

English Language Development among American Indian English Learner Students in New Mexico

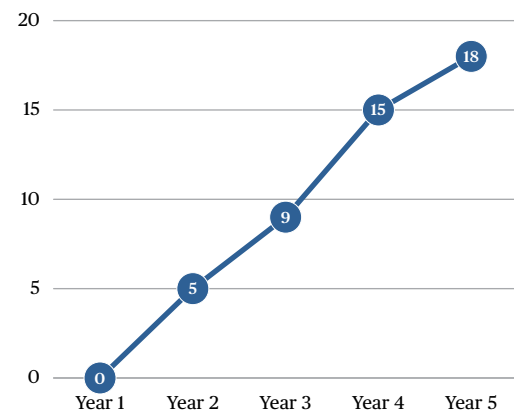
New Mexico’s Every Student Succeeds Act state plan set the goal for all English learner students to attain English proficiency within five years. The Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest English Learners Research Partnership conducted this study to better understand progress toward English proficiency among American Indian English learner students. The study examined two statewide cohorts of American Indian students identified as English learner students at initial kindergarten entry in 2013/14 or 2014/15 in New Mexico public schools. District and school leaders and teachers can use the findings from this study to determine how best to support English language development among American Indian English learner students.

Key findings

- **Only 18 percent of American Indian students identified as English learner students in kindergarten were reclassified as English proficient within five years.** The percentage of students who were reclassified increased by 2-6 percentage points each year (see figure).
- **American Indian English learner students who were reclassified as English proficient within five years of entering kindergarten achieved higher scores on the speaking and reading domains the final time they took the English language proficiency assessment (ACCESS for ELLs) than did students who were not reclassified.** For example, on average, American Indian English learner students who were reclassified scored 5.6 of 6.0 on the reading domain, while those who were not reclassified scored 3.7.
- **While overall proficiency rates were low, American Indian English learner students who were reclassified as English proficient within five years of kindergarten entry were more likely than students who were not reclassified to meet grade-level standards on the New Mexico state assessments in English language arts and math in grades 3 and 4.** Fewer than 10 percent of students who were not reclassified met grade-level standards on these assessments.
- **American Indian English learner students who attended a school with a bilingual multicultural education program (BMEP) for at least four years were reclassified as English proficient and met grade-level standards on the New Mexico state assessments in English language arts and math at higher rates than students who never attended a school with a BMEP.** Of students who attended a school with a BMEP for at least four years, 19 percent were reclassified as English proficient, compared with 12 percent of students who never attended a school with a BMEP during the five-year study period.

Low percentages of American Indian English learner students were reclassified as English proficient within five years of entering kindergarten in 2013/14 or 2014/15

Cumulative percent reclassified



Note: The sample included 1,375 American Indian students who were identified as English learner students at initial kindergarten entry in 2013/14 or 2014/15 (year 1).

Source: Authors’ analysis of data from the New Mexico Public Education Department.