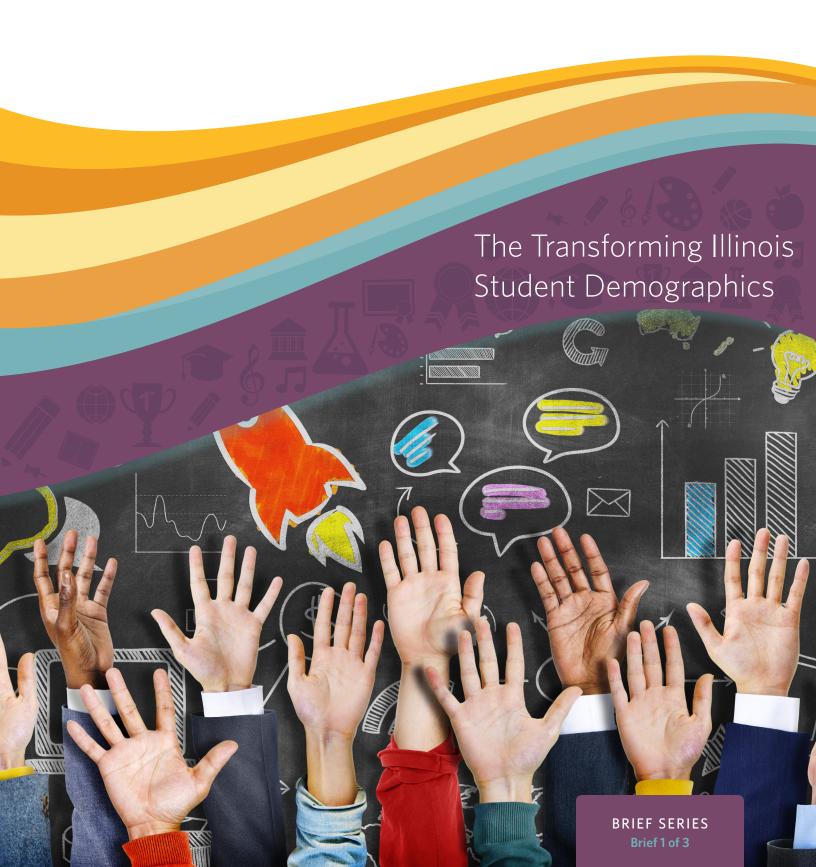


Preparing All Teachers to Educate Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students



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About the Series: This is a three-part series written by the Latino Policy Forum (see Appendix for the preparation of the brief series). The purpose of the series is to promote the importance of linguistic and cultural responsiveness in both pre-and in-service teacher preparation. The initial policy brief provides demographic data and research to illustrate the rise of diversity within the Illinois student population and how it differs with the largely white, female, and monolingual workforce. The second summarizes growing scholarly consensus on the specified knowledge and skills all teachers need to be linguistically responsive. The final brief summarizes current education policies and implications for linguistically and culturally diverse students followed by a call to action with a specific policy framework for change.

Changing education systems—like raising a child—takes the efforts of the entire community: educators, parents, policy-makers, elected and appointed officials, nonprofit leaders, community representatives, students themselves, and many others. It is the Forum's expectation that this series will have a positive impact on all those who are directly or indirectly concerned about teacher preparedness for today's classroom.

The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago-area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum strives to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and engage diverse sectors of the community. It does this by conducting analysis to inform, influence, and lead, all with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future.

Our mission: To build the power, influence, and leadership of the Latino community through collective action to transform public policies that ensure the well-being of our community and society as a whole. The Latino Policy Forum works to ensure that all Latino children have access to high-quality education services that are linguistically and culturally responsive.

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The views expressed in this brief series are explicitly those of the Latino Policy Forum and should not be taken to represent the views of any of our contributors, volunteers, work group members, or their affiliated organizations.

The Transforming Illinois Student Demographics

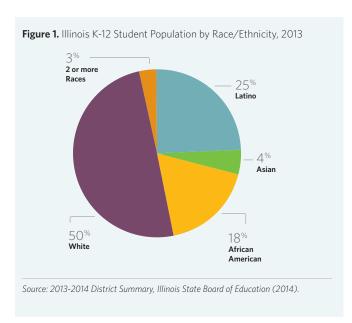
ohn Dewey (1944)

While a "majority-minority" student population has long been a reality in Chicago, 2011 marked the first time that minority students were the majority in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classrooms *across Illinois.*¹ Most in this demographic shift are students who come from immigrant families, have a range of native- and English-language proficiency, and/or who come from families who may be unfamiliar with how to navigate U.S. schools. Their educational experience serves as a critical conduit for how they will integrate into society. The preparedness of educators to build on student linguistic and cultural strengths will have a major impact on the future on Illinois.

I. Today's Students

Throughout the U.S. the number of school-age children from immigrant families is expected to grow from 12.3 million in 2005 to 17.9 million by 2020; this will account for all the projected growth in the student population.²

Within Illinois, one-in-four children have at least one foreignborn parent and 89% of children in Illinois with immigrant parents are US citizens.³ According to data from the Illinois State Board of Education, between 2003 and 2013 both the



African American and White student populations declined by 16 and 13 percent respectively. Latino and Asian student populations, in turn, grew by 42 and 22 percent (see Figure 1).⁴

A trend within this shift is the number of linguistically and culturally diverse students who reside throughout the state. Close to one of every four Illinois public school children speaks a language other than English in their home (22 percent).⁵ Many of these students identify as English Language Learners (ELLs)⁶—now representing close to one of every ten students statewide. Their numbers have grown an astonishing 83 percent over the last 15 years.⁷

ELLs reside in 85 of 102 Illinois counties and 62 of those counties doubled their ELL populations between 2005 and 2012 (see Figure 2). Within that same time period, 26 counties experienced a new presence of ELLs (see Figure 3).8 Many of these students spend some—or the grand majority—of their day with general education teachers.9

A statewide analysis reveals 66 percent of ELLs reside outside of Chicago (see Figure 4).¹⁰ Within the City of Chicago, 34 percent of students are or were identified as ELLs.¹¹ Despite this vast concentration, the rise of non-Chicago ELLs ballooned by 61 percent between 2004-2012, while declining in the city by three percent (see Figure 5).¹²

Illinois ELLs also skew young, with 65 percent concentrated in PreK-3rd grade (see Figure 6).¹³ Of the children from birth to age five enrolled in Illinois State Board of Education

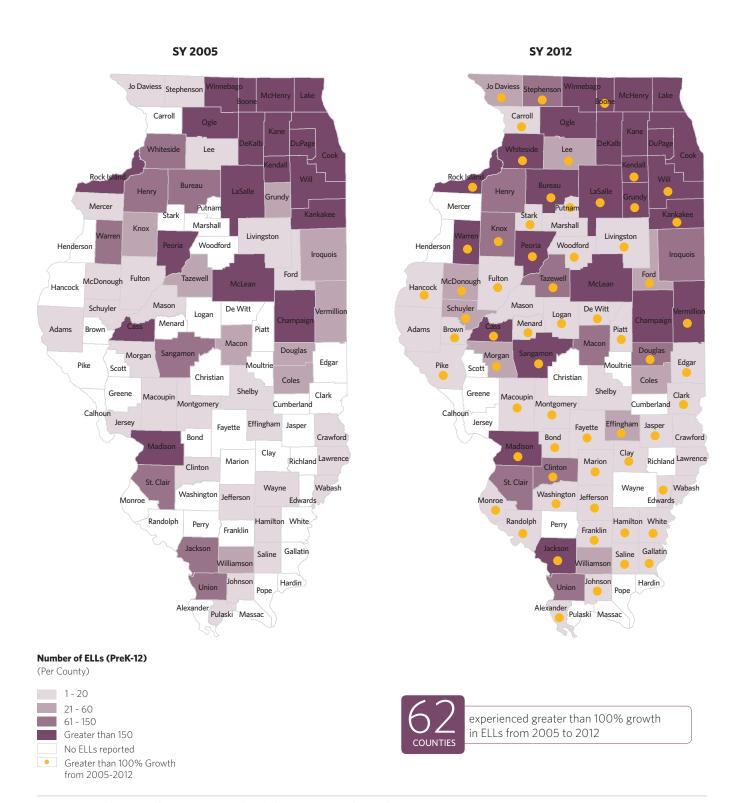
BETWEEN 2003 AND 2013:

African American students	DECLINED BY	Latino students	$^{\text{GREW BY}}_{142}\%$
White students	DECLINED BY	Asian students	GREW BY 122%
of childre	Latinos represe en under the age o	ent 26 %	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Data Set, analyzed by the Latino Policy Forum; 2011-2012 Students housed by grade, gender, race/ethnicity. Illinois State Board of Education (2013).

Figure 2. ELL Growth in Illinois

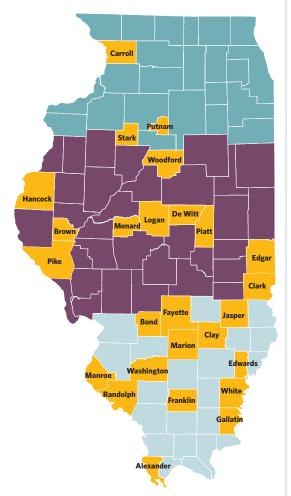
English Language Learners PreK-12, SchoolYear 2005 to 2012 per County



ISBE "2005 ELL Student Statistical Report", ISBE "2012 Bilingual Education Programs and ELLs in Illinois. Map created by Carlos Lopez, February 2014, Latino Policy Forum

Figure 3. Counties with New Presence of ELLs from 2005 to 2012

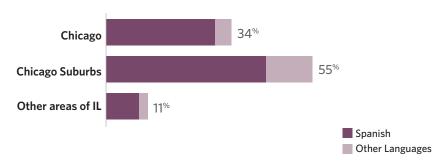






Source: Illinois State Board of Education, ELL Student Statistical Reports Analysis: Latino Policy Forum Map by Carlos Lopez, Spring 2014

Figure 4. Illinois English Language Learners by Region, 2012



Sources: Illinois State Board of Education. Bilingual Education Programs and English Language Learners in Illinois SY 2012 Statistical Report. (2013). Chicago suburbs include the collar counties of Cook, Kane, Lake, Dupage and Will. http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/pdfs/ell_program_stat_report10.pdf
Gwynee, Julia, Amber Stitziel Pareja, Stacy B. Ehrlich, and Elaine Allensworth (2012) "What Matters for Staying on Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A Focus on English Language Learners."

Figure 5. Percentage Increase of English Language Learners in Illinois, 2004-2012

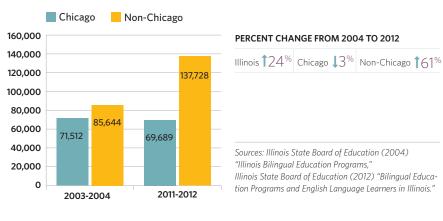
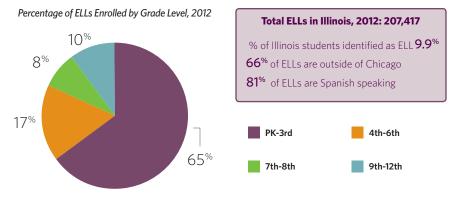


Figure 6. Illinois English Language Learners by Grade Level



 $Source: Illinois \ State \ Board \ of \ Education, \ Bilingual \ Education \ Programs \ and \ English \ Language \ Learners \ in \ Illinois \ SY2012 \ Statistical \ Report . \ http://isbe.net/research/pdfs/ell_program_stat_report 11.pdf$

funded programs (Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative) in 2012, approximately one-third come from homes where languages other than English are spoken. Not all of these children lack proficiency in English and are considered ELLs. The home language analysis, nevertheless, illustrates that linguistic diversity is a critical component of the state's educational future.

Throughout the state there is a rich variety of more than 136 languages. The great majority of school age ELLs, 81 percent, are Spanish-speaking.¹⁴

The demographic shifts are accompanied by rising income inequality levels and a mounting number of students who face economic adversity. Today, almost half of all Illinois students identify as low-income¹⁵, growing from 36 percent in 1999 to 49 percent by 2012. This trend is now fully apparent outside of Chicago. Between 2000 and 2008, suburban counties faced more than a 40 percent increase in their number of low-income residents.

Some children of immigrants fair well while others face substantial financial hardship: children of foreign-born parents account for 33 percent of all Illinois children in low-income families. Research strongly correlates economic adversity with student academic risk along with social and emotional difficulties. 19

Financial hardship is often compounded by parental legal status. Research finds that when compared with children whose parents are legal residents or native born, children of undocumented parents, by the age of two, can tend to demonstrate lower levels of language and cognitive development. The threat of deportation or lack of knowledge about social service eligibility can inhibit undocumented parents from looking for help. As a result, their children's development may be adversely affected by conditions including long work

hours, low pay and subpar living conditions.²⁰ If the keystone of teacher effectiveness is how prepared educators are to teach the children in front of them, their training will have to include linguistic and cultural responsiveness along with other considerations for socioeconomic insecurities.

Historically ELL classifications have been simply defined—ELL versus non-ELL. Today, clearer more nuanced descriptions are necessary. The categories in the following chart provide a broader consideration for the range of linguistically and culturally diverse students present in schools today.

Nearly 1-in-4 of Illinois students come from a home where a language other than English is spoken resulting in a spectrum of linguistic and cultural diversity in schools today. According to 2010 data from the Illinois State Board of Education, as many as 28 percent of ELL students were transitioned out of language programming in less than one year (i.e. they became reclassified ELLs). Another 34 percent were transitioned out in one to three years.²³ This entails more than half moving out of language services after three years and then being placed with general education instructors who generally can provide only minimal language supports.

II. Today's Teachers

The increasing diversity of the Illinois student body stands in stark contrast to teacher demographics—largely white, female, and monolingual. The Illinois State Board of Education's "Educator Supply and Demand in Illinois: 2011 Annual Report" indicates that currently 82 percent of the teachers are white, with six percent African American and five percent Latino.²⁴

The current focus of reform efforts focused on teacher quality only heightens the demand for pedagogical practices and clinical experiences responsive to how other languages

DROP BOX 1

Descriptions of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

- **Heritage speakers (never ELLs):** from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and fully proficient in English. They tend to be students who speak a language other than English in the home at various levels of proficiency, but may not be literate in that language.
- **Current ELLs:** students who are not yet proficient in English and require language supports. These students are generally enrolled in a Transitional Bilingual Education program or Transitional Program of Instruction.²¹
- > Reclassified ELLs: students who have been reclassified because they have met the state criteria for English language proficiency.
- **Linguistically and culturally diverse students with special needs:** any of the aforementioned students with an individualized education plan (IEP).²²

DROP BOX 2

Lack of Illinois Teacher Diversity

Teacher preparation programs have undergone vast changes to raise the difficulty of candidate entry. Beginning in 2012, all teacher candidates in Illinois were required to pass a more advanced entry exam, the Test of Academic Proficiency, (formerly the Basic Skills Test).²⁵ A later provision permits candidates with an ACT score of 22 or higher to elect out of the exam. The logic behind raising the bar for entry into the profession is to elevate its status and, consequentially, the quality of the teacher applicant pool.²⁶

Raising the cut off score on the exam to determine program admission has led to drops in candidate enrollment in Illinois, including the already small pool of racially and ethnically diverse candidates. Not yet considered, but just as critical, is how the exam has and will continue to influence the pool of linguistically diverse teacher candidates. Further research is necessary to explore whether the recent changes to the entrance exam prevents linguistically and culturally diverse candidates from entering teacher preparation programs.

There is a need to maintain equal priority on achieving both excellence and diversity within the teaching profession. A growing body of research shows students who have teachers from diverse cultural, ethnic and racial background stand to reap additional benefits from the experience, not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well.²⁷ While the field needs more teachers representative of the changing student population, the current entry requisite could serve to reinforce—or even exacerbate—the imbalance between student and teacher diversity.

and cultures differ from the dominant school language and culture. Teachers who are prepared to negotiate home-school differences through interactions, communications, and strength-based practices, can augment student participation within an array of educational experiences.²⁸

Research clearly illustrates that teachers, in turn, want training to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student body in front of them. Effective preparation gives ample attention to the great diversity within this student population in terms of country of origin, developmental characteristics, language development, parental education levels, the role of community, socioeconomic status, duration in the U.S., familiarity with formal schooling, immigration status, and ethnic and cultural background.²⁹

Conclusion

The foundation for teacher effectiveness is how well they are prepared to teach the children who are in front of them. As the student demographic continues to change, teachers—along with principals and all other educators—must be prepared with the knowledge and skills to build on the rich language and cultural assets in classrooms today. The future of Illinois is inevitably tied to the educational success of this vibrant and growing student population.

Appendix: Preparation of the Brief Series

Through a six-month process, the Latino Policy Forum sought to take a wider look at how Illinois might ensure that all students have access to culturally and linguistically relevant education. The process entailed the following:

- ► Conducting a review of research regarding language, literacy and teacher preparation and the demographics of the Illinois ELL population.
- ▶ Convening a pre- and in-service teacher preparation work group to review, reflect on, and make suggestions to developing a statewide approach to fortify teacher preparation for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Their comments provided insight in the development of this policy brief series.
- Developing this brief series to include recommendations to provide linguistically and culturally responsive teacher preparation.

The work group represented educators and philanthropic leaders with extensive experience in language education and pre-service

and/or in-service preparation. Through smaller breakout sessions, members discussed the various impediments and potential solutions to strengthen linguistically and culturally diverse student achievement. Widely respected education research and data analyses support the themes and feedback generated by the work group: amplified coursework and content on linguistic and cultural competencies, strengthening higher education capacity to prepare linguistically and culturally responsive candidates, priority for diverse fieldwork experiences, heightened professional knowledge on the complexity of linguistically and culturally diverse students with special needs. These will be discussed in briefs two and three.

The views expressed in this brief are explicitly those of the Latino Policy Forum and should not be taken to represent the views of any of our contributors, volunteers, committee members, or their affiliated organizations.

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- 5 U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey. Table 16. Detailed Languages Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over for Illinois: 2006-2008.
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 (1) Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), when 20 or more ELLs of the same language classification are enrolled in the same class or center, instruction is offered in the student's home language with additional English as a Second Language instruction. (2) Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI), when 19 or less ELLs of one or more native languages are in a classroom instruction is offered in English but assistance is offered in the native language as determined by the student's level of English proficiency
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