

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**An Analysis of State Funding and Program Needs
For Limited English Proficiency Students**

Prepared

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Introduction

Students with Limited English proficiency (LEP) are widely recognized as having educational needs that require expenditures above and beyond the costs of regular education. This report has several purposes. First, it describes which states provide extra funds for educating LEP students. Second, it provides information on the method these states choose to provide those funds. Third, it provides an analysis of Maine's LEP funding; and lastly, it furnishes information on the length of time required for LEP students to compete with native speakers of English. A question and answer format has been chosen to provide this information to the reader.

Question 1: *How many states provide additional funding for students in bilingual and LEP programs?*

Answer: According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a significant majority of states¹ provide some type of additional funding for LEP or bilingual programs, above and beyond what is given for regular education. In fact, 35 states provide additional funding for bilingual and LEP students. Based on FY 1998-99 data, NCES reports that 16 states provide no supplemental funds for students in this category. Table 1 on page 2 provides a listing of states with some type of bilingual or LEP funding.

¹ Including the District of Columbia

Table 1: State Analysis

States with some type of Bilingual/LEP Funding (n=35)		
Alaska	Iowa	North Dakota
Arkansas	Kansas	Ohio
Arizona	Louisiana	Oklahoma
California	Maine	Rhode Island
Colorado	Maryland	Texas
Connecticut	Massachusetts	Utah
District of Columbia	Michigan	Vermont
Florida	Minnesota	Virginia
Georgia	New Mexico	Washington
Idaho	New York	West Virginia
Illinois	New Jersey	Wisconsin
	North Carolina	Wyoming

Source: Public School Finance Programs of the United States and Canada:
1998-1999

Question 2: *What type of funding do the states provide for LEP and bilingual education?*

Answer: Of the states that provide funding for bilingual and LEP programs, 12 states do so using per-pupil expenditure weighting. Students in those programs receive a higher funding weight, an amount above and beyond the per-pupil expenditure amount in the foundation program. Other states provide bilingual and LEP programs in other ways, such as through a fixed, flat amount per pupil. Table 2, shown on the next page, provides a listing of states that use per-pupil expenditure weighting and those that use other methods of funding.

Table 2: A Listing of States with Per-pupil Expenditure Weighting and other types of Funding for Bilingual and LEP Education

States with per-pupil expenditure weighting (n=12)	States with other types of Bilingual/LEP Funding (n=23)	
Arizona	Alaska	New Jersey
Colorado	Arkansas	North Carolina
Connecticut	California	North Dakota
District of Columbia	Georgia	Ohio
Florida	Idaho	Rhode Island
Iowa	Illinois	Utah
Kansas	Louisiana	Virginia
New Mexico	Maine	Washington
New York	Maryland	West Virginia
Oklahoma	Massachusetts	Wisconsin
Texas	Michigan	Wyoming
Vermont	Minnesota	

Source: Public School Finance Programs of the United States and Canada: 1998-1999

Question 3: *What are the per-pupil expenditure weights for states which use weights?*

Answer: Providing a separate per-pupil expenditure weights is a method that allows for quick comparison of educational costs in relation to other students. Twelve states have separate weights for their programs, ranging from 1.06 to 1.50. A listing of those states and their weightings is shown below in Table 3. Weights have been converted for three additional states to increase the data available for analysis on this issue. In all three cases, a weight was easily derived from the specific funding formulas. Massachusetts provides a separate per-pupil amount, while New Jersey and North Dakota provide a flat amount above the foundation amount.

**Table 3: Examples of Per-pupil Expenditure Weights
for State Bilingual and LEP Education**

State	Weight	Converted Weight ²
Arizona	1.06	
Colorado	1.1 or 1.2 ³	
Connecticut	1.1	
District of Columbia	1.4	
Florida	1.2	
Iowa	1.19	
Kansas	1.2	
Massachusetts		1.16-1.27 ⁴
New Jersey		1.13-1.16 ⁵
New Mexico	1.5	
New York	1.16	
North Dakota		1.1-1.16
Oklahoma	1.25	
Texas	1.1	
Vermont	1.2	

Question 4: *What are the different levels of funding for Maine LEP students?*

Answer: FY 2000-01 data provided by Maine school districts to the Maine Department of Education indicates that per-pupil expenditures vary according to the size of the school unit. Table 4, on page 5, presents the per-pupil LEP expenditures for these categories. With some exceptions, units with small numbers of LEP students have the greatest per-pupil costs.

² Weights have been calculated for selected states. In Massachusetts, for example, taking the bilingual amount, \$6550, and dividing it by the high school foundation amount, \$5,667, results in a calculated rate of 1.16.

³ Actual funded amounts are \$107 and \$120 resulting in a calculated weight of approximately 1.03.

⁴ From preliminary FY 2002 budget.

⁵ Bilingual cost factor of \$1,102; Foundation amounts: \$6,899 (Elem.), \$7,727 (Middle), and \$8,279 (HS).

Table 4: Level of LEP funding, according to the size of LEP population

Number of LEP Students	1 – 15 students	16 – 164 students	165 or more students
Per-pupil LEP Expenditure	\$3,062 ⁶	\$1,531	\$2,762

Question 5: *Are there any other factors, in addition to the size of the program, that contribute to the variance of per-pupil costs in Maine?*

Answer: The Maine Department of Education data analyses indicate that: (1) the number of languages spoken; and, (2) the percentage of LEP students that were refugees; do not contribute significantly to the variance of per-pupil costs, beyond what is already explainable as due to the number of students.

Question 6: *Based on Maine data, what would be the program weights for Maine schools if LEP per-pupil expenditures were converted to weights?*

Answer: Converting the LEP expenditures into weights results in three different weights based on the categories of program sizes that have been established. These are shown in Table 5, below. The size of the LEP pupil weight depends on the LEP per-pupil cost (discussed above) and also the overall per-pupil amount to which the pupil count will be applied.

Table 5: Converted weights for LEP funding⁷

Number of LEP Students	1 – 15 students	16 – 164 students	165 or more students
Based on Actual Per-pupil Operating Costs	1.6	1.3	1.5

⁶ Two school units, each with only one LEP student, were excluded from the analysis as outliers.

⁷ Based on FY 2000-01 data.

Question 7: *How long does it take for LEP students to be able to compete academically with native speakers of English?*

Answer: Overall, research studies have found that it takes between four and eight years for non-native speakers of English to successfully compete with native speakers of English. The majority (60-90%) of students in LEP programs successfully exit the programs within five years. More detailed information from recent studies appears in Appendix A.

Question 8: *What variables affect the length of time needed for LEP students to compete academically with native speakers of English?*

Answer: Data regarding the length of time a LEP student needs before they may compete academically with native speakers of English varies depending on student and classroom characteristics. For instance, the age that children enter LEP programs (usually referred to as “age of arrival”) has been shown to influence the length of time they need to compete with native speakers.

Question 9: *How does the age of arrival in LEP programs influence the length of time students need to compete with native speakers?*

Answer: Those children who begin LEP programs between the ages of eight and eleven spend an average of two to seven years in LEP programs, those children between the ages of four to seven spend an average of three to ten years, while children between the ages of twelve to fifteen, on average, spend the most time in LEP programs (six to eight years).

Question 10: *What affect does the type of instruction have on the length-of-residence in LEP programs?*

Answer: Finally, the research has shown that the length-of-residence in LEP programs is related to the type of instruction in the classroom. Students in classrooms with instruction only in English spend between three and ten years in such programs while those in classrooms with bilingual instruction take between four and seven years to successfully exit LEP programs.

Summary

A large majority of states, 35 in all, provide some type of additional funding to meet the unique educational needs of students with Limited English proficiency. States provide this funding in a variety of ways, with one of the most common ways being a per-pupil expenditure weighting. Twelve states have separate weights for their programs, ranging from 1.06 to 1.50. In Maine, LEP per-pupil expenditures vary according to the size of the school unit, and if expenditures were converted to weights, they would range from 1.3 to 1.6. According to a number of research studies, LEP students need between four and eight years in order to compete academically with native speakers of English. Studies have also found that both the age children enter LEP programs and the type of instruction they receive influence the length of residence in these programs.

References

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Appendix A

**Research Findings on Amount of Time Needed by LEP
Students to Compete with Native English Speakers**

Table 1: Fairfax County, Virginia Data 1987³

Age of Arrival	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
4-7	7-10 years
8-11	5-7 years
12-15	6-8 years
All age groups	4-8 years

Table 2: Collier Study 1987⁴

Age of Arrival	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
5-7	3-8 years
8-11	2-5 years
12-15	6-8 years

Table 3: Collier Report 1995⁵

Classroom type	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
English only classrooms	7-10 years
Bilingual teaching in all subject areas	4-7 years
2-3 years of experience with English in home country	5-7 years

Table 4: Avila Study 1997¹

	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
Students with no prior experience with English in home country	≅ 3 years for oral proficiency

Table 5: Hakuta et al. Study 2000⁷

Two San Francisco school districts	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
Oral proficiency	3-5 years
Academic proficiency	4-7 years

^a Academic proficiency is the ability to use language successfully in academic contexts.

Table 6: Monroe County, Florida Data 2001⁹

Classroom type	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
English-only classrooms	≅ 3 years
Bilingual classrooms	≅ 5 years

**Table 7: Marnie Study 2001⁹
Data Compiled from Separate Sources**

Location of study	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
Toronto, Canada (1981) ⁶	At least 5 years
Fairfax County, Virginia (1987) ³	At least 4-8 years
North York, Canada (1994) ⁸	At least 6 years

Table 8: Marnie Study 2001⁹

Selected California school districts (1989-1999)	Time needed to compete with native speakers of English
Los Angeles	≥ 5 years
San Francisco	≤ 5 years
Santa Ana (1999-2000)	≤ 5 years
San Diego	≥ 7 years

Table 9: New York City 1995¹⁰

Age of Entry in LEP Program in New York City⁷	Percentage of LEP students transitioning from LEP programs
Kindergarten	63.3%
First Grade	54.3%
Second Grade	37.9%
Third Grade	33.5%
Sixth Grade	15.0%
Ninth Grade	11.4%

Table 10: Washington State Study 2000⁶

Number of years in an LEP program	Percentage of LEP students transitioning from LEP programs by years in program during the 1999-2000 school year
< 1 year	5.4%
1-2 years	10.4%
2-3 years	14.2%
3-4 years	13.8%
4-5 years	13.8%
> 5 years	11.8%

Table 11: Washington State Study 2000⁶

Number of years in an LEP program	Percentage of students in LEP programs by number of years in program during the 1999-2000 school year
< 1 year	33.7%
1-2 years	23.8%
2-3 years	14.5%
3-4 years	10.4%
4-5 years	7.0%
> 5 years	10.5%

Table 12: Marnie Study 2001⁹

State	Percentage of LEP students transitioning from LEP programs within:	
	four years	five years^a
Arizona	49%	59%
Florida	66%	79%
Illinois	67%	86%
New Jersey	90%	b
Texas	57%	c
Washington	77%	87% ^d

^a Cumulative data.

^b Ten percent of New Jersey students with limited English proficiency who exited a program in school year 1998-99 had been enrolled in language assistance programs for 5 years or more. The percentage of students staying 5 years or less cannot be determined.

^c Data are based on a 5-year study of children with limited English proficiency enrolled in Texas public schools between 1992-93 and 1996-97. The percentage of students staying 5 years or less cannot be determined.

^d Washington reported that 14 percent of students spent more than 5 years in the program. These percentages do not total 100 because of rounding.

**Table 13: Available State Funding Policies
Regarding LEP Funding Limits¹¹**

State	Length of time LEP Funding is Provided
Colorado	Up to 2 years
Iowa	Up to 3 years
Maryland	In 1998, the 2 year cap was removed
Washington	Eligibility ends when a student scores \geq 35 th percentile in reading and language arts

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