ECS and National Experts Examine: State-level English language learner policies

Public schools in the United States are seeing more and more English language learners (ELLs) in their classrooms. Policymakers are committed to creating education systems that address the needs of this fast-growing population, but there are many challenges.

The Education Commission of the States gathered a panel of experts to solicit recommendations for improving state and federal ELL policies. These experts focused on five topic areas: finance, identification and reclassification, educator quality, pre-kindergarten services, and parent and family engagement.

Their policy recommendations are summarized in a new report, *ECS and National Experts Examine: State-level English language learner policies*. Additionally, ECS published a complementary 50-state database that provides an overview of ELL policies across the nation.

“Addressing the needs of English language learners has been a top education priority of mine,” said Nevada Gov. and ECS Chair Brian Sandoval. “The recommendations in this ECS report will help inform better policy decisions in key areas – such as teacher preparation and adequate funding – and ultimately improve academic performance of students learning English.”

Some important takeaways from this report:

- A panel of experts agreed that adequate funding levels by themselves do not lead to improved student performance; states, districts and schools must also strengthen their ELL programs and program capacity.
- ELL students benefit when states require teachers and administrators to be trained in ELL instruction methods and cultural competency.
- Monitoring current and former ELL students throughout their school career is a valuable way to analyze the efficacy of ELL programs.

“Pulling together national experts to formalize recommendations on ELL policies was very important to us,” said ECS President Jeremy Anderson. “We are thrilled to provide this report and the accompanying database and believe they provide state policy leaders with multiple and innovative ideas to improve education for ELL students.”

Tweet this ECS report!

- English language learners: ECS reports on state policy recommendations from national experts. [bit.ly/18Ih4TF](bit.ly/18Ih4TF) @ECScoms #ELL
- See recs on how to better support ELLs with improved state policy [bit.ly/18Ih4TF](bit.ly/18Ih4TF) @ECScoms #ELL
- Improving policy for ELLs is critical for success. New @ECScoms report gives insights. [bit.ly/18Ih4TF](bit.ly/18Ih4TF) #ELL

Related ECS resources that you’ll find useful:

- View this [ELL database](#) that contains information about policies for ELLs in all 50 states.
- Get a clear and detailed description of the three ways in which states finance ELLs
- ELLs are a fast-growing population – yet they remain largely underserved.
- Rural communities have had to rethink the best ways to teach English as a second language.

For questions, contact ECS Director of Communications Amy Skinner at askinner@ecs.org or (303) 299. 3609.

ECS was created by states, for states, in 1965. We track policy, translate research, provide unbiased advice and create opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another.