



District Analysis and Review Tools (DART)

User Guide for DART Detail: English Language Learners

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Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides a framework for both accountability and assistance for the 400 districts in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As part of that system, the Department seeks to make the data it receives from districts available to policymakers, parents, the public and the Department to use in assessing effectiveness and monitoring improvement in teaching and learning. From the vast amount of data available, reports offering comparisons and trends for a limited number of indicators can be a good starting point for self-assessment, inquiry, or district and school review. The Department has been developing a suite of tools called the [District Analysis and Review Tools \(DART\)](#) to provide such reports.

DARTs provide a snapshot of school and district trends in various kinds of data and allow users to:

- Look at trends over several years
- View school and district data in charts that are easy to interpret
- Evaluate and reflect on districts and schools and their progress
- Find comparable districts and schools based on demographic characteristics
- Make comparisons with a similar district(s) that has shown promising trends.

DART for Districts and *DART for Schools* provide data and trends charts on a wide range of indicators suggested by a number of stakeholder groups around the state. Taken together, these indicators offer a snapshot of a district's overall effectiveness across key areas including curriculum and instruction, leadership and governance, human resources, professional development, student support, and finance and asset management.

DART Detail tools support targeted inquiries in specific areas.

- *DART Detail: Success After High School* provides reports on secondary and postsecondary education, and career development data with trends and school comparisons. They include some data that has not previously been publicly available.
- *DART Detail: Staffing and Finance* provides reports on finance and staffing data with trends and district comparisons. They include some data that has not previously been publicly available.
- *DART Detail: English Language Learners* provides detailed information on English language learners in districts and their schools, including some data that has not previously been publicly available.

Overview of DART Tools

DART tools are Excel files on the Department’s website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/> (see below for detailed instructions on downloading and using them.)

DART Tools

DART Tool	Data included	Comparisons	Years
<i>DART for Districts</i>	Selected indicators on curriculum and instruction, leadership and governance, human resources, professional development, student support, and finance and asset management Included: all districts	Compare two districts and the state	5 years
<i>DART for Schools</i>	Selected indicators on curriculum and instruction, leadership and governance, human resources, professional development, student support Included: all schools and single school districts	Compare two schools and the state	5 years
<i>DART Detail: Staffing and Finance</i>	Overview reports—enrollment, performance, staff and finance highlights Staffing FTEs and student/staff ratios by category for all staff, by program area and by subject for teachers, by category for special education Finance data for per pupil expenditures, dollar expenditures, state aid, out-of-district, revolving funds, Chapter 70 program, tax levies Included: municipal and regional districts*	One district Compare eight districts Compare four districts and the state One district Compare four districts and the state	5 years 1 year 3 years 5 years 3 years
<i>DART Detail: Success After High School</i>	Selected indicators on high school indicators, high school performance, programs of study, postsecondary education outcomes, and career development education. Included: all schools containing grades 9 to 12	Compare two schools and the state	5 years
<i>DART Detail: English Language Learners</i>	Selected indicators specific to English language learner students and programming, including enrollment and demographics, curriculum and assessment, English language proficiency (MEPA), staffing, and federal grants. Included: all districts, including single school districts	Compare ten districts and the state, and all schools in one	Most recent 5 years

** Because comparable financial data is not available for charter schools, this DART does not include these districts, and the DART state-wide finance comparisons do not include charter data.*

Using DART files

Download DART files to your computer

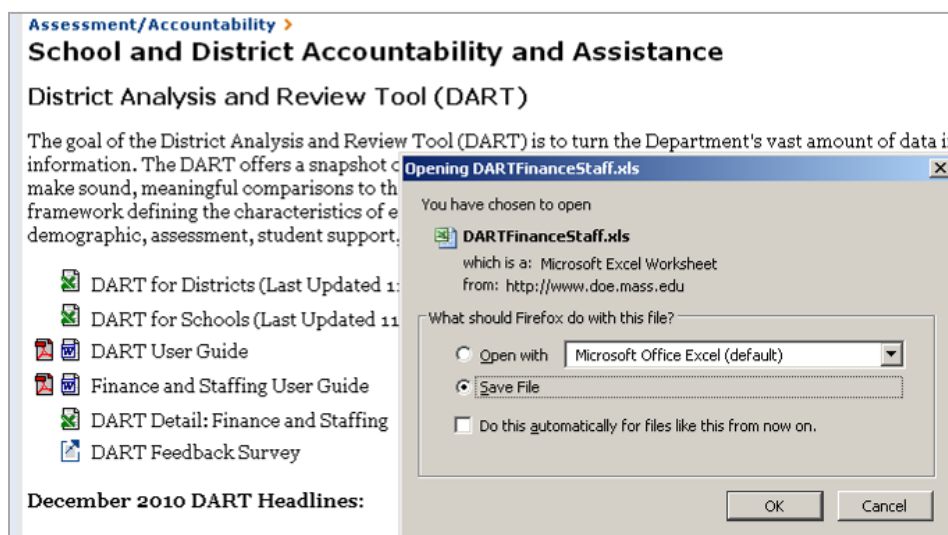
DART files work better if they are downloaded to your computer; *however, DARTs are updated periodically, so check the website and download new versions.*

DART files are very large and cannot be emailed. To share them, send a link to the website.

Note for Mac users: DARTs for Districts and Schools and DART Detail: English Language Learners have separate files for the Mac that will function better. The DART Detail: Staffing and Finance file works for both PCs and Macs, but Mac users cannot open this file directly from the website. Download it before opening it.

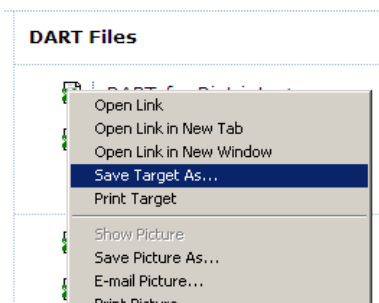
You can download the file two ways:

1) Go to the DART webpage—<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/>—and click on the Excel file icon for any DART. Select “Save File” and OK; choose a folder.



OR

2) Right-click on the download icon and select *Save Target As* or *Save Link As*, as shown below.



Select districts to populate DART reports with data

Once you have downloaded the file to your computer and opened it, you will see the Home page. To select a district or school, click on the first green box and make your selection from the dropdown menu. Note that throughout the DARTs, you may make selections to customize reports anywhere you see a green shaded area.

Screenshots used in this section are from DART for Districts. Other DART tools may look a little different but will function in the same way; for instance DART Detail: Staffing and Finance allows the user to select more comparison districts.

Click on the first green box and select a district from the dropdown list.

When you make a selection, a list of ten possible comparison districts will appear below, with the selected district in orange, and the highest performing of the other districts in blue. Highest performance is based on achievement and growth in ELA, math, and science / technology over the past four years.

		2012 District Assistance Level								
Malden		Level 3								
Select a comparable district										
<small>*Districts most similar to your district in terms of grade span, total enrollment, and special populations. Orange-shaded row: Your district Blue-shaded row: Highest performing of the other 10 districts in 2011 and 2012 .</small>										
Comparable Districts Overview	Grade span	2011-12 October Enrollment				2012 MCAS % Proficient or Higher			2012 MCAS Growth median SGP	
		Total Enrollment	Low Income	SPED	ELL	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math
Boston*	PK - 12	55,027	69.5	18.7	30.6	46%	40%	25%	45.0	52.0
Brockton*	PK - 12	16,162	70.8	12.8	20.1	49%	36%	29%	52.0	50.0
Chelsea*	PK - 12	5,692	78.1	12.3	18.1	44%	41%	26%	41.0	46.0
Chicopee*	PK - 12	7,844	59.5	16.8	4.1	60%	44%	32%	46.0	41.0
Everett*	PK - 12	6,371	76.1	15.6	12.2	55%	42%	24%	51.0	41.0
Lowell*	PK - 12	13,548	75.1	15.3	31.8	48%	44%	27%	48.0	55.0
Lynn*	PK - 12	13,731	82.4	16.5	19.6	50%	39%	34%	46.0	43.0
Malden*	PK - 12	6,572	62.6	14.2	16.3	58%	51%	44%	54.0	55.0
Pittsfield*	PK - 12	5,981	55.2	16.6	3.5	64%	54%	43%	45.0	43.0
Quincy*	PK - 12	9,236	46.5	15.5	12.8	68%	56%	54%	51.0	47.0
Revere*	PK - 12	6,519	74.9	16.0	11.0	61%	50%	48%	47.0	42.0

Select another district if you choose (or several districts in the *Staffing and Finance* tool.) You are not limited to the comparable districts.

Note: if a district seems to be missing from drop-down lists for comparison districts, go to the top of the list – it will be in the first ten districts which are from the comparison list.

Note: in the DART Detail: Success After High School all comparisons are on the school level.

The file may freeze for a moment while data is populated in all the reports (check for a message at the bottom left of the screen.)

You can go to various reports either by clicking on the links in the Table of Contents on the Home page;

Table of Contents	Resources
District Context	Aligned with District Standards and Indicators
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	User Guide
Achievement Gap	DART for Schools
Leadership, Human Resources, and Professional Development	DART Detail: English Language Learners
Student Support	DART Detail: Staffing and Finance
Finance and Asset Management	DART Webpage

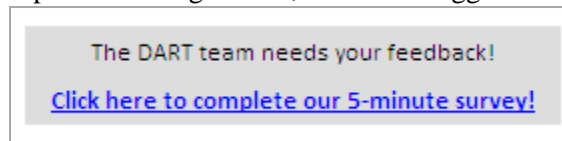
OR

by clicking on the worksheet tabs on the bottom of the screen.

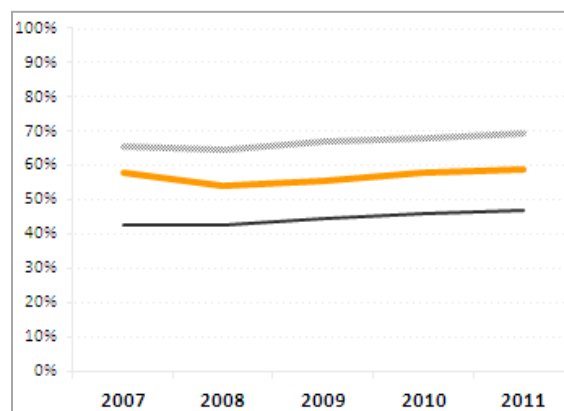
[Home](#) / [Context](#) / [HS_Indicators](#) / [HS_Performance](#) / [Program of Study](#) / [Postsecondary Outcomes](#) / [CareerDevelopment](#)

Links to additional resources, including other DART tools, are included.

Also on the Home page is a link to an anonymous, 5-minute [DART survey](#), where you can provide feedback to ESE about your experience using DART, and make suggestions for new indicators.



DART reports are designed to be as clear as possible. When charts are provided, the selected district is represented by an orange line, the Commonwealth by a gray line, and a comparable district by a dark charcoal line.



Print reports

Reports are formatted in 8.5" x 11" for easy printing to a desktop printer or to an Adobe pdf file. High quality black and white printing will also allow you to distinguish between the lines, but color prints are preferable.

If you want to share reports you've set up with others, print to Adobe Acrobat to create a pdf file. The DART file itself is too large to email.

Create your own reports using DART data

You can copy data from the DART and manipulate it in your own reports. However, you need to do the copying carefully because the DART has large hidden data sheets and formulas to populate the reports. If you just copy and paste, all cells will be linked to the DART file, and/or you will get zeroes and errors in each cell. You need to copy the data in such a way that it is no longer based on formulas and is not linked in any way to the DART file, as follows:

To copy and paste data cleanly from DART reports:

- Select all the data
- Copy and Paste Special into a new workbook
- Use Paste Special / Paste as **Values**
- Paste Special again, Paste as **Formats**
- Close the DART file and save your new file.

Warning about copying: *be sure to use Paste Special and paste as values.* If you just copy and paste, your new file will have cumbersome formulas linked to the original DART file and won't work well.

Use the RSS Feed for updates

You can sign up for notification of DART updates by subscribing to our RSS feed. On the DART home page there is an RSS icon just above the title bar. Click on the icon, then select the DART RSS feed from the list. When you click on it, you will be invited to subscribe.

Comparing similar districts and schools

While districts often compare themselves to neighbors, it may be useful to see whether similar districts or schools are struggling or succeeding in a variety of areas—districts from around the state may be relevant. When the user selects a district, DART tools generate a list of ten comparable districts based on enrollment characteristics. Districts are compared within their grade-span group (K-12, elementary, secondary, and vocational-technical/agricultural.) You are not limited to these districts in selecting a comparison district.

District comparison methodology details

The model used to select the 10 comparable districts in the *DART Detail: English Language Learners* is slightly different from the one used in the other DART tools. The *DART Detail: ELLs* selection formula was designed to identify districts that have similar demographic characteristics related specifically to English language learner students. This formula incorporates total enrollment, percentage of low-income students enrolled, percentage of ELL students enrolled, number of ELL students enrolled, and school type.

The *DART Detail: ELLs* district comparison function includes all districts in the Commonwealth, including single-school districts such as charters. Districts are assigned percentile ranks (1 to 99) based on their total enrollment, the percentage of low-income students enrolled, and the percentage of ELL students enrolled. Higher percentile ranks (closer to 99) indicate that the district enrolls more students or higher percentages of all students, low-income students, or ELL students relative to districts with lower percentiles (closer to 1). Districts are also categorized by district type: elementary, secondary, and K-12 grade-spans, which are also grouped by multiple and single school districts. In order to simplify the definition of district types, districts that serve elementary and middle school grades are classified as elementary districts, and districts that serve middle and high school grades are classified as secondary districts.

Finally, districts are also categorized by ELL incidence: None (no ELL students), Low (1 to 99 ELL students), moderate (100 to 985 ELL students), and high (986 or more ELL students). ELL incidence is incorporated in the comparison model to ensure that comparable districts serve relatively similar numbers of ELL students enrolled, not just percentages of ELL students enrolled.

The formula sums the absolute differences between percentiles from the selected district and other districts, and identifies the 10 districts with the smallest total differences. The comparison methodology minimizes the total absolute difference in total enrollment, low-income, and ELL percentiles from the selected district and also matches districts by district type and ELL incidence categories. Each district has a fixed comparison group in any given year, but the comparison groups are not static, meaning that districts comparable to a selected district will have their own comparison groups that may not completely overlap. Also, as the underlying data is updated annually, a district's comparison group may change slightly from one year to the next. It is important to note that the list of 10 comparables in the *DART Detail: ELLs* will not necessarily be the same as the list of 10 comparables in the other DART tools, because of the formula modifications to make more relevant comparisons in this area.

Considerations in Using DART Data

Remember: DARTs are a snapshot.

The DARTs provide a gauge of the overall condition of a district or school, but do not have all available information. They should be treated as a good starting point for exploring the data and identifying areas of focus for further inquiry. The ESE website, especially [School and District Profiles](#), provides additional detail and should be referenced for deeper analysis. Local data is a powerful addition tool for inquiry.

DART charts, when available, allow visual comparisons between local and state trends, but observed differences may not be statistically or educationally meaningful. For instance, annual change of about 2.5 points in CPI is potentially meaningful, but 10 SGP percentile points meets the same threshold. Users are cautioned to view the data provided in DARTs as a starting point for further investigation of relative differences and data outliers.

DART files do not automatically update.

About three times a year, new data become available and the DART excel files are updated and posted to the website. This means that files previously downloaded to local computers may not be current; they will *not* automatically update. Check the website periodically and download the newest files.

Considerations for Data Analysis

Districts put great effort into providing a lot of data to the Department, which is used for district self-assessment, Department reviews, legislative and grants reporting, public posting, and research. The data supports analysis and decision-making, but it is not perfect. Some healthy skepticism is appropriate when, for instance, there is a real outlier in the data. The data collection process is subject to difficulties of several kinds, including simple keying errors. Other factors that affect data include:

- Without being in error, district staff may interpret the Department's codes differently, so comparison at the detail level may make less sense than comparison at the subtotal level.
- When the Department requires a new data collection (e.g., EPIMS, course schedules), data is more inconsistent for the first year or two.
- Department coding is not perfectly aligned across different areas (e.g., staffing and finance.)

Ultimately, if data raises questions relevant to a decision-making process it is wise to follow up with other districts directly or to contact the Department for further information.

Contents of the DART Detail: English language learners (ELLs)

An ELL—or English language learner—student is defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as “a student whose first language is a language other than English *and* who is unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English.”¹ In this user guide, the term English language learner (ELL) is used in the place of Limited English Proficient (LEP), the term used in federal reporting, as these are considered interchangeable terms. Similarly, the term formerly English language learner (FELL) is used in the place of Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP), as they refer to the same group: students who exited ELL status within the last two school years.

The *DART Detail: English Language Learners* provides data specific to the English language learner population in a district, its schools, a comparable district, and the state. It may be used as a starting point in self-evaluation by a district of its successes and challenges in promoting the educational advancement of its English language learner students. The following sections include brief descriptions of each indicator as well as important considerations for examining the data. Note that some descriptive information is summarized from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, and users should refer to the website links listed in the footnotes for further information. Additionally, *DART Detail: ELLs* includes assessment data gathered from yearly administrations of the MCAS, MEPA, and ACCESS for ELLs examinations (see these sections for more detail). When considering MCAS test results, it is important to note that first-year ELL students are not included in MCAS performance level or CPI results. See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/lep.doc> for details.

¹ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=ell>

District and School Overview

This section provides demographic and performance information across the ten comparable districts or in the case of the school overview, across all schools within the selected district.

Enrollment

Source: [Student Information Management System \(SIMS\)](#)

The District Overview and School Overview each show the total number of enrolled students as well as subgroup enrollment (in percentages) for the following subgroups: students with disabilities who receive special education (SWD), students eligible for free and reduced lunch (low-income), students whose first language is not English (FLNE), and students who were formerly English language learners (FELL). All enrollment figures reflect those reported by districts in the October SIMS data collection.

ELL student to ESL teacher ratio (District overview only)

Sources: [SIMS](#) & [Educator Personnel Information Management System \(EPIMS\)](#)

The district overview displays the ELL student-to-ESL teacher ratio; a measure of the proportion ELL students served by each ESL teacher across the district. In this ratio, ELL student and ESL teacher counts reflect those reported by the district in the October SIMS and EPIMS data collections. ESL teacher FTEs referenced in this ratio include all instructional staff reported in EPIMS as having a job classification (WA07) of teacher (2305), co-teacher (2306), or support content instruction teacher (2310) and whose work assignment (WA08) is one of the following: non-secondary ESL (010), secondary level ESL (011), non-secondary content support ESL (014), or secondary content support ESL (020).

Users should note that ESL coding does not necessarily imply that these teachers have ESL certifications, although this may be likely. Certification information is collected through the Educator Licensing and Recruitment (ELAR) system and is not reported here.

ESL teacher FTE (School overview only)

Source: [EPIMS](#)

Using the same EPIMS parameters described in the ELL student-to-ESL teacher ratio above, this indicator displays the total number of ESL full time equivalents (FTEs) reported at the district and school levels. ELL programming decisions vary widely district to district, and this may be reflected in the allocation of resources between schools. For example, in some districts, ESL teachers are reported in EPIMS as attributed to a particular school or to the central office, but are deployed to several schools across the district as needed. In contrast, other districts host ELL programs at particular schools and assign ESL teachers there.

Sheltered content and Other Bilingual Teacher FTE (School Overview only)

Source: [EPIMS](#)

In addition to the ESL teacher FTEs, the School Overview also displays the number of teachers providing sheltered content instruction or other bilingual education instruction for ELL students. Sheltered content and other bilingual teacher FTEs include all instructional staff reported as having a job classification (WA07) of teacher (2305), co-teacher (2306), or support content instruction teacher (2310) *and* whose work assignment (WA08) is one of the following: Core Subject: Sheltered Content Teacher > or = 50% (009), Core Subject: Sheltered Content Teacher < 50% (019), or Core Subject: Other Bilingual Education (016).

The definition of a sheltered content teacher may vary district to district. Ideally, a sheltered content teacher is one who has received a series of sheltered content instruction professional development, also referred to as “Category trainings,” of which there are four defined modules. The four professional development “Category” modules are 1) second language learning and teaching, 2) sheltering content instruction, 3) assessment of speaking and listening, and 4) reading and writing in sheltered content classrooms.

Languages

Sources: [SIMS](#)

To collect information on students’ first languages (when English is not their native tongue), districts administer a [Home Language Survey](#)² to students and their families. Students reported to have a native language other than English are identified as First Language Not English (FLNE) students. It is important to note that not all FLNE students are identified as ELLs; only those who are unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English may be designated as ELL. The District and School Overviews display the first and second most commonly reported first languages among the *ELL students only*, not all FLNE students. In cases where the first or second most common language has the same enrollment, the data will display the languages in alphabetical order. In addition to the first two most commonly reported languages, the District and School Overviews provide the total number of native languages reported by the entire group of ELL students to give users a sense of the diversity of languages spoken by ELLs across the district or school. For the full list of languages reportable by a district, see Appendix C of the [SIMS data handbook](#)³.

Countries of origin for ELLs who are recent immigrants or U.S.A./Territories for ELLs who are not recent immigrants

Sources: [SIMS](#)

By the federal definition, a student is an immigrant if s/he was not born in the United States or its territories *and* s/he has not completed three full academic years of school in the U.S.A. or its territories. In short, this indicates that a student born in another country will only be considered an immigrant for the first three years in the U.S.A., and would no longer be considered an immigrant starting in the fourth year of schooling in this country, even if s/he is still classified as an English language learner. Therefore, for the first three years that a recent immigrant is reported in SIMS, that student will have their country of origin reported. Starting in her/his fourth year, that same student will be reported as U.S.A./Territories for country of origin.

Further, students who were born in Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands are not considered immigrants and

² <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/hlsurvey/>

³ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/DataHandbook.pdf>

their country of origin is reported as U.S.A./Territories. For more information on immigration status coding, see DOE022 in the SIMS data handbook; and for the full list of countries of origin reportable by a district, see Appendix B of the [SIMS data handbook](#).

Using the definitions above, the district and school overviews show the top two most commonly reported countries of origin for ELLs who are recent immigrants, and for ELL students who are not recent immigrants or who were never immigrants, U.S.A./Territories is displayed. In cases where the first or second most common country of origin has the same enrollment, the data will display the countries in alphabetical order.

Percentage of ELL students in Massachusetts schools for the 1st or 2nd year (Grades 2-12 only)

Sources: [SIMS](#)

This indicator is the percentage of ELL students in grades 2-12 who were first recorded in SIMS within the last two school years. It was created to provide educators with a sense of the proportion of ELL students who, within the last two years, may have entered the MA school system from another country, may have previously been enrolled in schools in another state, or may have previously been enrolled in non-public schools in MA. Only ELL students in grades 2-12 are included in this indicator. This is because, by definition, pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and first graders (not previously repeating a grade) will have been reported in SIMS for less than 3 years. Thus, if they were included, this indicator might be artificially inflated for districts with large groups of Pre-K, K, and grade 1 students.

Percentage of ELLs proficient on ACCESS for ELLs

Source: [Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners \(ACCESS for ELLs\)](#)

This indicator is the percentage of ELL students who attained proficiency on the ACCESS for ELLs. Proficiency is defined as students who achieved an overall composite level of 5.0 or above. Level 5.0 is meant to signal the point at which students generally become candidates to exit English language learner status. See section on Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) for more information on the levels.

Percentage of ELLs making progress on ACCESS for ELLs

Source: [Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners \(ACCESS for ELLs\)](#)

This indicator shows the progress of ELL students who were tested in the 2012 MEPA and the 2013 ACCESS for ELLs. The progress calculations were based on two scores: 1) the student's actual 2012 MEPA score, and 2) the estimated MEPA score the student would have received in 2013, based on an equivalent percentile linked to his or her ACCESS for ELLs score. After translating these two scores (2012 and 2013) into MEPA performance levels, Massachusetts determined, based on existing Step Approach Decision Rules, whether each student made progress along the continuum of MEPA performance levels from 2012 to 2013.

In 2014, the Department will have two consecutive years of ACCESS for ELLs test results on which to base progress determinations, and will propose new rules to US Department of Education for determining student progress along the six-level continuum of ACCESS for ELLs results, in consultation with WIDA technical staff.

ELL MCAS performance (Percent proficient or higher & median student growth percentile)

Source: [Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System \(MCAS\)](#)

For detailed information, see page 14.

Annual Snapshot

Student demographics

Source: [SIMS](#)

This section shows the percentage of ELL students by the type of ELL program in which they are enrolled, the grade span in which they are enrolled, and the other subgroups (i.e., students with disabilities, low-income, FLNE, race/ethnicity) by which they are reported. The tables also display the percentage of all students who are reported in each of these categories.

The first section shows the percentage of ELL students reported in each ELL programming category (i.e., Sheltered English Immersion, Two-way Bilingual, opt-out, other, and no program). Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) is the required program model for ELL students unless the student has received a waiver in accordance with Massachusetts law,⁴ or is enrolled in a two-way bilingual program. SEI programs incorporate both English as a second language (ESL; also known as English Language Development, or ELD) instruction and sheltered content instruction.

Next, the percentage of all students and percentage of ELLs in each grade span are shown. The grade spans defined here are PK, K-01, 02-05, 06-08, and 09-12, regardless of how schools are configured in a specific district.

The next section displays the percentage of all students and the percentage of ELLs that belong to other selected populations, including special education, the combined low-income group and its components (i.e., students eligible for reduced lunch and students eligible for free lunch), and students whose first language is not English (FLNE). These proportions provide information about the percentage of students that may experience a complex set of needs. For, example, one particularly important variable to consider is the percentage of ELL students that also receive special education services, given the potential for over- or under-representation of ELLs in the special needs population.

Finally, the percentage of all students and ELLs belonging to each racial/ethnic category are also displayed. The races/ethnicities reported here are the four most commonly reported: African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, and White.

Percentage of ELL students in Massachusetts schools for the 1st or 2nd year (by grade span)

Source: [SIMS](#)

This graph displays the percentage of ELL students in each grade span who were first reported in the SIMS data collection within the past two years. As noted previously, this indicator was designed to provide educators with a sense of the proportion of ELL students who, within the last two years, have entered the MA school system from other countries, other states, or from non-public schools in MA. This data provides an indication of the challenges a district may face in educating ELL students who recently

⁴ <http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71a>

entered the MA school system, and may have varying needs based on origin, age, and prior educational background.

Staffing

Source: [EPIMS](#)

This section provides full-time-equivalents (FTEs) for ELL-related personnel, including ELL directors, ESL teachers, sheltered content teachers, other bilingual education teachers, and ESL paraprofessionals. Overall, this snapshot of ELL-related staffing may provide a general picture of the staff available to serve the needs of the ELL student population across the district. Note that reporting practices vary district to district; therefore, this information may not completely reflect the staffing support available to ELL students, as it is contingent upon how a district codes the work assignments of its teachers.

The ELL director typically is an individual at the district level who coordinates and oversees programming for ELL students across the district. Not all districts have an ELL director or ELL coordinator position, as this may depend on available funding and/or district decision-making around leadership. For example, in some larger districts, Assistant Superintendents may serve as coordinator for ELL programming, but they will be coded as an Assistant Superintendent in the EPIMS system and thus would not be reflected in this category.

As described earlier in this user guide, an ESL teacher is an educator whose work assignment is listed as ESL-related (one of four available reporting categories). In addition to ESL teachers, this section also displays FTEs for teachers who shelter content and teachers who provide other bilingual education instruction to ELL students.

Finance

Source: [Title III Grant Reporting](#)

“No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students is a federal program that assists immigrant and [English language learner] students in achieving grade-level and graduation standards, as well as acquiring the English language.”⁵ Districts that serve a minimum of 100 ELL students are eligible to apply for Title III funding to support instruction and other supports for these students. Starting in the 2010-2011 school year, districts serving fewer than 100 ELL students were given the option to join with neighboring districts to form consortia. Each consortium that, as a whole, serves a minimum of 100 ELLs is eligible to apply for Title III funds. The Finance section displays the amount of Title III funding granted to each district in the most recent year of available data. For districts that are part of a consortium, their estimated per pupil allocation is shown.

Curriculum and MCAS

Users may filter this graph by any of the tested grades, as well as by years in the MA school system (i.e., all years, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, and 5 years or more).

Percentage of ELL students scoring proficient or higher in ELA and mathematics

Source: [MCAS](#)

MCAS tests are the standard assessments for all Massachusetts public schools students, including ELLs, in grades 3-8 and 10. MCAS tests are tied to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, and thus provide a good indicator of grade-level attainment in literacy and numeracy. The four reported MCAS

⁵ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/titleIII.html>

achievement levels for those taking the standard MCAS are *Warning/Failing*, *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*.⁶

The line graph displays the trends in the percentages of ELL students (not *all* students) whose MCAS scores reached *Proficient* or higher. The element includes ELL students who took the MCAS or MCAS alternative assessment and received a corresponding proficiency level. Users may filter this graph by any of the tested grades, as well as by years in the MA school system (i.e., all years, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, and 5 years or more).

ELL median student growth percentile (SGP) in ELA and mathematics

Source: [MCAS](#)

A student growth percentile (SGP) is a measure of student progress that compares changes in a student's MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of other students with similar achievement histories. The model establishes cohorts of students with similar performance profiles by identifying all students with the same (or very similar) MCAS scores in prior years. To report student growth at the subgroup, grade, school, or district level, the median student growth percentile is reported for that group. Student growth percentiles range from 1 to 99, where higher numbers represent relatively higher growth and lower numbers represent relatively lower growth. Because student growth percentiles are normative (they describe how each student changed relative to what was normal for their peers with similar scoring histories), the medians for all districts, schools, and subgroups are centered at 50. Therefore, statewide, an equal number of districts, schools, and subgroups will have median student growth percentiles above 50 and below 50, and this will be true even if achievement levels rise.⁷

The line graph displays the median SGP in ELA and mathematics for ELL students (not *all* students) in each year of available data starting from the first release of this data in 2008. The table lists the number of ELL students included in this calculation; at least 20 students must be included for a median SGP to be reported. Users may filter this graph by any of the tested grades, as well as by years in the MA school system (i.e., all years, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, and 5 years or more).

Median student growth percentiles describe how a school or district is *changing*, regardless of how well that school or district has been *achieving*. Median SGPs of less than 40 are unusually low, and those 60 and above are unusually high; these should be examined further. When examining year-to-year changes in median SGP, differences in medians of less than 10 points are not likely to be educationally meaningful. Therefore, a difference of 10 or more points between years warrants further investigation. Finally, SGP information for grade 10 is only available beginning in 2009 and should be interpreted differently given that it represents student growth from grade 8 to grade 10 (there is no grade 9 test).⁸

Percentage of ELL students averaging 2 or above on open response items

Source: [MCAS](#)

Open-response questions are included on all MCAS tests except the ELA Composition and require students to generate, rather than recognize, a response. Students create a one- or two-paragraph response in writing or create a chart, table, diagram, illustration, or graph, as appropriate. Students can respond correctly using a variety of strategies and approaches. Responses to open-response questions are scored

⁶ For the MCAS-Alt, the Performance Levels are *Portfolio Incomplete*, *Awareness*, *Emerging*, and *Progressing*.

⁷ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/StateReport.doc>

⁸ For more information on the growth model, download the Interpretive Guide at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/InterpretiveGuide.pdf>.

using a scoring guide for each question. The [scoring guides](#) indicate what knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to earn 1, 2, 3, or 4 points. Answers to open-response questions are not scored for spelling, punctuation, or grammar⁹.

The open response portion of the MCAS is an indication of students' information processing, their ability to comprehend a text, and their ability to effectively convey their thoughts through writing. However, since spelling, punctuation, and grammar are not taken into account, it is important to limit any inferences to a student's ability to convey thoughts, not a student's ability to write using all proper techniques and conventions.

The line graph and corresponding chart display the percentage of ELL students (not *all* students) whose open response items on the ELA and mathematics MCAS tests averaged a score of 2 or above. The chart also shows the number ELL students included in this calculation. Users may filter this graph by any of the tested grades, as well as by years in the MA school system (i.e., all years, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, and 5 years or more).

Percentage of ELL students scoring proficient or higher in science & technology / engineering

Source: [MCAS](#)

MCAS tests are the standard assessments for all Massachusetts public schools students, including ELLs, in grades 5, 8 and 10. Grade 10 Science & Technology/ Engineering (STE) results are reported based on students' best performance on any STE test taken in grade 9 or grade 10; only students continuously enrolled in Massachusetts public schools from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10 are included. The four reported MCAS achievement levels for those taking the standard MCAS are *Warning/Failing*, *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, and *Above Proficient/Advanced*.¹⁰

The line graph displays the trends in the percentages of ELL students (not *all* students) whose MCAS scores reached *Proficient* or higher. The element includes ELL students who took the MCAS or MCAS alternative assessment and received a corresponding achievement level.

Percentage of ELL high school graduates who completed MassCore

Source: End of Year [SIMS](#)

The line graph and chart display the percentages of ELL high school graduates (not *all* high school graduates) with a Competency Determination¹¹ who successfully completed the Massachusetts Core Curriculum, also known as MassCore.¹² MassCore is the recommended program of high school studies that includes four years of English, four years of Math, three years of a lab-based Science, three years of history, two years of the same foreign language, one year of an arts program and five additional "core" courses such as business education, health, and/or technology. MassCore also includes additional learning opportunities including AP classes, dual enrollment, a senior project, online courses for high school or college credit, and service or work-based learning. This data is not filterable by grades or years in the MA school system.

This element is useful in determining whether high school graduates who are ELLs have completed a rigorous course-load so that they are prepared to enroll in credit-bearing coursework in college.

⁹<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/overview.html?faq=2>

¹⁰ For the MCAS-Alt, the Performance Levels are *Portfolio Incomplete*, *Awareness*, *Emerging*, and *Progressing*.

¹¹ For more information on Competency Determination, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

¹² For more information on MassCore, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/masscore/>.

Percentage of ELL juniors/seniors enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course

Source: End of Year [SIMS](#)

The line graph and table display the percentage of ELL students (not *all* students) in grades 11 and 12 enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course each year. Along with the number of ELL students taking one or more AP course(s), the table shows the total number of enrolled juniors and seniors who are ELLs in the school or district (at the end of the school year). This data is not filterable by grades or years in the MA school system.

This element may indicate a district's or school's ability or commitment to provide Advanced Placement programming for their high school ELL student population.

Achievement Gaps

Source: [MCAS](#) & [SIMS](#)

Achievement gaps illustrate differences in Composite Performance Index (CPI) scores for ELA (at the top of the page) and mathematics (at the bottom of the page)¹³. The graphs allow comparisons of CPI trends in both subjects among three groups: ELL students, Formerly ELL (FELL) students, and non-ELL/non-FELL students in all tested grades. Six graphs allow users to view separately ELA and math for the target district, comparable district, and the state.

Limited English proficiency in combination with myriad other factors contribute to the ELA and math proficiency gaps often observed between ELLs and their peers who are not ELLs. To understand these proficiency gaps over time, users may compare the ELL students' CPI (in orange) to the other two groups' lines in each graph.

In addition to understanding the proficiency gap for ELLs, educators often wonder how ELL students perform on the MCAS after they have exited ELL status, as this may be an indication of how well an ELL program prepares ELL students to join mainstream classrooms, and how well it assesses the readiness of these students to exit status and succeed in mainstream classrooms. FELL students, defined as students who were previously reported as ELLs but have exited ELL status within the last two school years, are represented by the blue lines in the graphs. Users are encouraged to compare performance of the FELL group to that of the non-ELL/non-FELL peers, as in theory, once a student exits ELL status and becomes FELL, English language proficiency should no longer impede her/his ability to perform to the best of her/his academic ability on the assessment. Therefore, the distribution of MCAS scores for FELL students should be similar to that of their non-ELL/non-FELL peers.

A limitation of this comparison is that the non-ELL/non-FELL group of students may in fact contain students who were reported as ELL at some point in their previous educational history. However, a comparison of the FELL to the non-ELL/non-FELL group may help to identify districts serving similar populations that have achieved strong results with their mainstreamed, FELL students.

While achievement gaps are helpful in framing the challenges that districts and schools face, the ultimate goal is to lead all students to proficiency. Closing the gaps between groups is important, but secondary to the goal of having all students achieve at a proficient level, regardless of their group(s).

¹³ For more information on CPI, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/2011/schleadersguide.pdf>.

Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA)

Because of the new state ELP assessment, ACCESS for ELLs, this section is no longer updated, but will remain in DART for ELL for reference.

ELL students in grades K–12 are assessed annually to measure their *proficiency* in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English, as well as the *progress* they are making in learning English. ELL students participate in the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA),¹⁴ which consists of two separate parts. The MEPA-Reading/Writing (MEPA-R/W) is a written test that assesses reading and writing knowledge and skills. The Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) is an observational assessment that evaluates listening (comprehension) and speaking (production) skills in English. In 2009 the MEPA examination changed substantially, and performance on the MEPA tests has been reported since then according to an overall (combined) scaled score in the range of 400 to 550 and a performance level of 1 through 5. Data with a different scoring system from the earlier versions of MEPA (2008 and before) are not reported.

In this section, users may filter this graph by grade span (i.e., K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12) as well as by years in the MA school system (i.e., all years, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, and 5 years or more).

Percentage of ELL students scoring MEPA Level 1 or Level 2

Source: [MEPA](#)

This line graph displays the percentage of ELL students whose MEPA performance fell within the lower range of scores, Level 1 or Level 2.

This data element provides users with a sense of the proportion of ELLs who have the furthest to go in learning English, and the ability to filter by grade span and years in MA can be useful ways to examine the intricacies of this data. For example, one might expect lines on this graph to go down for ELL students who have been in the MA school system for many years, and vice versa.

Percentage of ELL students scoring proficient on MEPA

Source: [MEPA](#)

Between 2009 and 2012, attainment of English language proficiency has been defined as scoring at the midpoint of Level 4 or above. Students at the midpoint or above in Level 4, or at Level 5, are often considered for reclassification from ELL to FELL. The line graph displays the percentage of ELLs who attained English language proficiency on the MEPA examination by the definition above.

This data element provides information about how many students have reached higher level scores on the MEPA, which indicates that they may have sufficient English language skills to be considered for reclassification as an FELL.

¹⁴ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/mepa/>

Percentage of ELL students making progress on MEPA

Source: [MEPA](#)

This line graph displays the percentage of ELLs whose scores on the MEPA examination showed enough improvement to move students at least two levels within the same grade span or at least one level between grade spans, regardless of the starting MEPA level of students.

This data element is one indication of the pace of students' progression in acquiring English language skills. When examined in conjunction with other local content assessments specifically designed for measuring English language proficiency, this indicator, along with the others on this page, may provide an indication of the effectiveness of an English language learner program.

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs)

Federal and state laws require that English language learner (ELL) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English, as well as the progress they are making in learning English. In fulfillment of these laws, ELL students are required to participate in ACCESS for ELLs tests, which replace MEPA tests, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

Students at each proficiency level on ACCESS for ELLs

Source: [ACCESS](#)

This section provides ACCESS data broken out into four language domains (writing, reading, speaking, and listening) and several composite scores derived from a combination of weighted domain scale scores. Composite scores include an overall composite score, combining all four language domain scores, and three additional composite scores which combine two domains. The calculations for the composite domains are as follow:

- Overall Level, combining scale scores for Reading (35%), Writing (35%), Listening (15%) and Speaking (15%).
- Oral Language, combining equally weighted scale scores from Listening (50%) and Speaking (50%);
- Literacy, combining equally weighted scale scores from Reading (50%) and Writing (50%);
- Comprehension, combining scale scores for Listening (30%) and Reading (70%).

Scores are reported as one of six WIDA English Language proficiency levels which describe an English language learner's ability process, understand, produce or use English.

Level 1 - Entering: minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support

Level 2 - Beginning: some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support

Level 3 - Developing: some social English and specific academic language and visual and graphic support

Level 4 - Expanding: social English and some technical academic language

Level 5 - Bridging: social English and academic language with grade level material

Level 6 - Reaching: social English and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

The distribution bar graphs display the percentage of ELL students whose performance fell within each of the six performance levels for the four language domains and composite domains. A rule of thumb for interpreting these displays is that the larger the two darkest green sections to the right are, the more ELL students performed relatively well for that domain. One helpful aspect in breaking down ACCESS results by domain is that it allows users to examine performance on writing, reading, speaking, and listening for ELL students in one district, as compared to ELL students in a similar district, and across the state.

Note that results are shown for only students who completed all 4 sections of the tests.

MCAS/ACCESS Crosswalk

Source: [MCAS](#) & [ACCESS](#)

This table shows the numbers and percentages of ELL students in each ACCESS proficiency level (1-6) by MCAS achievement level (*Warning/Failing*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Proficient or Higher*). Also displayed are the numbers and percentages of ELL students, FELL students, non-ELL/non-FELL students, and all students by MCAS achievement level.

The top section of each table displays data for ELL students who completed both the ACCESS and the MCAS examinations in a given year. The bottom section includes students in each group that completed the MCAS test. Data are selectable by the three subject area: ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering for the targeted district, comparable district, and the state.

This data table provides information about the interaction between students' English language proficiency levels and students' performance on statewide standardized tests in ELA, mathematics, and science and technology / engineering. It allows users to make comparisons of the percentages of ELL students who score in each group, although users are cautioned to remember that the needs of diverse groups of ELL students may differ based on a number of factors, including age, grade level, immigration status, educational history, etc.

Student Support

ELL students' attendance rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

The measure displayed in this line graph is the ELL students' attendance rate, or the percentage representing the average number of students present each day divided by the average number of students enrolled each day. Research has shown that, when controlling for other factors associated with student performance, students who have higher attendance rates tend to perform better in school¹⁵.

¹⁵ Park, K.H., & Kerr, P.M. (1990). Determinants of academic performance: A multinomial logit approach. *Journal of Economic Education*, 21, 101-111; Romer, D. (1993). Do students go to class? Should they? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 7, 167-174.

ELL students' chronic absence rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

The next line graph shows trends in ELL students' chronic absence rate, defined as the percentage of ELL students absent more than 10% of their days enrolled. In addition to the attendance rate, this element provides an indication of the proportion of ELL students who are absent from the classroom for extended periods of time.

ELL students' stability rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

The stability rate¹⁶ displayed in this line graph is the percentage of ELL students who remained enrolled in the district during the course of a school year, divided by the total number of ELL students enrolled at the beginning of the year. This element provides an indication of mobility among ELL students, with higher percentages of ELL students stable throughout the school year being desirable. A limitation of this indicator is that it does not provide information regarding between-year mobility for ELL students.

Percentage of ELL students suspended out-of-school at least once

Source: [SIMS](#) and School Safety and Discipline Report ([SSDR](#))

This line graph shows the percentage of enrolled ELL students in grades 1 to 12 who received one or more out-of-school suspensions. A limitation of this indicator is that it is the *number of students* and not the *number of incidents*, nor does it indicate how severe those incidents were. All school suspensions are counted equally, regardless of how severe the infraction. Because the measure looks at the number of students suspended and not the number of times a student was suspended, students who were suspended multiple times count the same as students who were suspended only once.

Percentage of ELL students suspended in-school at least once

Source: End of Year [SIMS](#)

This line graph displays the percentage of ELL students in grades 1 to 12 who received one or more in-school suspensions. Similar to the out-of-school suspension rate, this indicator reflects the number of students who were suspended in-school at least once during the school year, but it does not give information about the number or severity of incidents per student.

ELL students' retention rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

The retention rate¹⁷ displayed in this line graph is the percentage of ELL students in grades K-12 retained in a grade in which they were enrolled during the previous school year. When considering this data element, it is important to consider the complex set of circumstances that ELL students experience that may contribute to the inability to be promoted to the next grade level.

¹⁶ For more information on the stability rate, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/mobility/>.

¹⁷ For more information on retention rates, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/retention/>.

ELL students' annual dropout rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

A dropout rate is the frequency that a dropout occurs within a defined population. ESE calculates the annual dropout rate as the number of students who drop out of school over a one-year period, minus the number of returned dropouts, divided by the October 1st grade 9 through 12 enrollment, and multiplied by 100¹⁸. The line graph displays the annual dropout rate for ELL students in the district.

ELL Students' 4-year cohort graduation rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

The 4-year cohort graduation rate displayed in the line graph reflects the percentage of a cohort of ELL students entering grade 9 in the same year who graduated within a four-year (or shorter) span of time, starting from the year in which they entered grade 9. To compare the annual dropout rate and cohort graduation rate calculations, see the ESE website¹⁹. This element may be indicative of the culture within a school or district, and perhaps the district's or school's ability to intervene with at-risk ELL students.

ELL Students' 5-year cohort graduation rate

Source: [SIMS](#)

The five-year cohort graduation rate displayed in the line graph reflects the percent of a cohort of ELL students entering grade 9 in the same year who graduated within a five-year span of time, starting from the year in which they entered grade 9. This indicator adds an additional dimension to the four-year cohort graduation rate by combining the number of a cohort of ELL students graduating on time (in four years or less) with the number of the same cohort of ELL students who graduated one year later (i.e., within 5 years of beginning grade 9).

¹⁸ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/dropout/>

¹⁹ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/dropoutvsgrad.html>