

For Immediate Release
October 24, 2024

Fullerton School District Closes Achievement Gap for English Language Learners



A teacher at Pacific Drive Elementary welcomes students and families for a community engagement night.

(Fullerton, CA) - Fullerton School District (FSD) is making significant strides in closing the achievement gap for its English language learners, as highlighted by the latest state test results from the California Department of Education (CDE). The 2023-24 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) data, released this month, shows that FSD's English language learners are making more gains than their peers across the state.

The CAASPP, administered each spring to students in grades 3 through 8, measures student progress in core subjects like English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. According to the new data, FSD's English language learners achieved proficiency rates about nine percentage points higher than the state average in both ELA and Math. In addition, comparing data from the 2022-23 school year with that from the 2023-24 school year, FSD's English language learners grew 1.6 percentage points in ELA and 1.7 percentage points in math, while the state dropped 0.6 percentage points in ELA and grew 0.3 percentage points in math.

Over the past few years, FSD has seen a rise in reclassification rates, which measure the number of students transitioning from "English Learner" to "English Proficient" status. The district's reclassification rate

increased from 8% in the 2021-22 school year to 19% in 2022-23. In 2023-24, FSD had an 18% reclassification rate. Reclassification occurs when students score a four on the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC), among other criteria, which include an evaluation from the teacher, consultation with a parent/guardian, and comparison of performance in basic Language Arts.

“Our reclassification rates are moving in step with the increase in proficiency scores, which is very promising,” President of FSD’s Board of Trustees Leonel Talavera said. He credited the district’s robust English Language Development (ELD) programs and targeted strategies for helping narrow the achievement gap for English language learners.

FSD’s success stems from a combination of focused ELD instruction and integrated strategies throughout the school day. English language learners receive 30 minutes of designated ELD instruction daily (150 minutes weekly), focusing on the key language skills they need to succeed in academic subjects. The district also uses an integrated ELD model, aligning state ELD standards with California’s Common Core and ELA standards. This approach strengthens students' ability to learn English while mastering academic content.

The district’s methods are supported by the use of ELLevation, a learning platform that helps track and support English learners’ progress. FSD also implements early interventions, such as ELD Bootcamps each winter and spring, to support students close to reclassification.

Once students are reclassified as English proficient, the district monitors their academic progress for four years, or until they are promoted from eighth grade, to ensure continued success. Monthly updates and additional training are provided to FSD’s ELD educators, equipping them with the resources and tools needed to support their students.

“All means all in FSD, and we are committed to making sure every learner has the support they need to succeed,” Talavera added.

The Fullerton School District (FSD) is located in northern Orange County, California, and serves over 11,400 students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through eighth grade. FSD is home to 15 elementary schools, two TK through eighth-grade schools, three junior high schools, and a distance learning and home school program. FSD features unique programs for students, including a Dual Language Academy for Spanish and Korean languages; a Performance Academy Sports Program that offers a traditional in-person learning experience with time for advanced athletic training integrated into the school day; and robust before, after, and summer school programs. The mission of the Fullerton School District is to work collaboratively with the community to provide an innovative, high-quality educational experience for all students in a safe learning environment. FSD’s motto, “Great Schools - Successful Kids,” signifies that all FSD students will be given the tools and instruction to achieve academic excellence, hone interpersonal skills, and develop technological expertise to contribute as productive citizens in a democratic society.

###

For more information, please feel free to contact Amber Muñoz/Public Information Officer, Fullerton School District at 657/706-3774 or amber_munos@myfsd.org