

Identifying and Supporting English Learner Students Who May Have Learning Disabilities

Practitioners of English Language Learning meeting

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Overview

- REL West Report: *Identifying and Supporting EL Students with Disabilities: Key Issues in the Literature and State Practice*

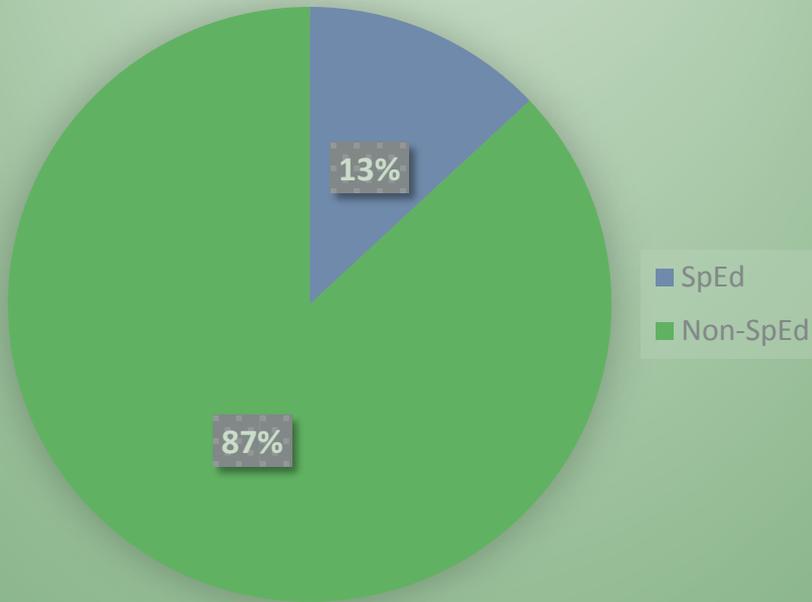
Literature review

State policy and practice review

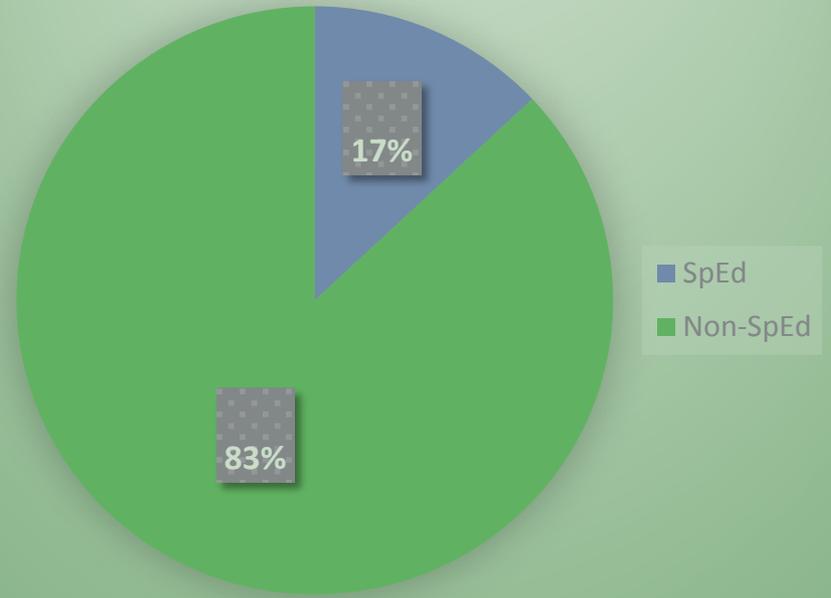
- More to Come: Breakout Sessions
- Development of a Guidance Manual for AZ
- More Questions? Ask A REL

English Learners are Over-Represented in Special Education in Arizona

Non-ELs: 1,054,681



ELs: 95,150





REL West Report Part 1: Literature Review

Key Elements for Success

- High quality school experience
 - Strong classroom instruction (GE & ELD)
 - Teachers with SpEd and second language understanding and capacity for best practices
 - Teachers with multicultural understandings
- Student supports to minimize non-academic factors: Poverty, mobility, physical and socio-emotional health, etc.
- Multi-participant & multi-data identification and placement process
- Ongoing monitoring & improvement process using data

Barriers to Success

Staff Capacity

- Difficulties in distinguishing between a second language learning need and a disability
- Lack of awareness of best practices for ELs with disabilities

Systemic

- Poorly designed and implemented SpEd referral processes
- Insufficient use of assessment accommodations for EL & SWD
- No data system for tracking effectiveness or sharing information between EL and SpEd departments



REL West Report Part 2: State Policy and Practice Review

Guiding Principles from States

- Clear policy statement that additional considerations will be used in placing EL students in SpEd
- Test accommodations for EL students
- Exit criteria for EL support programs for EL in SpEd
- Early intervention approach (RtI)
- Comprehensive manuals to aid educators in identifying and supporting EL students who may have disabilities

Policy and Practice Guidelines

Five states have comprehensive manuals for identifying and serving ELs with disabilities

- CT (2011, 38 pages)
- IL (2002, 167 pages)
- MI (2015, 97 pages)
- MN (2005, 319 pages, currently in revision)
- VA (2015, 60 pages)

State Manual Overview

Features	CT	IL	MI	MN	VA
Pages	38	167	97	319	60
Info on second language acquisition and progress	X	X	X	X	X
Guidance on assessments	X	X	X	X	X
Checklists	X	X	X	X	X
PD program for educators		X			
Info on the role of culture/acclturation		X		X	
Sample pre-referral or intervention program	X (and early intervention flowchart)	X	X	X	X (early intervention flowchart and special education process flowchart)
Plan for continuous eval./ systemic review		X		X	
Laws and regs. related to the rights of ELs	X	X	X	X	X
Guidance for working with families	X (sample parent interview)	X	X (sample parent interview)	X	X
FAQs	X		X		X

Key Features From the Five State Manuals

- Information on second language acquisition and progress (all)
- PD program for educators (IL)
- Info on the role of culture/acclturation (IL, MN)
- Info on avoiding over- and under-identification (CT)
- Early intervention flowchart (IL, MN)
- Plan for continuous evaluation / systemic review (IL, MN)
- Guidance for working with families, including sample parent interviews (all)
- Checklists (all)
- Laws and regulations related to the rights on ELs (all)
- FAQ's from educators (CT, MI, VA)

More to Come: Breakout Sessions

*When an English learner struggles academically:
Telling the difference
between second language
acquisition and a possible
learning disability*





Development of a Guidance Manual for Arizona

*Please Sign Up at the
Registration Table to
Get Involved!*

More Questions? Ask A REL

Do you want to know the latest research or where to turn for information?

Our free reference desk service provides references, referrals, and memo responses to education questions:

<https://relwest.wested.org/contact>

Resources

- REL West research:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2015086.pdf (research report)
- and
https://relwest.wested.org/system/documents/pdfs/48/original/REL_West_Memo_State_manuals_on_EL_SWD_022016.pdf?1456533413 (summaries of five state manuals)
- U.S. Department of Education toolkit:
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf>



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