



Why Funding Matters for English Learners

In the 2021-2022 school year, [approximately 37,000](#) of Alabama's public school students had limited English proficiency. Of those, about 8,000 were first-year English learners (EL). The state received a score on the state report card of 43.56 out of 100 for progress in English language proficiency. Research shows that English-learning students need high-quality English language instruction to achieve greater language proficiency and perform better academically.

Funding matters for English-learning students because they require specific supports and services, such as additional EL teachers and translation services for students and their families, to ensure they are receiving the same quality education as their peers. Like all supplemental services, these supports require additional funding to implement. More funding for English learners ensures that schools can provide the resources these students need to thrive.

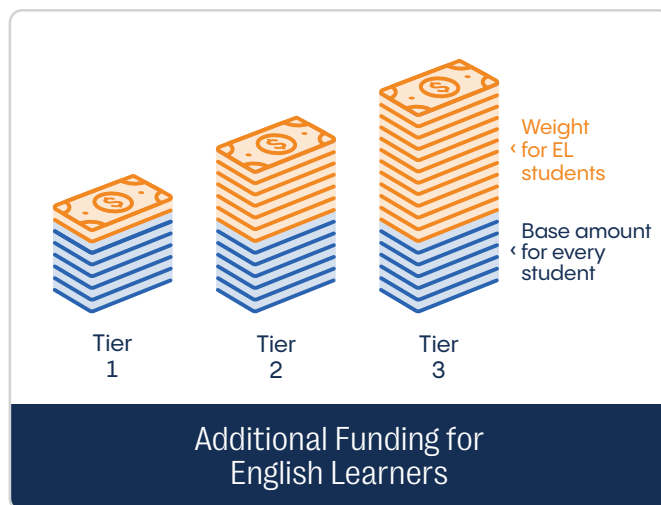
Student-Weighted Funding Formulas Matter for English Learners

Serving English-learning students presents unique challenges and requires more resources to meet student needs. Student-weighted funding formulas are a way to make sure that schools have enough money to help all students, no matter how much money their families have or what language they speak. Forty-one states use a student-weighted formula to give more money to schools that have more English learners.

A student-weighted formula would allocate a set amount to each district for each English learner they serve. This approach allows schools to provide intensive services for students, as well as support for their families to become effective partners in their child's education. This amount could be changed to respond to the needs of these students over time. In addition, having a clear amount set aside per student allows policymakers and the public to hold leaders accountable for how those funds are used for the students they are intended to benefit.

A New Funding Formula for Alabama Should Include:

- Tiered weights for all English-learning students on top of the base per-pupil funding amount.
- Tiers should increase for students with greater needs, based on:
 - The student's level of English proficiency, with more funding for students who are less proficient in English.
 - Grade level (recognizing that students in different grades may have more or less difficulty learning a new language).
 - The prevalence of their native language in the district.
 - The number of all English learners in the district, with a minimum funding amount for districts with fewer students to be able to provide a minimum level of services.



*Base amount is the same for every student

What Other States Are Doing

- [Louisiana](#) uses a weight of 22% for English learners.
- [Ohio](#) has multiple weights for English learners, including:
 - 21.04% for students learning English.
 - 15.77% for students who achieve advanced, accelerated, or proficient.
 - 10.53% for students who achieve advanced, accelerated, or proficient on the state's English language arts assessment in the previous two years.
- [Tennessee](#) recently passed a new funding formula with multiple weights for English learners, including three tiers for student weights (set at 20%, 60% and 70%) based on their English learner status, years of EL services, and scores on the state assessment for English-learning students.
- [Texas](#) has multiple weights for bilingual education, including:
 - 10% for students with limited English proficiency receiving bilingual education or special language programs.
 - An additional 5% (for a total of up to 15%) for students with limited English proficiency who are enrolled in a dual language immersion one-way or two-way program.
 - 5% for students who are not limited English proficient who are participating in a dual language immersion two-way program.

See a complete 50 state comparison of funding for English learners [here](#).

Additional Resources

- [Funding English Learner Education: Making the Most of Policy and Budget Levers](#), Migration Policy Institute, 2021
- [How Can School Finance Systems Support Students with Additional Learning Needs?](#) Bellwether, 2021