

Multilingual Learner Student Performance

The academic achievement of multilingual learners^A in Connecticut is assessed in multiple forms throughout their school experience. While a deeper analysis must be conducted in order to have a fuller picture of multilingual learner achievement, data analyzed for this overview shows a large gap exists between achievement levels for multilingual learners and their non-multilingual learner peers on statewide assessments.

Historically, Connecticut's multilingual learner students have underperformed on statewide assessments compared to their non-multilingual learner peers, and have routinely fallen short of meeting or exceeding proficiency standards. Currently, only 15 percent of multilingual learner students in Connecticut are meeting or exceeding proficiency based on assessments such as the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) Links, which assesses a multilingual learner's English Language Proficiency (ELP).¹

While there has been a steady increase in the number of multilingual learners in Connecticut graduating high school,² given the available performance and achievement data, it is not clear if the State is actually preparing these graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare them for life, college, and career post-graduation. Given the disparities in achievement between multilingual learners and non-multilingual learners, and the general trends of multilingual learner performance and achievement, a closer look at what resources may be needed in order to bridge the gap in achievement is needed.

Assessments and Achievements

In Connecticut there are various means used to assess achievement and growth in learning for multilingual learner students. Currently, multilingual learners in Connecticut are assessed using a number of different tests and methods, including:

- LAS Links
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

The table on the following page summarizes these assessments, how they are measured, and recent multilingual learner student performance on each one.

^A Multilingual learners are also commonly referred to as English Learners or English Language Learners.

Connecticut Assessments for Multilingual Learners and Recent Performance

	LAS Links ³	SBAC	NGSS	SAT
Description of Assessment	LAS Links is an annual assessment given to all students identified as multilingual learners based on their proficiency level in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	SBAC is a summative English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessment given to all students between elementary and middle school. This assessment is used to show a student's achievement and growth in learning. ⁴	NGSS assessments is a state assessment aligned with the NGSS and given to all students in certain grades. Students may take the NGSS or the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment. ⁵	The SAT is an assessment used as an entrance exam for many colleges as well as a way to measure the readiness of a high school student for college. ⁶
Grades of Assessments	K-12	3-8	5 th , 8 th , and 11 th	11 th and 12 th
How Assessments are Scored	Proficiency is gained once a student attains a proficiency level of 4 or 5 in their overall reading and writing scores, with 5 being the highest level of proficiency.	Assessments are scored based on a scale that is divided into four quartiles with the fourth quartile being the highest level of achievement. ⁷	The NGSS score ranges differ based on grade level and scores, while the CTAS is presented in a raw score range. Both tests are then shared on a standardized scale leveled 1 through 4, with level 4 meaning exceeding achievement standards. ⁸	The SAT is scored on a scale of 1600. ⁹
Student Performance	Since 2015-16, 9 districts have seen an increase in multilingual learner scores, 83 districts have seen a decrease in scores, and 103 districts have	From the 2015-16 to 2023-24 school years: ELA 21 districts reported increased proficiency for multilingual	Statewide, 9.9% of multilingual learners met or exceeded the NGSS proficiency standards compared to 52.7% of their	In the 2018-19 school year, multilingual learners reported an average ELA SAT score of 332 and an average Math SAT score of 356. (Each

	LAS Links ³	SBAC	NGSS	SAT
	suppressed data.	<p>learners, 25 reported decreased proficiency. Statewide, multilingual learner proficiency increased from 10.7 to 11 percent.</p> <p><u>Math</u> 35 districts reported increased proficiency for multilingual learners, 16 reported decreased proficiency. Statewide, multilingual learner proficiency increased from 9.6 to 13.7 percent.¹⁰</p> <p><i>There is only one district (Achievement First Bridgeport Academy) where multilingual learners are meeting or exceeding proficiency in ELA or Math at the same levels as their non-multilingual learner peers.¹¹</i></p>	<p>non-multilingual learner peers.¹²</p> <p>Since testing began in the 2018-19 school year, 7 districts have reported increased multilingual learner proficiency and 12 have reported decreased proficiency.¹³</p>	<p>section is worth 800 total points.)</p> <p>This means the average aggregate score for multilingual learners was 688 out of 1600.</p>

Endnotes

¹ Analysis by the School and State Finance Project.

² Connecticut State Department of Education. (2020, May 27). *Connecticut State Department of Education Announces Graduation Rates Show Continued Improvement* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Press-Room/Press-Releases/2020/Connecticut-State-Department-of-Education-Announces-Graduation-Rates-Show-Continued-Improvement>.

³ Villegas, L., & Pompa, D. (2020). *The Patchy Landscape of State English Learner Policies under ESSA*. Washington DC: The Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESSA-Compendium-Final.pdf>

⁴ Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). Find Information about Smarter Balanced. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Student-Assessment/Smarter-Balanced/Find-Information-about-Smarter-Balanced>.

⁵ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2022). *Connecticut Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments: Interpretive Guide, 2022 Test Administration*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Student-Assessment/NGSS-Science/2022-NGSS-Interpretive-Guide.pdf>.

⁶ The Princeton Review. (n.d.). What is the SAT? Retrieved from <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-information>.

⁷ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2021). *Connecticut Smarter Balanced Assessments for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics: 2021 Interpretive Guide*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Student-Assessment/Smarter-Balanced/Interpretive_Guide_2021-9-20-21.pdf.

⁸ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2022). *Connecticut Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments: Interpretive Guide, 2022 Test Administration*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Student-Assessment/NGSS-Science/2022-NGSS-Interpretive-Guide.pdf>.

⁹ The Princeton Review. (n.d.). What is the SAT? Retrieved from <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-information>.

¹⁰ Analysis by the School and State Finance Project.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.