

2020-2021 ELL Demographics: At-a-Glance

During the 2020-2021 school year, there were ~42% (~369,000) of students enrolled in New York City (NYC) public schools with a primary home language other than English.¹ Approximately ~16% (~140,000) of students enrolled in NYC public schools identified as English Language Learners (ELL).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 ~50% of students identified as ELLs were born in the United States.³

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2020-2021 ELL Enrollment Citywide

During school year 2020-2021, 147,287 ELLs were enrolled in NYC public schools at some point in the year.

Borough	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
Bronx	35,969	24.42%
Brooklyn	43,017	29.21%
Manhattan	16,364	11.11%
Queens	47,016	31.92%
Staten Island	4,921	3.34%
Total	147,287	100.00%

¹ Figures are based on the 2020-21 Audited Register as of Fall 2020; 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 2020-21 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.

2020-2021 ELL Enrollment by Grade Level Citywide

During the 2020-2021 school year, slightly more than half (53.48%) of all ELLs in NYC public schools were in elementary school grades (78,770).

Grade Level	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
K	13,929	9.46%
1	14,936	10.14%
2	13,285	9.02%
3	13,437	9.12%
4	12,190	8.28%
5	10,993	7.46%
6	10,373	7.04%
7	9,452	6.42%
8	8,635	5.86%
9	11,034	7.49%
10	11,148	7.57%
11	9,421	6.40%
12	8,454	5.74%
Total	147,287	100.00%

2020-2021 Top 10 Places of Birth for ELLs Citywide

During the 2020-2021 school year, nearly half of the ELLs in the NYC public schools (49.80% or 73,354) were born within the United States, but slightly more than half (50.20% or 73,933) were born outside the United States in 200 different places.

Rank	Place of Birth	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
1	United States of America	73,354	49.80%
2	Dominican Republic	22,806	15.48%
3	China	6,847	4.65%
4	Ecuador	5,393	3.66%
5	Yemen	4,189	2.84%
6	Bangladesh	3,841	2.61%
7	Honduras	3,740	2.54%
8	Guatemala	2,812	1.91%
9	Uzbekistan	2,509	1.70%
10	El Salvador	1,916	1.30%
No Rank	Other (191)	19,880	13.50%
Total	All Places of Birth	147,287	100.00%

2020-2021 Top 10 Home Languages for ELLs Citywide

During the 2020-2021 school year, ELLs in NYC public schools communicated in 151 languages other than English. Over 61% of ELLs are Spanish speakers, followed by students who speak Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Urdu, Haitian Creole, Uzbek, French, and Tadjik.

Rank	Home Language	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
1	Spanish	89,946	61.07%
2	Chinese	19,127	12.99%
3	Arabic	8,550	5.80%
4	Bengali	6,169	4.19%
5	Russian	4,231	2.87%
6	Urdu	2,468	1.68%
7	Haitian Creole	2,216	1.50%
8	Uzbek	1,708	1.16%
9	French	1,659	1.13%
10	Tadjik	1,005	0.68%
No Rank	Other (141)	10,208	6.93%
Total	All Home Languages	147,287	100.00%

2020-2021 ELL Programs and Services

During the 2020-2021 school year, a considerable portion of ELLs were served in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs at 9.91%, while 7.12% 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 (80.14%).

Program	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
English as a New Language Only	118,030	80.14%
Transitional Bilingual Education	14,597	9.91%
Dual Language	10,491	7.12%
Not Served/Not Reported	4,169	2.83%
Total	147,287	100.00%

2020-2021 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 2020-2021 school year, the largest proportion of ELLs in NYC public schools is represented in the Newcomer category at 50.77% (74,783) because this includes newly identified ELLs who have not yet received any ELL services. Newcomers account for more than both Developing (31.14% or 45,864) and Long-term (18.09% or 26,640) categories combined.

Subgroup	ELLs (Number)	ELLs (Percent)
Newcomer	74,783	50.77%
Developing	45,864	31.14%
Long-term	26,640	18.09%
Total	147,287	100.00%