

English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State

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Introduction

New York State defines English Language Learners (ELLs) as “pupils who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak a language other than English, and either understand or speak little or no English; or score below a designated level of proficiency on the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R)” (Tuite). Nationally, ELLs are the fastest growing segment of the student population comprising about 11% of public school students in the U.S. (a 6% increase since 1990). During the 2003-2004 school year, ELL services were provided to over 3.7 million students in the U.S. (National Council of Teachers of English).

New York City has the second largest population of ELLs in the country after Los Angeles. Fourteen percent of all New York City public school students are ELLs (Tuite). Table 1 shows the total enrollment of Hispanic students in New York City public schools, as well as the number of ELLs.

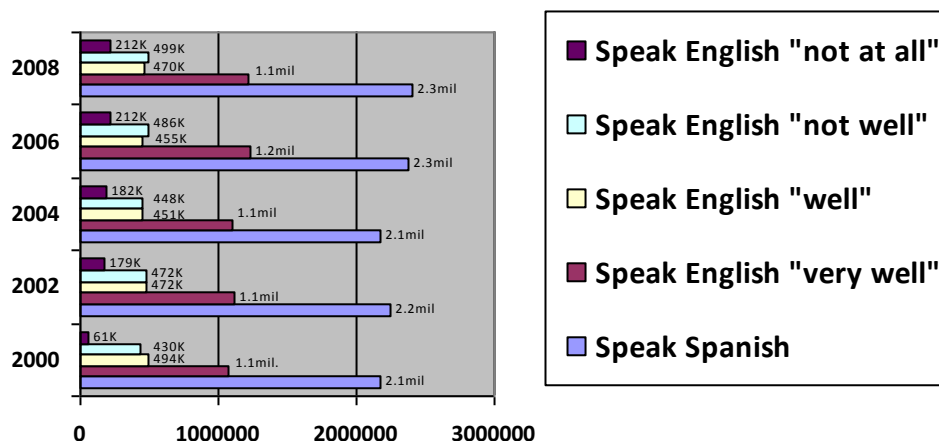
Table 1. Total Hispanic Population and ELLs in New York City Public Schools, 2008-2009

	TOTAL	% of TOTAL
Students of Hispanic Ethnicity	411,079	39%
English Language Learners (ELL)	146,249	14%
Total Student Population	1,043,427	

Source: New York City Department of Education, “Register,” <http://schools.nyc.gov/Common/Templates/MainTemplate/CommonMainTemplate.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID={0C22FCF8-57EF-4C65-A69D-DE6CCEC8EEFC}&NRORIGINALURL=%2fSchoolPortals%2f10%2fX397%2fAboutUs%2fStatistics%2fregister.htm&NRCACHEHINT=Guest> <Accessed December 2009>

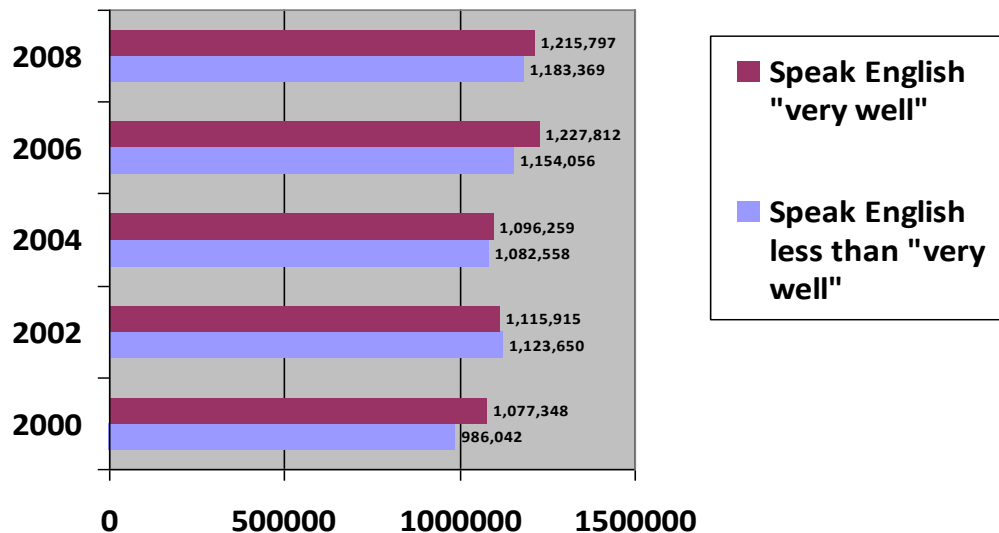
The U.S. Census Bureau collects data on ability to speak English by age and ethnicity. Figures 1 and 2 detail the English speaking ability for the Latino/Hispanic population over 5 years of age in New York State from 2000 to 2008.

Figure 1. Ability to Speak English by Latino/Hispanic Spanish Speaking Population Age 5-Years and Older, 2000-2008



Source: Author’s calculations from U.S. Census Bureau data. Figures for 2000 are from 2000 U.S. Census data. Figures for 2001 to 2008 are from the American Community Survey.

Figure 2. Latino/Hispanic Spanish Speaking Population Age 5-Years and Older Who Speak English “Very Well” and “Less Than Very Well,” 2000-2008



Source: Author’s calculations from U.S. Census Bureau data. Figures for 2000 are from 2000 U.S. Census data. Figures for 2001 to 2008 are from the American Community Survey.

The 2000 U.S. Census provides the most detailed information about ELLs in New York State. Below is a breakdown of English language ability of the Latino/Hispanic population 5 years and over by age. Between 2001 and 2008, the U.S. Census also provides general estimates of the Latino/Hispanic population 5 years and over and their English language ability. The figures for 2001-2008 are provided in the subsequent pages.

Table 2. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2000

Age and Ability to Speak English	TOTAL	% of TOTAL
5 to 17 yrs:	635,398	24%
Speak only English	156,398	5.9%
Speak Spanish	474,600	18%
Speak other languages	3,802	.14%
Speak English “very well”	316,857	12%
Speak English “well”	104,305	3.9%
Speak English “not well”	46,929	1.7%
Speak English “not at all”	10,311	.39%
18 to 64 yrs:	1,814,013	69.4%
Speak only English	238,193	9.1%
Speak Spanish	1,561,458	59.6%
Speak other languages	14,362	.54%
Speak English “very well”	724,844	27.7%
Speak English “well”	356,528	13.6%
Speak English “not well”	341,528	13.0%
Speak English “not at all”	152,896	5.8%
65 yrs and over:	166,152	7.6%
Speak only English	19,960	.76%
Speak Spanish	144,248	5.5%
Speak other languages	1,944	.07%
Speak English “very well”	35,647	1.4%
Speak English “well”	33,774	1.3%
Speak English “not well”	41,930	1.6%
Speak English “not at all”	34,841	1.3%
Total Latino Pop. 5 yrs and Over	2,615,563	

Source: Author’s calculations from 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data. The Latinos listed as speaking English “very well,” “well,” “not well,” or “not at all” also speak either Spanish or other languages (other languages include Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Island, and other languages as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau).

2001:

Table 3. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2001 Supplementary Survey Summary Tables

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	455,402
Speak Spanish:	2,167,038
Speak English "very well"	1,165,299
Speak English "well"	446,262
Speak English "not well"	372,139
Speak English "not at all"	183,338
Speak other language:	15,291
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	37.9%
TOTAL:	2,637,731
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2002:

Table 4. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2002 American Community Survey Summary Tables

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	481,281
Speak Spanish:	2,239,565
Speak English "very well"	1,115,915
Speak English "well"	472,092
Speak English "not well"	472,437
Speak English "not at all"	179,121
Speak other language:	11,908
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	41.1%
TOTAL	2,732,754
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2003:

Table 5. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2003 1-Year Estimates

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	484,918
Speak Spanish:	2,267,384
Speak English "very well"	1,091,750
Speak English "well"	500,620
Speak English "not well"	480,461
Speak English "not at all"	194,553
Speak other language:	12,692
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	42.5%
TOTAL	2,764,994
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2004:

Table 6. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2004 American Community Survey

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	541,321
Speak Spanish:	2,178,817
Speak English "very well"	1,096,259
Speak English "well"	451,129
Speak English "not well"	448,505
Speak English "not at all"	182,924
Speak other language:	11,439
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	39.6%
TOTAL	2,731,577
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2005:

Table 7. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2005 American Community Survey

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	489,779
Speak Spanish:	2,246,674
Speak English "very well"	1,162,589
Speak English "well"	447,795
Speak English "not well"	446,341
Speak English "not at all"	189,949
Speak other language:	15,722
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	39.4%
TOTAL	2,752,175
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2006:

Table 8. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2006 American Community Survey

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	475,144
Speak Spanish:	2,381,868
Speak English "very well"	1,227,812
Speak English "well"	455,306
Speak English "not well"	486,380
Speak English "not at all"	212,370
Speak other language:	14,716
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	40.1%
TOTAL	2,871,728
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2007:

Table 9. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2007 1-Year Estimates

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	499,031
Speak Spanish:	2,371,821
Speak English "very well"	1,200,830
Speak English "well"	464,270
Speak English "not well"	494,993
Speak English "not at all"	211,728
Speak other language:	12,991
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	40.6%
TOTAL	2,883,843
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

2008:

Table 10. Ability to Speak English for the Latino/Hispanic Population 5 Years and Over in New York State, 2008 1-Year Estimates

Language	TOTAL
Speak only English:	534,642
Speak Spanish:	2,399,166
Speak English "very well"	1,215,797
Speak English "well"	470,692
Speak English "not well"	499,971
Speak English "not at all"	212,706
Speak other language:	18,195
% of Spanish Speakers that Speak English Less than "Very Well"	40.1%
TOTAL	2,952,003
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.	

References:

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U.S. Census Bureau.