



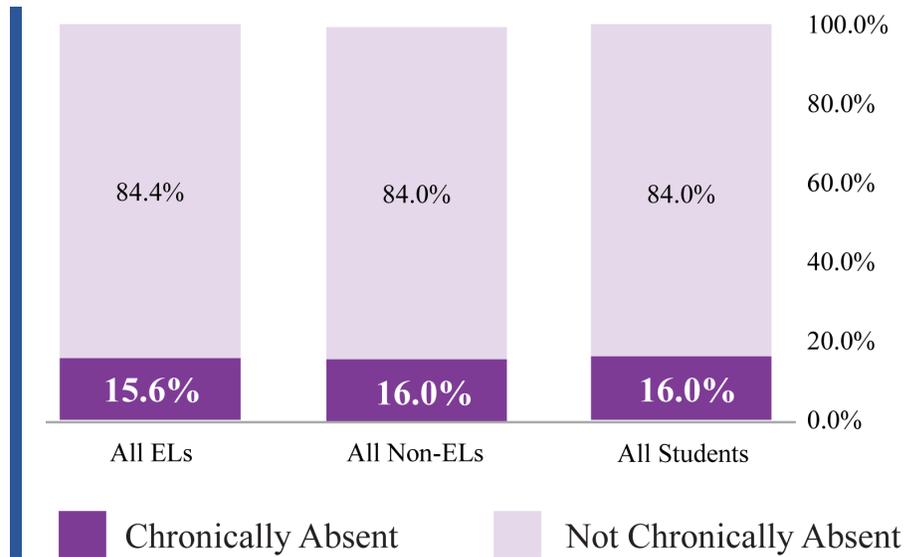
Office of English Language Acquisition

English Learner Absenteeism, Suspension, and Retention

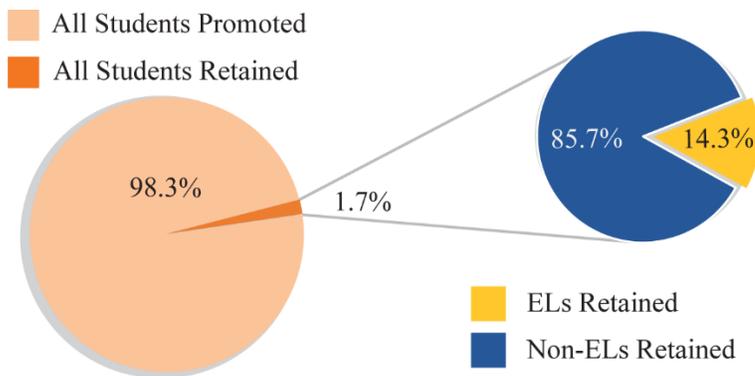
The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a biennial survey required by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights since 1968. This survey measures factors that impact education equity and opportunity for students, including student access to courses, programs, resources, instructional and other staff — and school climate factors. Using CRDC data,¹ this fact sheet explores English learner (EL) chronic student absenteeism,² student retention,³ and out-of-school⁴ student suspension.

Percentage of K–12 Students Who Were Chronically Absent by English Learner Status: School Year 2017–18

Students who are chronically absent—meaning they missed at least 10% of the school year—are at serious risk of falling behind in school. Since the school year (SY) 2015–16, the percentage of chronically absent ELs has increased by more than two percentage points⁵ (from 13.4% to 15.6%) whereas the percentage of chronically absent non-ELs and all students has remained the same (16.0%). In SY 2017–18 almost one in six ELs were reported to be chronically absent.



Percentage of K–12 Students Who Were Promoted and Retained by English Learner Status: School Year 2017–18



Out of all students in grades K–12, 1.7% were retained in SY 2017–18.

ELs were overrepresented among the retained students. While ELs make up about 10% of the K–12 student population, they represented 14.3% of all retained students in SY 2017–18.

¹ Beginning in SY 2016–17, the Department of Education began collecting student chronic absenteeism data through the ED*Facts* collection.

² Chronic absenteeism includes all students in kindergarten through grade 12, and comparable ungraded levels, who were enrolled in the school for at least 10 school days at any time during the school year, and who were absent 10% of the school days in the school in which they were enrolled.

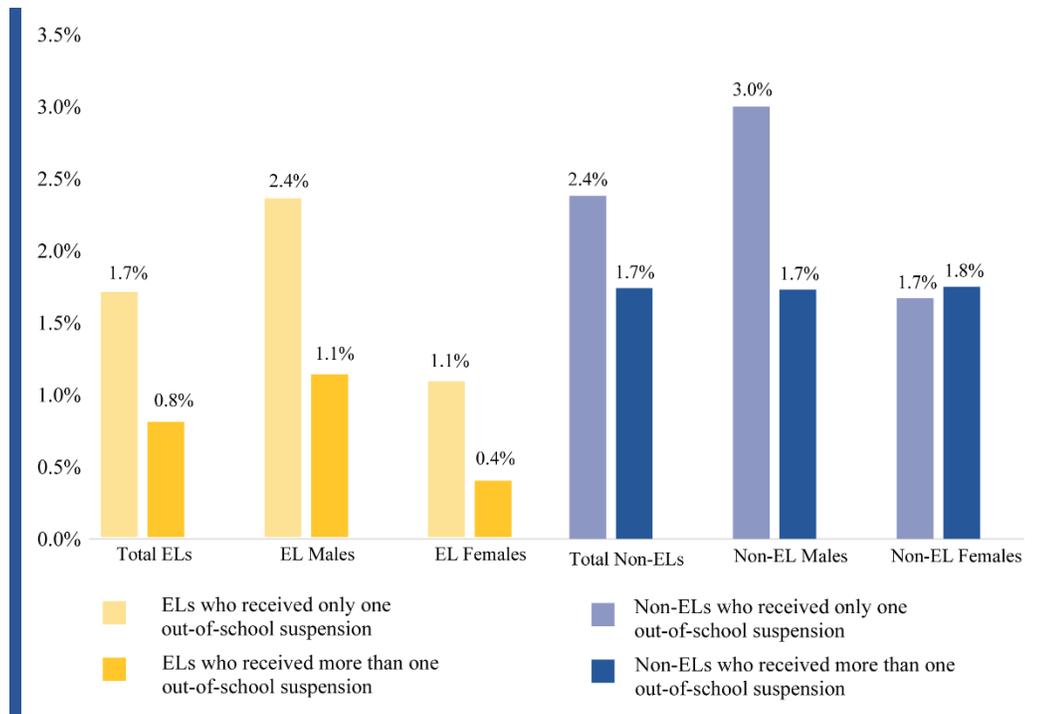
³ A student is retained if he or she is not promoted to the next grade prior to the beginning of the following school year. Students are not considered retained if they can proceed to the next grade because they successfully completed a summer school program or for a similar reason.

⁴ For students without disabilities and students with disabilities served solely under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: Out-of-school suspension is an instance in which a child is temporarily removed from his/her regular school for at least half a day (but less than the remainder of the school year) for disciplinary purposes to another setting (e.g., home, behavior center). Out-of-school suspensions include removals in which no educational services are provided, and removals in which educational services are provided (e.g., school-provided at home instruction or tutoring).

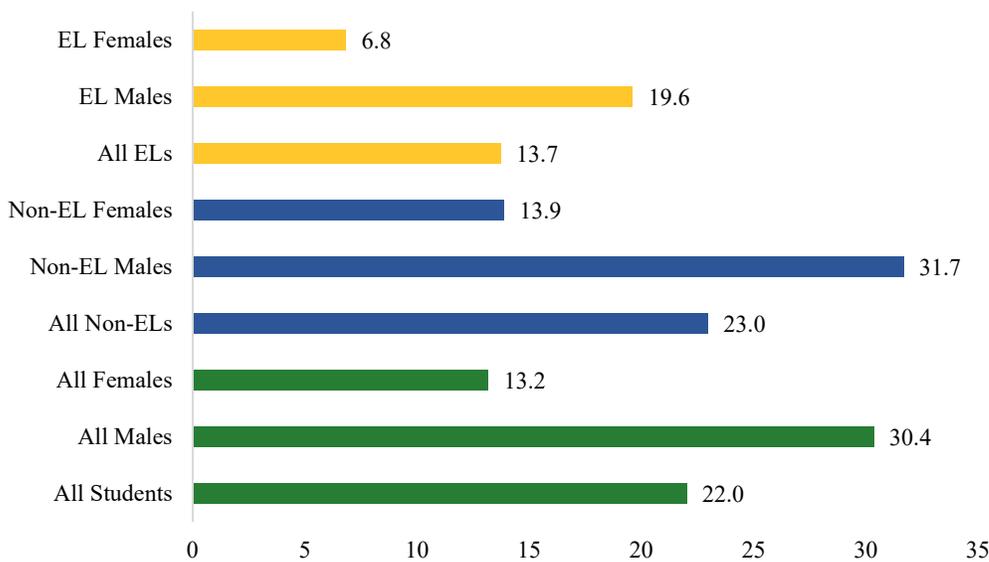
⁵ Information from U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015–16, retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2015-16.html>

Percentage of K–12 Students Who Received Out-of-School Suspensions by Gender and English Learner Status: School Year 2017–18

From SY 2015–16 to SY 2017–18, there was an overall 2% decline in the use of exclusionary discipline practices, such as one or more out-of-school suspensions in public schools in the U.S.⁶ In SY 2017–18, ELs received out-of-school suspensions at slightly lower rates than non-ELs, with 2.4% of non-ELs receiving one out-of-school suspension versus 1.7% of ELs. Both non-EL and EL females received out-of-school suspensions at lower rates than males.



Days of Instruction Lost per 100 K–12 Students Due to Out-of-School Suspensions by Gender and English Learner Status: School Year 2017–18



In SY 2017–18, ELs lost fewer days of classroom instruction per 100 students due to out-of-school suspensions than non-ELs (13.7 days vs. 23 days).⁷ When compared to all students, ELs also lost fewer school days due to out-of-school suspensions. EL males lost an average of 19.6 days of instruction, while EL females lost 6.8 days of instruction.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2017–18, retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2017-18.html>

⁶ U.S. Education Department, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2017-18 State and National Estimations, released June 2021, available at <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/estimations/2017-2018>.

⁷ Author calculations: For days of instruction lost, in order to enable comparisons despite enrollment differences for each subgroup, the total number of days lost are divided by enrollment and multiplied by 100 to provide the days lost per 100 students enrolled. The number of days lost represent school days missed due to out-of-school suspension.