

2019-2020 ELL Demographics: At-a-Glance

During the 2019-2020 school year, there were ~43% (~388,000) of students enrolled in New York City (NYC) public schools with a primary home language other than English.¹ Approximately ~15% (~132,000) of students enrolled in NYC public schools identified as English Language Learners (ELL)s.² An ELL is a student whose primary home language is not English and has scored below a cut score on the New York State Identification Test for ELLs (NYSITELL). These students continue to be ELLs until they reach proficiency on the NYSESLAT or a combination of NYSESLAT scores and ELA/ELA Regents scores. Starting the 2019-2020 school year, NYSED and the NYC DOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as multilingual learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy. Approximately ~46% of students identified as ELLs were born in the United States.³

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2019-2020 ELL Enrollment Citywide

During school year 2019-2020, 142,096 ELLs were enrolled in NYC public schools at some point in the year.

Borough	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
Bronx	36,373	25.60%
Brooklyn	41,272	29.05%
Manhattan	16,270	11.45%
Queens	43,802	30.83%
Staten Island	4,379	3.08%
Total	142,096	100.00%

¹ Figures are based on the 2019-20 Audited Register as of Fall 2019; which includes only grades K – 12, excludes charter schools, and excludes students in high school equivalency programs.

² See footnote 1.

³ Henceforth, figures are based on 2019-20 Final ELL Dataset (BESIS data). The difference in ELL numbers between the NYC DOE’s annual ELL survey and the Audited Register is because the latter is a snapshot in time, while the former looks at all ELLs who came in and out of the NYC DOE school system during the entire school year.

2019-2020 ELL Enrollment by Grade Level Citywide

During the 2019-2020 school year, slightly more than half (53.83%) of all ELLs in NYC public schools were in elementary school grades (76,487).

Grade Level	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
K	15,000	10.56%
1	13,590	9.56%
2	13,720	9.66%
3	12,350	8.69%
4	11,118	7.82%
5	10,709	7.54%
6	9,280	6.53%
7	8,536	6.01%
8	8,286	5.83%
9	12,568	8.84%
10	11,491	8.09%
11	8,227	5.79%
12	7,221	5.08%
Total	142,096	100.00%

2019-2020 Top 10 Places of Birth for ELLs Citywide

During the 2019-2020 school year, nearly half of the ELLs in the NYC public schools (46.48% or 66,046) were born within the United States, but slightly more than half (53.52% or 76,050) were born outside the United States in 198 different places.

Rank	Place of Birth	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
1	United States of America	66,046	46.48%
2	Dominican Republic	24,476	17.22%
3	China	7,239	5.09%
4	Yemen	4,519	3.18%
5	Ecuador	4,452	3.13%
6	Honduras	3,846	2.71%
7	Bangladesh	3,801	2.67%
8	Guatemala	2,994	2.11%
9	Uzbekistan	2,516	1.77%
10	El Salvador	2,125	1.50%
No Rank	Other (179)	20,082	14.13%
Total	All Places of Birth	142,096	100.00%

2019-2020 Top 10 Home Languages for ELLs Citywide

During the 2019-2020 school year, ELLs in NYC public schools communicated in 152 languages other than English. Over 61% of ELLs are Spanish speakers, followed by students who speak Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Urdu, Haitian Creole, French, Uzbek, and Punjabi.

Rank	Home Language	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
1	Spanish	87,857	61.83%
2	Chinese	17,336	12.20%
3	Arabic	8,540	6.01%
4	Bengali	5,711	4.02%
5	Russian	3,907	2.75%
6	Urdu	2,401	1.69%
7	Haitian Creole	2,361	1.66%
8	French	1,753	1.23%
9	Uzbek	1,618	1.14%
10	Punjabi	908	0.64%
No Rank	Other (142)	9,704	6.83%
Total	All Home Languages	142,096	100.00%

2019-2020 ELL Programs and Services

During the 2019-2020 school year, a considerable portion of ELLs were served in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs at 10.16%, while 7.03% of ELLs were served in Dual Language (DL) bilingual education programs. These programs include English as a New Language (ENL) instruction. Most ELLs were served in ENL only programs (81.00%).

Program	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
English as a New Language Only	115,099	81.00%
Transitional Bilingual Education	14,435	10.16%
Dual Language	9,994	7.03%
Not Served/Not Reported	2,568	1.81%
Total	142,096	100.00%

2019-2020 ELL Subgroups

ELL Subgroups are defined by the years of ELL service a student has received:

- Newcomer: 0 to 3 years
- Developing: 4 to 6 years
- Long-term: 7 or more years

During the 2019-2020 school year, the largest proportion of ELLs in NYC public schools is represented in the Newcomer category at 56.62% (80,457) because this includes a newly identified ELLs who have not yet received any ELL services. Newcomer ELLs account for more than both Developing (27.78% or 39,472) and Long-term (15.60% or 22,167) categories combined.

Subgroup	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
Newcomer	80,457	56.62%
Developing	39,472	27.78%
Long-term	22,167	15.60%
Total	142,096	100.00%