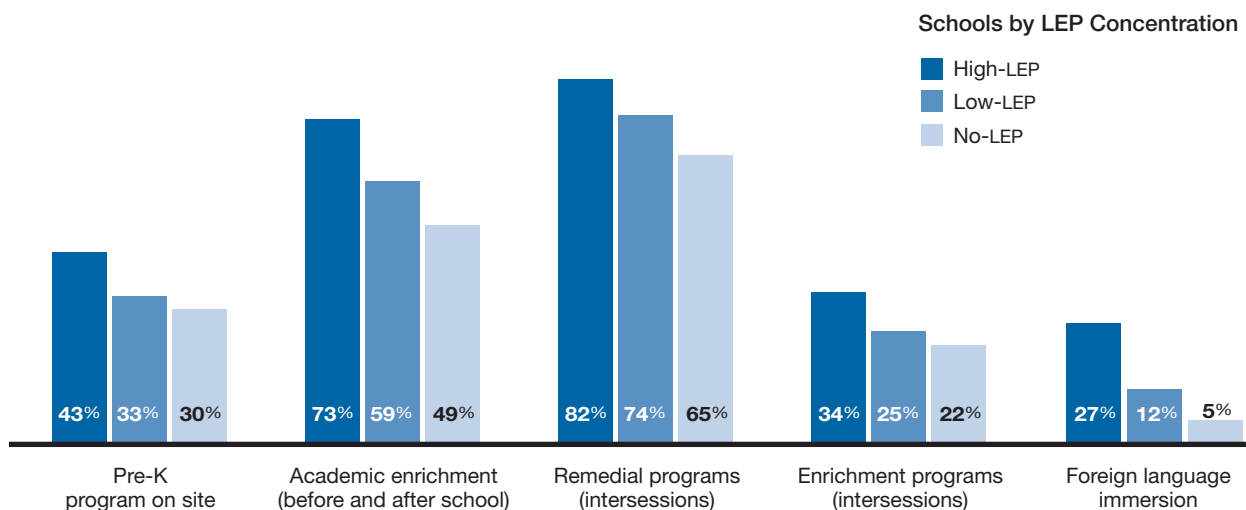


Source: Urban Institute analysis of NCES Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000.

(Capps et al. 2005). Confirming the significance of this finding, poverty was cited as a “serious problem” by more than 40 percent of principals and teachers at high-LEP schools, versus 20 percent or less of staff at other schools. Student health problems, likely also related to poverty, were identified as “serious” and “moderate” more frequently in high- than in low- or no-LEP schools. More than 30 percent of principals and 45 percent of teachers in high-LEP schools ranked student health problems as “serious” or “moderate,” versus about 17 percent of principals and 21 percent of teachers in low- and no-LEP schools.

Instructional contexts vary significantly across schools: high-LEP schools are more likely to offer support and remedial programs (pre-K, enrichment, after-school, summer school) (figure 3). Schools serving large numbers of ELL students were more likely to offer academic support programs—including before- and after-school academic enrichment programs, as well as summer school programs, whether for remedial or advancement purposes. These schools were also more likely to have a pre-K program on site (over 40 percent of the high-LEP schools have such a program versus about 30 percent of schools in the other LEP types). In addition, high-LEP schools had a higher incidence of foreign language immersion programs, likely building on the language abilities ELL students bring with them to the classroom. The greater prevalence of support and remedial programs in high-LEP schools prior to enactment of NCLB may have facilitated these schools’ compliance with the NCLB requirement for Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

FIGURE 3.
Special Programs Offered



Source: Urban Institute analysis of NCES Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000.

Native language instruction is more prevalent in high- than low-LEP schools. The difference in use of other LEP-targeted instructional techniques, though significant, is less marked. In high-LEP schools, instruction was more likely to be adapted to the needs of ELL students than in other schools. Techniques used to impart language and subject matter instruction included structured immersion, bilingual education, English as a second language (ESL), and native language instruction. The largest difference between low- and high-LEP schools was in the use of native language instruction, whether to maintain the language or to teach different subjects. About 43 percent of high-LEP schools relied on native language instruction to maintain students' native tongues or to teach them subject areas, a practice common in less than 15 percent of low-LEP schools. Differences across schools in other forms of instruction—ESL, bilingual—were less marked, with about 82 percent of low-LEP and 94 percent of high-LEP schools using these instructional techniques. Data collected at case study schools suggest that with the enactment of NCLB, high-LEP schools, in an effort to accelerate the transition of ELL students to English language instruction, are providing students less instruction in their native languages.

High-LEP schools are more likely to be involved in parental outreach and support activities than schools with lower concentrations of LEP students. Eighty-five percent of high-LEP schools versus 65 percent of low-LEP schools reported engaging in parental outreach. Strategies included assigning a staff member as parent liaison, providing child care and/or transportation to facilitate parent participation in school activities or events, and having a parent drop-in center. In high-LEP schools, teachers were also more frequently required to involve parents in schooling, which they accomplished by sending letters explaining lessons or suggesting parental activities and giving homework assignments that require parental participation. These activities—and the fact that they were more likely to be offered in high-LEP schools—may be a response to Title I regulations, which require substantive parental involvement for schools receiving Title I funds. Teachers, and to a lesser extent principals, at high-LEP schools more frequently reported that parental involvement is a moderate to serious problem than their counterparts at low- and no-LEP schools. Staff at high-LEP schools were also more likely to indicate that tardiness, absenteeism, and lack of preparation among students were moderate or serious problems, again perhaps partly explaining increased school attempts to involve

parents. NCLB has intensified this focus on parental outreach, possibly in an attempt to address low rates of parental involvement among low-income parents, including immigrant parents of ELL students.

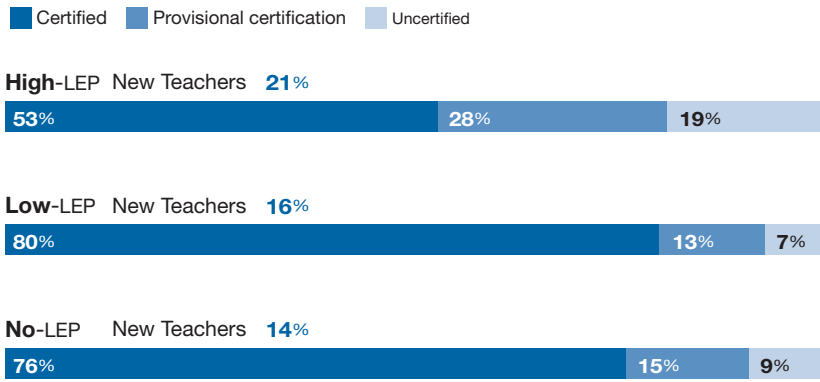
High-LEP schools face more difficulties filling teaching vacancies and are more likely to rely on unqualified and substitute teachers than schools with few or no LEP children. Schools with high concentrations of LEP students were more likely to encounter difficulties filling teaching vacancies than schools with no or low concentrations of LEP children. This is suggested by the fact that high-LEP schools were more likely to hire unqualified teachers (37 percent of these schools do, versus about 11 percent of other schools) and were almost twice as likely to rely on substitutes than schools with fewer or no LEP students. Asked to report how difficult filling teaching vacancies was, 12 percent of high-LEP schools versus 5 percent of low- and no-LEP schools indicated “very difficult.” In addition, 47 percent of high-LEP schools, compared to 70 percent of low- and no-LEP schools indicated positions were “easy to fill.” NCLB may have exacerbated this problem by tightening the requirements for “highly qualified” teachers.⁶ Some of our case study sites reported difficulty in filling teaching vacancies with teachers who met the “highly qualified” criteria; recruiting bilingual teachers was reported to be particularly challenging because of the short supply of these teachers.

Teachers of ELLs

Teachers in high-LEP schools are more likely to hold ESL/bilingual certification in addition to their main certification. More than 90 percent of ESL/bilingual teachers in both high- and low-LEP schools had a regular teaching certificate in a given field. Teachers at high-LEP schools were, however, more likely to hold an ESL/bilingual certificate even though this was neither their first nor the second teaching assignment (about 8 percent of high-LEP versus 2 percent of low-LEP teachers). As a result, a larger percentage of high-LEP (15 percent) than low-LEP (4 percent) teachers were certified in ESL/bilingual education.

Teachers in high-LEP schools are more likely to have provisional, emergency, or temporary certification than are those in other schools. Teachers in high-LEP schools were substantially less likely to have full or probationary certification (indicating that they have completed a traditional teacher preparation program) and more likely to have provisional, temporary, or emergency certification. This is partly because a greater proportion of teachers in high-LEP schools are new to the profession.

FIGURE 4.
Certification Status of New Teachers



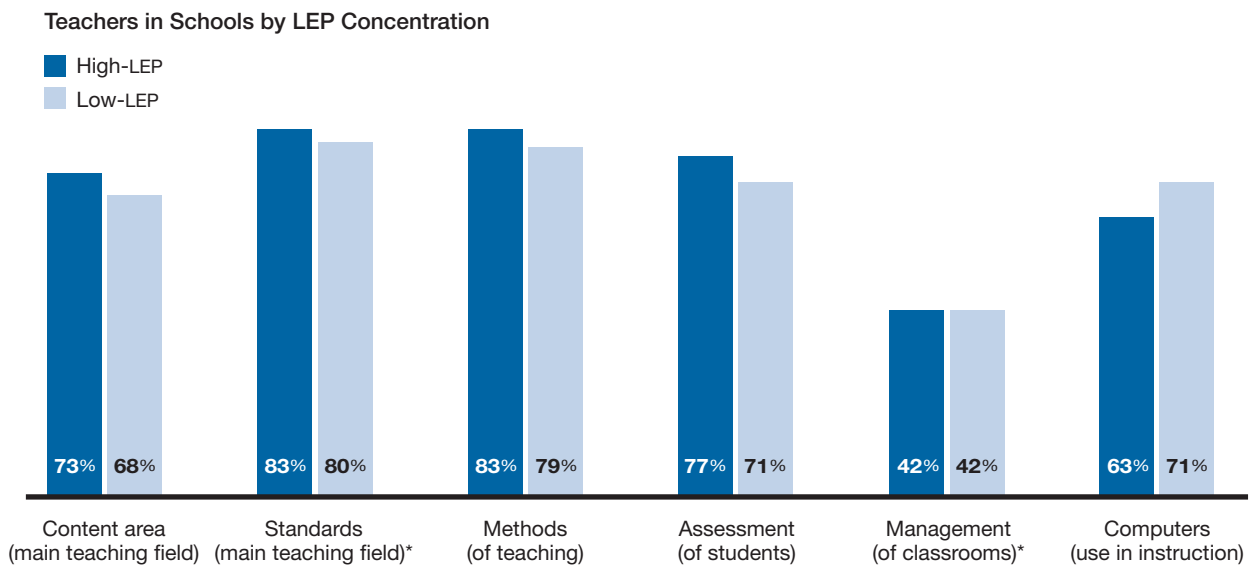
Source: Urban Institute analysis of NCES Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000

High-LEP schools have more new teachers than schools with fewer or no LEP students, and these teachers are substantially more likely to be uncertified than those at other schools (figure 4). Prior to NCLB, new teachers—those teaching for fewer than three years—represented 21 percent of teachers in high-LEP schools, 16 percent of those in low-LEP schools, and 14 percent of those in no-LEP schools. About 80 percent of new teachers in high-LEP schools were certified in their main field, versus about 90 percent of teachers in the other schools. This 10 percent difference becomes much larger, however, when type of certification is taken into account. Slightly more than 50 percent of teachers in

high-LEP schools had full certification, while almost 80 percent of teachers at low- and no-LEP schools did. In addition, new teachers at high-LEP schools were three times more likely to be uncertified (but in a certification program) and twice as likely to have provisional, temporary, or emergency certification than new teachers at low- or no-LEP schools. High-LEP schools were, therefore, at a double disadvantage: they had a larger share of new teachers and their new teachers were less likely to be certified. These findings are supported by the case study schools visited after enactment of NCLB. They reported that alternative certification programs were a source of many of their new hires. Most of these novice teachers held temporary or emergency certification while they completed the requirements for full certification.

Teachers in high-LEP schools tend to report receiving more professional development than do teachers in other types of schools (figure 5). In three of four professional development (PD) activities where differences were found, higher proportions of teachers in high-LEP schools reported participation than in low- and no-LEP schools. The subject of this PD training also differed slightly by whether the schools have high concentrations of LEP students. Teachers in high-LEP schools were more likely to have participated in PD in the subject matter of their main teaching field in the past year, teaching methods/pedagogy, and student assessment. Conversely, they were substantially less likely to have had PD in the use of computers for instruction than were teachers in the

FIGURE 5.
In-Service Professional Development of Teachers



Source: Urban Institute analysis of NCES Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000.
Note: * no significant difference between High and Low LEP schools.

other types of schools. Lastly, much higher proportions of general education teachers (those who do not specifically teach bilingual education or ESL) received training geared toward teaching LEP students in high-LEP schools (63 percent) than in no- (15 percent) or low-LEP schools (25 percent). Case study data suggest that NCLB may have built on and intensified the use of professional development in high-LEP schools as a tool for school reform and to improve teacher quality.

After NCLB: School Districts and High-LEP Schools Respond

How has NCLB been implemented in high-LEP schools? The following are examples from our case study sites, which included three districts and six high-LEP schools.

There was a great deal of variation in the way districts with high-LEP schools implemented NCLB testing requirements in both subject areas and ELP (English Language Proficiency). These variations are evident in terms of the actual *tests* used, the way *exemptions* are applied, and the use of *accommodations* in testing ELL students. Although all districts used ELP tests in compliance with both Title I and Title III requirements, some used tests inappropriately to measure both subject area and ELP skills. For example, one district used an ELP test, developed to measure English language proficiency only, to assess content area knowledge of ELLs. Another district required that ELL students take the same English language tests in math and language arts that were administered to all students. One of the case study districts allowed no exemptions from testing for NCLB purposes, and the only accommodation provided to these students was the fact that they took a different test. Another district reviewed exemption requests from schools and determined which ELLs should be tested and made suggestions regarding accommodations. A third district exempted ELL students who had been attending school for fewer than three years from the English language arts test and administered a state English proficiency test instead. Testing accommodations allowed by districts ranged from none to a laundry list of several, including small group administration, repeating directions, extending time, reading of a listening section, use of bilingual glossaries, written response in a native language, and simultaneous use of English and an alternative language.

NCLB had a positive effect on the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in high-LEP case study schools. Although the districts in our case studies were at different stages in the alignment process, NCLB seems to have increased their drive

to align ELL programs with the general curriculum, state standards, and assessments. All the districts in our study were focused on achieving alignment: one district, where alignment had already been achieved, was adapting content lessons in English language courses for ELL programs, while the other two districts were actively involved in alignment activities and were collaborating with regional consortia to develop new ELP standards aligned with ELP tests. The districts in our study found it difficult to provide school choice to all eligible students, including ELL students. They cite logistical reasons such as overcrowding for their inability to accommodate eligible students for school choice. This did not seem to present a problem, however, because fewer students than were eligible actually opted for school choice. Two factors inhibited the use of the school choice option by parents of ELL students: parental preference for neighborhood schools and reluctance to bus children long distances in order to attend a public school of choice. Additional inhibiting factors included parental trust in the schools that ELL students were attending and a lack of information received by immigrant parents about their school choice options.

The high-LEP school districts in our study all offered Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to eligible students, although lack of data on actual use by eligible ELL students made it difficult to determine their adequacy. All three school districts provided SES, with two districts offering services that were centralized at the district level and the third providing SES mainly through individual schools. Limited information on the use of SES by ELL students prevented a determination of whether students had access to adequate and appropriate SES. Because high-ELL schools, prior to NCLB, were more likely to offer such Title I services as academic support, enrichment, and remedial programs, these schools may have been able to build on previously established support services to fulfill the NCLB requirement for SES.

Professional development was a major mechanism for improving high-LEP schools under NCLB. This has been especially true for schools identified as in need of improvement. Professional development has been used to help teachers align curriculum to state content standards and assessment. It has also been a means by which ESL/bilingual teachers learned about cutting-edge instructional techniques for ELL students. Bilingual/ESL teachers and general education teachers have also been encouraged to coordinate instruction for ELL students through professional development workshops. Our

findings regarding high-LEP schools confirm that both bilingual and general education teachers in these schools report receiving more professional development than do teachers in schools with lower LEP enrollment. In addition, general education teachers in high-LEP schools report receiving training in teaching LEP students.

Parents of ELL students in high-LEP enrollment schools professed to have very little knowledge of the requirements of NCLB. As required by NCLB, the districts and schools in our study conducted considerable parental outreach, mostly consisting of translation and dissemination of basic information about NCLB targeted to parents of ELL students. All schools had adopted a parental involvement policy and used mechanisms for parental outreach, such as parent coordinators, parent volunteer programs, and school-based activities for parents.⁷ These efforts notwithstanding, most parents seemed to understand very little about the law. This was attributed by school personnel to parents' low literacy levels and lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system. Parents of ELL students, who are often recent immigrants, pose a particular challenge because of linguistic, educational, and cultural barriers to communication. Recent data show that a third of children of immigrants in pre-K to 5th grade had parents without high school degrees, compared with only 9 percent of students with native-born parents (Capps et al. 2005).

NCLB had an effect on pre-K education at the case study sites. Although NCLB does not directly address pre-K and only 2 percent of NCLB funds are used for pre-K education (King 2006), there is evidence from our case study data to suggest that NCLB has had a spillover effect on pre-K education. This effect can be seen as an extension of the law's effect on K–5 students. At least in the case study sites, NCLB seems to have raised standards in pre-K education and resulted in a movement toward aligning the pre-K curriculum with district and state standards. An additional effect has been the expansion of teacher and paraprofessional quality requirements to encompass pre-K staff. Because high-LEP schools are more likely to have pre-K programs, this indirect influence of NCLB may have been experienced more widely in these schools.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

NCLB puts ELL students on the map

By increasing the accountability of states, districts, and schools for the educational success of ELL students, especially those in high-LEP settings, NCLB has focused attention on the educational needs of this

group. A principal of a case study school summed up the general feelings of most district and school personnel in our study: “I think that NCLB has not been a bad thing for LEP students. It's put them on the map, so to speak, because of the increased accountability for their learning.” Shining a spotlight on ELL students has resulted in improvement not only of the services provided to these students but also of the educational strategies employed to educate them. This enhanced approach is manifested through

- a new focus on aligning ELL instruction and assessment with state content standards;
- increased emphasis on literacy and math;
- enhanced efforts to train ESL teachers in effective instructional strategies;
- exposure of general classroom teachers to ESL instructional methods;
- increased instructional coordination between ESL/bilingual teachers and general classroom teachers;
- greater specificity in the prescription of instruction to guide the English language acquisition process; and
- greater awareness of the inadequacy of most English language proficiency assessments.

ELL students are also being held to higher

“I think that NCLB has not been a bad thing for LEP students. It's put them on the map, so to speak, because of the increased accountability for their learning.”

— SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

standards. Teachers and staff in the high-LEP schools in our study commented that NCLB had raised the bar for ELL student achievement. An assistant principal observed that ELL students were doing better than they had been a few years earlier because “standards are high.” Kindergarten teachers in one of the schools commented that because of NCLB and other district initiatives, “kindergarten now is what first grade used to be.” Teachers also spoke of intensifying their efforts to help students learn and of following the curriculum more closely, driven by the need to meet the higher standards demanded by NCLB. Observed one teacher: “My kids are learning more now. It pushes me to teach them more—I know how hard the test is.” This increase in expecta-

tions seems to have had a spillover effect on pre-K education. Because schools are teaching more advanced material in kindergarten to give students a “head start,” it has been necessary to improve pre-K education to ease students’ transition into kindergarten and the early years of schooling. Accordingly, in the schools visited, the pre-K curriculum has been aligned with district and state standards, and NCLB requirements for high-quality teachers and paraprofessionals have been expanded to include pre-K staff.

The effects of NCLB on ELL students, nevertheless, have not been wholly positive. District and school personnel repeatedly cite increased testing requirements as having caused undue stress for teachers and students. As described above, testing practices espoused by some high-LEP school districts have hurt rather than helped ELL students. And although the heightened attention to ELL students has benefited those in high-LEP schools, this may not be true for ELL students in low-LEP schools (and districts), as there might not be enough of them to require disaggregation of their scores as a separate group.

The benefits of a critical mass apply to LEP concentration

This study also shows that limited English proficient elementary school students are highly concentrated: 70 percent of them enroll in only 10 percent of our schools. This high degree of concentration—while undoubtedly negative in terms of limiting interaction among native and immigrant students—does make the provision of specialized services more cost-effective and a higher priority, which enhances the likelihood that such services will be offered. It is often easier to justify expenditures for special programs when a large proportion of the student body will benefit. This probably helps explain the evidence presented in this research of the use of approaches and strategies considered effective for this population: standardized identification procedures, remedial and enrichment support programs, and specialized instruction for ELLs, such as bilingual education, foreign language immersion programs, and native language instruction. Post-NCLB, districts and schools with high LEP concentration have been more motivated to improve education for these students because LEP students comprise an identifiable group for which schools are held accountable.

Low-LEP schools may not adequately serve growing numbers of immigrant children spreading throughout the nation. Nearly one-third of all limited English proficient children enroll in schools serving low percentages of LEP students. When NCLB passed, these mostly suburban schools lagged

behind high-LEP schools in providing instruction adapted to the needs of LEP children, providing in-service professional development for general education teachers related to teaching LEP students, and offering important student services, such as support and enrichment programs. The documented spread of immigrants to nontraditional locations is causing LEP student enrollment to become more diffuse across schools. As this process of immigrant expansion throughout the nation continues, it will be of particular importance for all schools to offer the services needed to help LEP children succeed. Perhaps a greater emphasis on exposing non-ESL/bilingual teachers to the needs of LEP students through both preservice and in-service training can be a starting point to address this problem. This is important even in schools that have moderate or small LEP populations, where LEP students are isolated (in numbers too small to require that test scores be reported separately under NCLB). Training on LEP education among teachers in these schools would not only help their LEP students, who otherwise run the risk of being overlooked, but would also help teachers prepare for the likely possibility that in the near future, the LEP population at their schools will grow and become a reporting category.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our findings—particularly from the case studies at three school districts and six schools— suggest the following recommendations to improve the education of ELL students under NCLB.

Testing

- The U.S. Department of Education should make the development of an appropriate English language proficiency test a national priority and require its use by all states and districts.
- States should ensure that (a) policies are in place to conduct subject matter testing of ELL students using appropriate tests and accommodations and (b) reasonable exemptions are granted.

Pre-K in NCLB Legislation

- The inclusion of pre-K education should be considered in the reauthorization of NCLB. While it is evident from our study that NCLB is changing pre-K education in high-LEP schools, including this component of the educational system in the law would enforce and standardize these changes across all districts and states.

School Choice and SES

- The NCLB provisions for school choice and Supplemental Educational Services (SES) should be reexamined. These provisions do not seem to be having the intended effect and their feasibility and effectiveness should be studied.

Teacher Quality

- Districts should assume responsibility for the training and professional development of teachers—including bilingual/ESL teachers—to assist them in meeting the NCLB requirements for high-quality teachers. This assistance might include working with local colleges to increase the production of high-quality bilingual/ESL teachers and to offer courses in areas where current teachers need to acquire credits for certification. Local colleges and alternative certification programs should be encouraged to incorporate courses on ELL instruction as part of the required general teacher education curriculum. These courses should be required for certification or employment of all teachers, at least in high-ELL-enrollment districts but preferably in all districts.

Parental Outreach

- More effective strategies are needed for conducting parental outreach and information efforts with parents of ELL students. Districts and schools must acquire a greater understanding of effective strategies to reach this group of parents, who face many barriers to understanding the requirements of NCLB and their role in supporting its goals.

NOTES

1. Throughout this research, LEP will include both students who are limited English proficient (LEP) and students who do not know English at all (NEP). The terms ELL and LEP will be used interchangeably.
2. The “road map” does not provide findings reported herein but is a guide to understanding the provisions of NCLB. It is in the process of being updated to incorporate recent revisions in the law. All other reports are available at <http://www.urban.org>.
3. Another contributing factor is higher fertility among immigrant, minority women. This is particularly true among non-Cuban Hispanic women, where fertility may soon surpass immigration as the main contributor to growth in the Hispanic population (Tienda and Mitchell 2006).
4. Findings from the demographic profile prepared in this series (Capps et al. 2005).
5. See note 4.
6. Defined as a teacher having at least a bachelor’s degree, full state certification, and demonstrated knowledge in the core academic subjects he or she teaches.

7. In general, high-LEP schools, even before the advent of NCLB, were more likely to conduct parental outreach and support activities than schools with lower levels of LEP students (Cosentino, Deterding, and Clewell 2005).

REFERENCES

- Capps, Randy, Michael Fix, Julie Murray, Jason Ost, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Shinta Herwanto. 2005. “The New Demography of America’s Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act.” Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Clewell, Beatriz Chu. 2007. “Promise or Peril? NCLB and the Education of ELL Students.” Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Cosentino de Cohen, Clemencia, Nicole Deterding, and Beatriz Chu Clewell. 2005. “Who’s Left Behind? Immigrant Children in High and Low LEP Schools.” Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- King, Justin. 2006. “Closing the Achievement Gap through Expanded Access to Quality Early Education in Grades PK-3.” Issue Brief no. 3. Washington, DC: New America Foundation.
- Tienda, Marta, and Faith Mitchell, eds. 2006. *Multiple Origins, Uncertain Destinies*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to extend a special thanks to Michael Fix, vice president of the Migration Policy Institute, for conceiving this series of reports and securing funding from the Foundation for Child Development (www.fcd-us.org), which generously supported our work. We also acknowledge the contribution of Randy Capps, who guided the completion of a demographic study of the ELL and immigrant student populations, and of Nicole Deterding, who provided excellent research support. Finally, we wish to thank the reviewers of each of the reports produced in the series.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Clemencia Cosentino de Cohen is a sociologist and research associate in the Program for Evaluation and Equity Research (PEER) of the Urban Institute. A native of Argentina, she holds degrees from Princeton University (graduate) and Washington University in St. Louis (undergraduate). Guided by an interest in processes of acculturation and language acquisition, her recent work focuses on the education of immigrant children and English language learners.

Beatriz Chu Clewell is director of the Program for Evaluation and Equity Research (PEER) at the Urban Institute, where she is also a principal research associate. Born and raised in the Republic of Panama, she holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Florida State University. As a former sixth-grade teacher, she has retained an abiding interest in the education of immigrant and ELL students.

THE URBAN INSTITUTE
2100 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037



Phone: 202-833-7200
Fax: 202-467-5775
<http://www.urban.org>

EDUCATION IN FOCUS

IN THIS ISSUE

Putting English Language Learners on the Educational Map

The No Child Left Behind
Act Implemented

For more information, call Public Affairs at 202-261-5709
or visit our web site, <http://www.urban.org>.

To order additional copies of this publication,
call 202-261-5687 or 877-UIPRESS, or visit our online
bookstore, <http://www.uiypress.org>.

EDUCATION IN FOCUS

Any opinions, conclusions, or recommendations
expressed are those of the authors and do not
necessarily reflect the views of the Urban Institute
or its funders.



Copyright ©2007. The Urban Institute

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 8098
Ridgely, MD

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and educational organization that examines social, economic, and governance problems of public interest and evaluates the public and private means to alleviate them. The Program for Evaluation and Equity Research (PEER) is a research unit within the Urban Institute. PEER staff conduct research and evaluation studies in the fields of educational attainment, educational access, science and mathematics, and others—often with a focus on gender, minority (ethnicity and language), and immigrant issues.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. EXCEPT FOR SHORT QUOTES, NO PART OF THIS BRIEF MAY BE REPRODUCED OR USED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC OR MECHANICAL, INCLUDING PHOTOCOPYING, RECORDING, OR BY INFORMATION STORAGE OR RETRIEVAL SYSTEM, WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE URBAN INSTITUTE.