



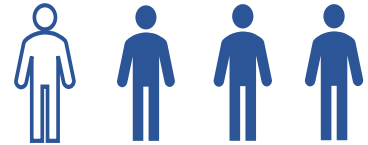
Office of English Language Acquisition

English Learners in College Credit-Bearing Courses

This fact sheet uses data from the 2017–18 [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) (CRDC) to explore information about dual enrollment and Advanced Placement (AP) exam participation for students enrolled in grades nine to 12.¹ This fact sheet is a complement to [an August 2021 fact sheet](#) that covered AP and IB course-taking using the same CRDC data. The CRDC is a biennial survey administered by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Credits earned through dual enrollment courses and/or AP exams may reduce students’ postsecondary course load or shorten their time to earn a degree. Dual enrollment/dual credit programs provide opportunities for high school students to take college-level courses and earn concurrent credit toward a high school diploma and a college degree. Only schools that serve students in grades nine through 12 offer dual enrollment courses, and not all such schools do offer them. However, a majority of students in grades nine through 12 (75%) attend a school that offers dual-enrollment options.

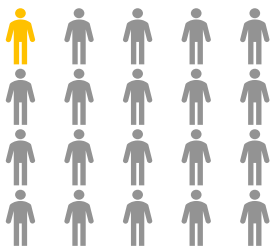
Student Access to Dual Enrollment Courses: School Year 2017–18

Approximately one out of every four students in grades nine to 12² attends a school that **does not** offer dual enrollment,³ and three out of every four students in these grades attend a school that **does**.⁴

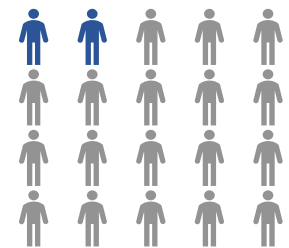


In the subset of schools that offer dual enrollment courses, English learners (ELs) are underrepresented. ELs are less likely than non-EL students to enroll in dual enrollment courses when they are offered. Research suggests that EL students in secondary grades struggle to access rigorous grade-level coursework.⁵ Challenges for ELs may lie in scheduling language instruction courses along with a full academic course load, and/or from prerequisites that ELs may not have had an opportunity to complete. Over time, obstacles can accumulate and hinder ELs’ opportunity to be prepared for dual-enrollment courses when they are available.⁶

Dual Enrollment: English Learners vs. All Students: School Year 2017–18



Across all states, **fewer than one in twenty high school ELs (4%)** enrolled in dual enrollment courses when they were available, compared to **slightly more than two in 20 students in the total population (11%)**.



¹ AP refers to a program, sponsored by the College Board, through which students may earn college credit and advanced college placement by successfully completing AP courses and standardized AP exams.

² Dual-enrollment-eligible schools are those with students enrolled in grades nine to 12, or with ungraded high school-aged students

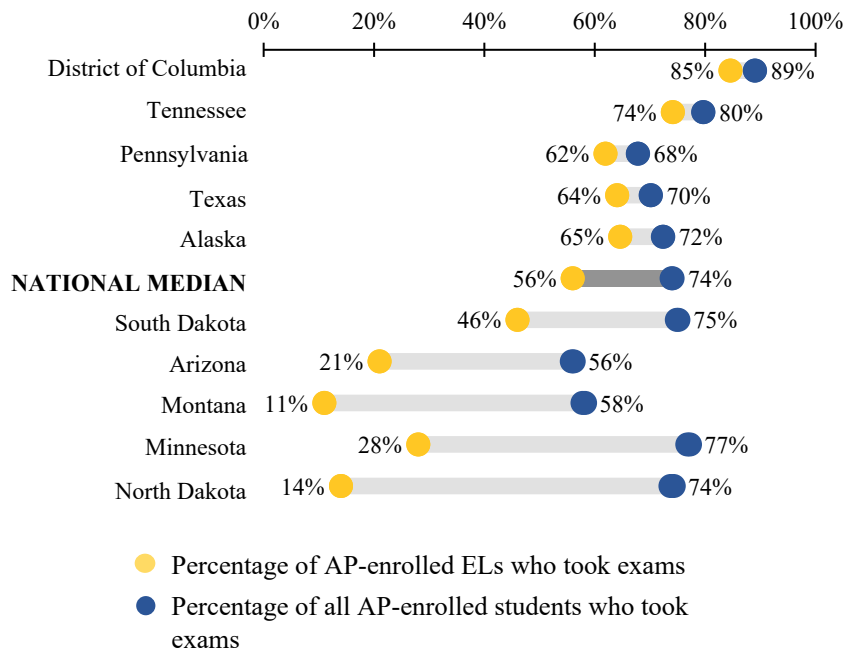
³ 27% or 4,826,596 students.

⁴ 73% or 12,975,272 students.

⁵ Umansky, I. M. (2016). Leveled and exclusionary tracking: English learners’ access to academic content in middle school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(6), 1792–1833.

⁶ Callahan, R. M. (2005). Tracking and high school English learners: Limiting opportunity to learn. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(2), 305–328.

Advanced Placement Exam Participation in States With the Narrowest and Widest Participation Divide Between ELs and All Students: School Year 2017–18



In nearly all states, ELs were underrepresented in AP exam participation in 2017–18.⁷ Participation gaps between ELs and all students ranged from a low of 4 percentage points (in the District of Columbia) to a high of 60 percentage points (in North Dakota). States with the narrowest gaps generally had larger EL populations than states with wider gaps. The range in AP participation for students overall was relatively narrow across the states, with values ranging from a low of 56% (in Arizona) to a high of 89% (in D.C). The participation range for ELs was much wider, ranging from 14% (in North Dakota) to 85% (in D.C)

Advanced Placement Exam Participation Nationally English Learners vs. All Students: School Year 2017–18



Nationwide, approximately **three out of every five ELs** who are enrolled in AP courses went on to take the AP exams, compared to **three out of every four students** in the total population.



The variance in AP exam participation between ELs and all students may stem from a variety of factors.

- Language barriers on the AP exam.** Currently, the College Board only provides AP exam accommodations for students with documented disabilities; linguistic accommodations are not available for students who use multiple languages to learn and express themselves.
- Cost barrier.** Most AP exams cost \$95 each, a fee that examinees often must cover on their own. There are ways to mitigate this barrier. According to the College Board, students with significant financial need may qualify for a \$33 fee reduction. Additionally, states may use or allocate funds allotted to them under Title I, Section 1004 or Title IV, Section 4104 of the Every Student Succeeds Act to help students with AP exam fees.

For more information on factors that can improve the course access by ELs in secondary grades, see: <https://www.elrdcenter.wested.org/improve-course-access-of-els>.

⁷ The exceptions in the 2017–18 CRDC data are Hawaii and Wyoming.