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Limited English Students Behind on High School Tests *Middle Grade Interventions Key To Narrowing Gap*

Executive Summary

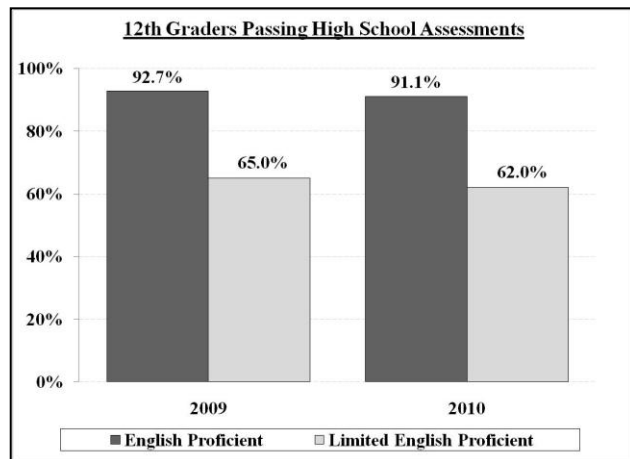
Achievement disparities between Limited English Proficient and English Proficient high schoolers in Maryland remain wide. Limited English Proficient students start high school behind and are unable to catch up by the time of graduation. Narrowing the gap requires interventions for struggling students, particularly in the middle grades.

Background

Maryland students must pass four High School Assessments, or pass three with a high enough combined score. This issue brief examines the recently released results for Limited English Proficient students for the 2009-10 school year.¹

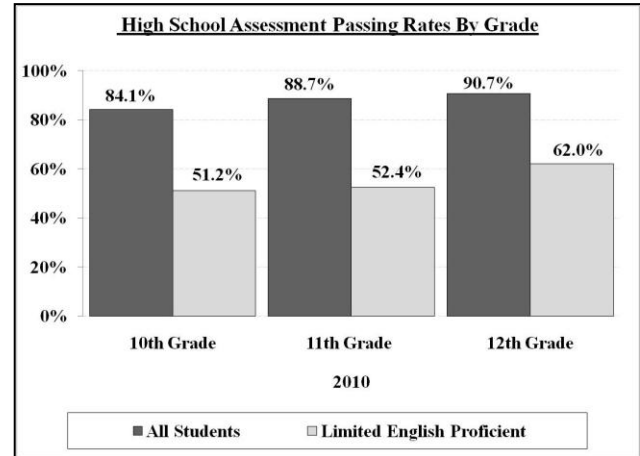
Findings

As reflected in the chart below, the disparity between Limited English Proficient and English Proficient remained large in 2010.



The disparity starts early with a substantial portion of Limited English Proficient students not meeting the HSA standard at the end of 10th grade.

¹ The State does not provide the percentage of students needing the combined score option. However, given the separate pass rates for each of the four tests, it is likely that a substantial percentage of students did not pass all four tests.



A significant percentage of Limited English Proficient students are allowed to meet the graduation requirement by completing “bridge” projects—22.1 percent vs. 8.6 for all students. The State also waived the graduation requirements for another 12.9 percent of Limited English Proficient students; whereas, the State waived only 0.5 percent of all students.

Discussion and Recommendation

The large disparity between the achievement of Limited English Proficient and English Proficient high schoolers is troubling, particularly considering the steady increase in the number of individuals who use English as a second language in Maryland.²

The fact that Limited English Proficient students are behind other students starting in 10th grade means that narrowing the achievement gap requires interventions for struggling students starting in the middle grades.

School districts receive extra state funding for each Limited English Proficient student, and the State needs to ensure that this funding is paying for interventions for these students.

² See U.S. Census, *American Community Survey Comparison Profile 2006-2009*.