

## Limited English Proficiency

### DEFINITION

This indicator measures the share of public school children with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). New Hampshire schools report Limited English Proficiency for students who receive a minimum of five 40-minute sessions of English language assistance in school each week (NH DOE).

### CONTEXT

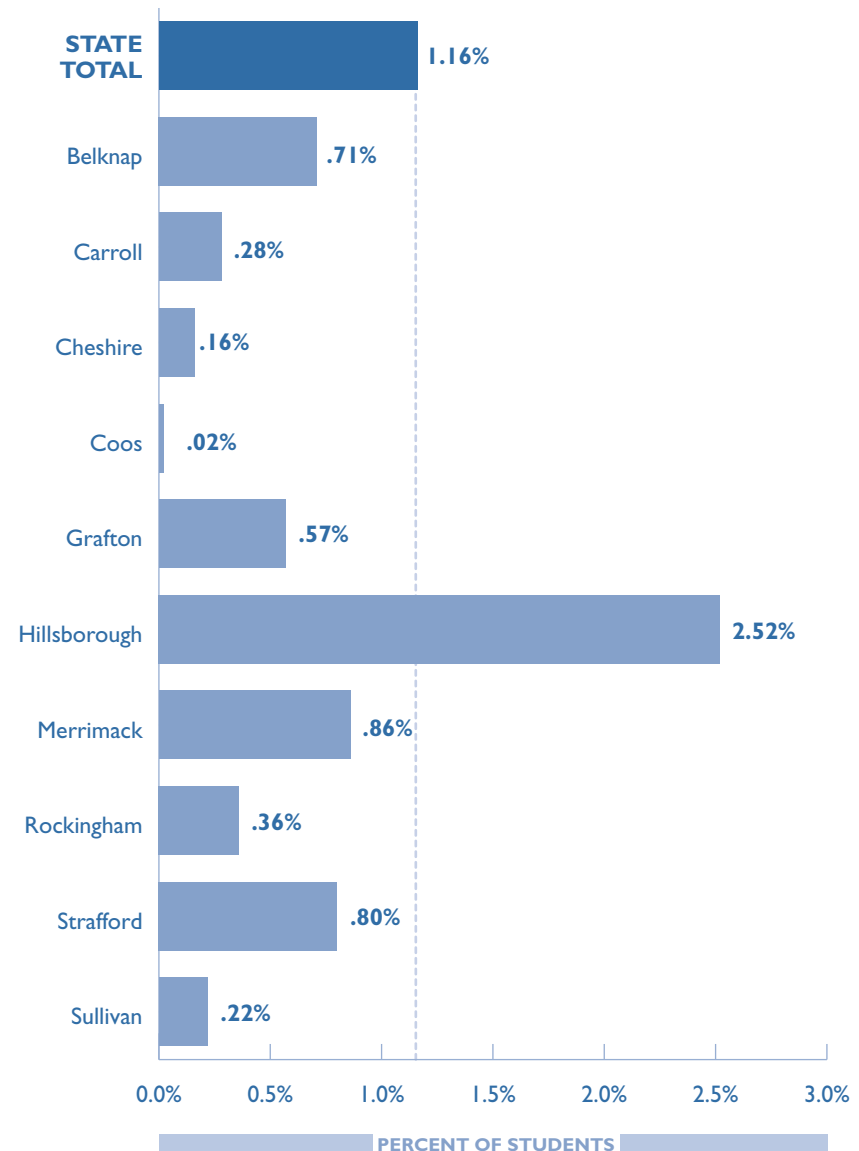
The term English Language Learner (ELL) refers to students whose first language is not English and includes both Limited English Proficiency students, who are just beginning to learn English, and those who have already developed considerable proficiency (George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education).

In the 1990s, immigrants flocked to the U.S., attracted by a growing supply of jobs in construction, food production, and service industries. While the explosion of immigrants was concentrated in southern states, most areas of the country have experienced growth from immigration. In the ten years from 1995 to 2005, English Language Learner (ELL) enrollment doubled in twenty states. Over the same time, the number of ELLs in U.S. schools grew from 3.2 million to 5.1 million while total enrollment has been level. With the growth of ELL students as a share of the total student population, states are facing new challenges such as funding English language instruction and attracting English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers (Maxwell 2009).

Nationwide the proportion of school-age children who do not speak English well and speak another language at home grew between 1979 and 2007, increasing from 3 percent to 5 percent. Most of these children who struggled with English spoke Spanish at home (75 percent). Children in homes speaking a language other than English were three times more likely not to speak English if they were in low-income families (Skinner et. al.).

While speaking a second language can improve literacy, children who are not proficient in English are more likely to struggle in school, score lower on assessment tests, drop out of high school, and are less likely to get medical and mental health care (Skinner et. al.).

**Limited English Proficiency**  
By County, 2009



## NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

Statistics of lingual diversity, including limited English proficiency, suggest New Hampshire's student population has become more diverse over the last two decades. The number of residents who do not speak English at home increased from 1990 to 2000 (Norton et. al. 2010). The share of English Language Learners in New Hampshire public schools is greater than it was in 1999, despite a short period of decline in the mid 2000s, and LEP enrollment has increased each year since 2007, even though the overall percentage of LEP students in 2008 is lower than it was in 2001 (NCES 1999-2009, NH DOE).

**Statewide, 1.16 percent of public school students have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (2,265 students). The percentage of LEP students varies widely across the state and across counties. Coos County has the lowest percentage of LEP students and Hillsborough County the highest. (see chart on previous page)**

The state's three largest cities – Manchester, Nashua, and Concord – have the highest share of LEP students at 6.25 percent, 4.23 percent and 2.51 percent respectively. These three cities have 71.6 percent of statewide LEP enrollment. Over half (51.5 percent) of New Hampshire's 163 school districts have no LEP students enrolled.

New Hampshire Department of Education reports 4,900 students are English Language Learners (ELLs), a broader designation than Limited English Proficiency. These New Hampshire students speak 136 languages; the five most common languages are Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Bosnian and Russian. Most English Language Learner students came to New Hampshire from other countries either as immigrants or through adoption (NH DOE 2010b).

## SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

New Hampshire Department of Education. 2010a. *Students with Limited English Proficiency in Public Schools*. [www.education.nh.gov/data/attendance.htm](http://www.education.nh.gov/data/attendance.htm)

The New Hampshire Department of Education reports LEP percentages by school district. The following methodology was used to estimate LEP percentages by county. First, we identified which county each school district lay in. Seven districts crossed county borders, and special estimates were computed for those districts (see methodology in Appendix). Then district average LEP percentages were used to derive county average LEP percentages by weighting each district by its enrollment.

## REFERENCES

George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education. <http://ceee.gwu.edu/ELLS/ELLS.html>.

Johnson, Kenneth M. 2007. *The Changing Faces of New Hampshire: Recent Demographic Trends in the Granite State*. Carsey Institute. [www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/Report\\_NH\\_Demographics.pdf](http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/Report_NH_Demographics.pdf)

Mather, Mark. 2009. *Children in Immigrant Families Chart New Path*. Population Reference Bureau. February. [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

Maxwell, Lesli A. 2009. *Shifting Landscape: Immigration Transforms Communities*. Education Week, Vol.28, No. 17. January 8. [www.cal.org/qualitycounts/quality\\_counts\\_cal.pdf](http://www.cal.org/qualitycounts/quality_counts_cal.pdf)

National Center for Education Statistics. 1999-2009. *Common Core of Data, Education Agency Universe Survey and State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education*. <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>

New Hampshire Department of Education. 2010b. *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program, K-12*. [www.education.nh.gov/instruction/integrated/esol/index.htm](http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/integrated/esol/index.htm)

Norton, Stephen, Ryan Tappin, Dennis Delay and Valerie Marshall. 2010. *What is New Hampshire?* New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies. September. [www.nhpolicy.org/reports/what\\_is\\_nh\\_2010\\_v4.pdf](http://www.nhpolicy.org/reports/what_is_nh_2010_v4.pdf)

Skinner, Curtis, Vanessa R. Wight, Yumiko Aratani, Janice L. Cooper and Kalyani Thampi. 2010. *English Proficiency, Family Economic Security and Child Development*. National Center for Children in Poverty. June. [www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text\\_948.pdf](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_948.pdf)