

ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs) IN ILLINOIS: Investing in Growth, Assets, and Opportunity

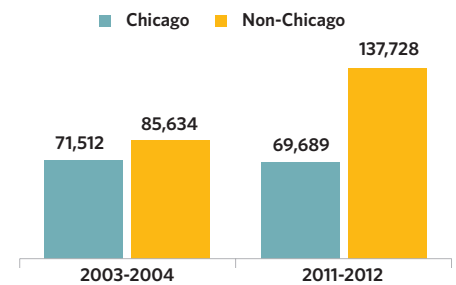
Growth

THE NUMBER OF ELs HAS INCREASED BY 32 PERCENT SINCE 2004

More than 207,000 children in Illinois are identified as ELs, accounting for nine percent of all students. More than 66 percent attend school outside of Chicago and are enrolled in school districts in 85 of 102 counties.

- Sixty-five percent of PK-12 EL students are concentrated in preschool through third grade.
- Research indicates supporting a child’s first language is one of the best ways to encourage high levels of academic English language and literacy.¹

Growth of EL Students in Illinois 2004-2012



<http://www.isbe.state.il.us>

Assets

MULTILINGUALISM INCREASES EMPLOYABILITY

The Illinois economy stands to gain from a workforce with greater language capacity, cultural competence, and global interconnectedness. ELs enter schools with a huge asset—the potential to gain written and oral proficiency in English *and* their native language. Learning more than one language is advantageous for all students. Children who learn more than one language are likely to gain cognitively, academically, and professionally.

- Bilingual workers are in demand in education, healthcare, hospitality, law enforcement, and social services.²
- Reading and writing in more than one language is a twenty-first century skill to be valued and promoted.³

Opportunity

IT’S TIME FOR ILLINOIS TO CAPITALIZE ON ITS HUMAN POTENTIAL

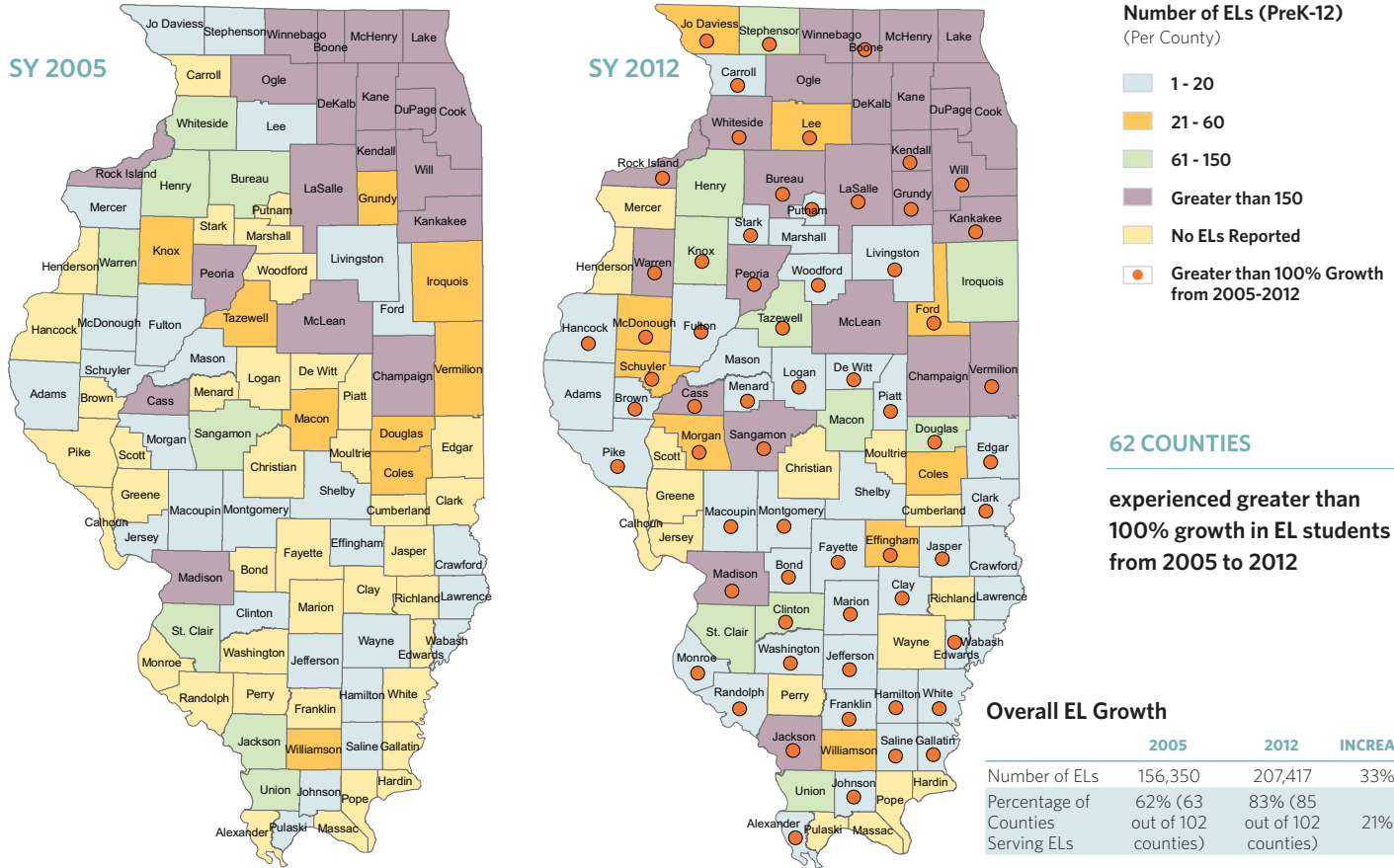
State funding for bilingual education has not kept pace with the growing EL population. As of FY 2005, the appropriation for bilingual education services has dropped to \$63.3 million, its lowest level in nearly a decade. Dollars are declining while the EL population has increased.

- The decline in per pupil funding limits school districts’ ability to provide professional development opportunities and supplemental language instruction.⁴
- The future of Illinois is tied to the educational success of this vibrant and growing student population.

STATE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BILINGUALISM:

- In 2010, Illinois expanded the range of children eligible to receive bilingual education services to include those in preschool.
- In 2013, Illinois established a State Seal of Biliteracy program that enables school districts to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition

English Learners (ELs) PreK-12, School Year (SY) 2005 to 2012 per County



ISBE "2005 ELL Student Statistical Report", ISBE "2012 Bilingual Education Programs and ELL's in Illinois"

ENDNOTES

- Aida Walqui and Margaret Heritage (2012), "Instruction for Diverse Groups of English Language Learners" *Understanding Language*, Stanford University
- Balderrama, A. (2008, September 10). *Eight industries needing bilingual workers*. Accessed from <http://www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/worklife/09/10/cb.industries.bilingual>
- Bialystok, Ellen (2010). "Bilingualism," *Advanced Review*, Accessed on October 21, 2013: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/wcs.43/abstract>
- ISBE-English Language Learning Division. (2013, July). Retrieved from Illinois State Board of Education: http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/ell_program_stat_report12.pdf

ABOUT SOL

SOL is a series of periodic policy briefs that combines data with insightful analysis from the Latino Policy Forum. The series provides a unique snapshot of the growth, influence and challenges of the local Latino community, for use by community leaders, urban planners, elected officials, journalists, and anyone interested in building a shared future for all of Illinois.

Top 15 by Number of EL Increase (SY 2005-2012)

RANK	NAME	INCREASE	INCREASE %	2005 ELL	2012 ELL
1	Cook	19,007	19%	102,332	121,339
2	Kane	6,608	44%	15,148	21,756
3	DuPage	4,719	40%	11,747	16,466
4	Will	4,405	120%	3,684	8,089
5	Lake	4,277	34%	12,464	16,741
6	Winnebago	1,621	69%	2,351	3,972
7	McHenry	1,521	72%	2,116	3,637
8	Rock Island	1,027	117%	878	1,905
9	Kendall	845	176%	479	1,324
10	Kankakee	777	377%	206	983
11	Champaign	625	77%	808	1,433
12	Peoria	617	204%	303	920
13	Madison	615	340%	181	796
14	Boone	557	106%	527	1,084
15	LaSalle	504	220%	229	733

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