



## **STUDY FINDS ACADEMIC BENEFITS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO TRANSITION INTO MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS**

*Nearly thirty percent of Los Angeles Unified School District students aren't reclassified by the 8th grade, according to USC-based Tomás Rivera Policy Institute*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Los Angeles, CA** - Nearly 30 percent of Los Angeles Unified School District students placed in English language learning programs are not reclassified as proficient by the end of middle school, according to a report released today by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute at the University of Southern California.

The study – *¿Qué Pasa?: Are English Language Learning Students Remaining in English Learning Classes Too Long?* details the value of redesignating students as fluent English proficient. Researchers found that reclassification as late as the eighth grade is associated with improved academic outcomes when compared to students who remain in the English language learning (ELL) programs.

The findings have national significance because LAUSD is the nation's second largest school district with substantial numbers of English language learners. The study is also unique because it is based on thousands of student records and seven years of data. Most other studies into the subject take just a snapshot of student outcomes within a short time frame.

The study's authors are: Edward Flores, a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at USC; Gary Painter, a professor at the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development; and Harry Pachon, president of the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) and a professor at the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development.

Data for this report was gathered by following and analyzing an entire cohort of non-special education students who started out as sixth graders in 1999 (N=28,714) and who would have graduated in 2005. Of those students, 65 percent were in ELL classes during one point of their schooling.

Researchers determined that about three-fourths of the students who were English language learners entering the 9th grade had been in U.S. schools eight years or more, and 29.1 percent were still in ELL programs by the beginning of freshman year in high school.

Students who were able to transition into mainstream English classes demonstrated a reduced likelihood of dropping out of school, and higher likelihood of passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and taking advanced placement (AP) courses, according to the study.

Reclassification by 5th grade was associated with SAT9 reading scores that were 10 points higher than those who remained in ELL classes. Students who were reclassified as late as 8th grade as "proficient" in English were also more likely to pass their classes and continue in school than the students who stayed in ELL classes, according to the study.

“Implementation of ELL programs needs to be evaluated and improved.” said Dr. Harry Pachon, President of TRPI and professor of public policy at USC. “Latino parents want their children to learn English...parents know that full English fluency increases their children’s ability to attend college and to have rewarding careers.”

In LAUSD, 69.1 percent of students who have been classified at some point of their schooling as English language learners are native born U.S. citizens. “Surprisingly, we have American children outnumbering foreign born students by a ratio of about 2:1 in English language learning” said Edward Flores, TRPI researcher who worked on the study.

The following data illustrates the challenge that school districts across the nation face in effectively educating limited English speaking students. Nationally, there are more than 5 million students designated as ELL.

#### Reclassification Rates of LAUSD English Language Learner Students

Grade of Reclassification	Percent
3rd grade	4.6%
4th grade	8.9%
5th grade	28.6%
6th grade	13.4%
7th grade	7.2%
8th grade	8.1%
Not reclassified by the 8th grade	29.1%
Total	100.0%

Source: TRPI analysis of LAUSD official records  
Note: Only includes non-special education students

For a copy of the report, go to [www.trpi.org](http://www.trpi.org)

To arrange interviews with researchers:  
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The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute is an independent non-partisan policy research organization affiliated with the School of Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Southern California. TRPI specializes in the key issues affecting Latinos, including technology, education, political participation, access to healthcare, economic well being, mass media, and immigration. For more information: <http://www.trpi.org/>

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