

# Virginia Can Choose to Break Down Barriers for English Learners

## English learners are diverse and live in communities across the commonwealth

A wide variety of schools across the state have high shares of English learners. For example, 15% of Accomack County's and Richmond City's students are English Learners, as well as 11% in Charlottesville.

Around 25% of Virginia public school students who speak English less than "very well" speak an Asian language, including Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, Korean, and Vietnamese, according to 2019 Census data.

## English learners are behind their peers in Virginia and other states

Virginia ranks 32nd out of 46 states plus DC for average 4th grade reading scores for English learners according to new NAEP data. For other students, we're close to the national average.

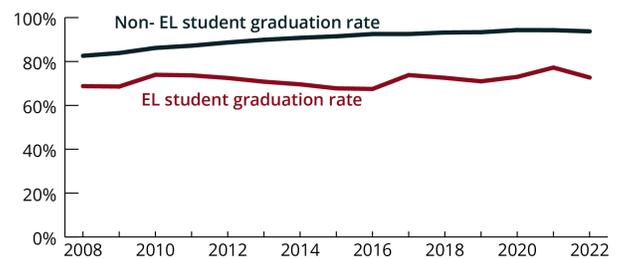
EL students saw the largest percentage drop of any student groups in reading, math and science exams on state SOLs between 2019 and 2021.

## Policymakers can improve educational opportunities for English learners

**Implement the Board of Education's recommended teacher ratios (included in HB2111 & SB1325):** Boosting funding for local communities for instructors for English learners through implementing the Board-recommended Standards of Quality (SOQs) will reduce class sizes, increase retention, and help students succeed.

### Diverging Paths: Graduation Rates Improved for Non-English Learner Students, Remain Stagnant for EL Students

Public high school 4-year cohort graduation rate



Source: TCI analysis of Virginia Department of Education data



**Incentivize teachers to obtain EL credentials (HB1824 & SB1118):** Creating an incentive program for obtaining an endorsement in English as a second language, similar to Virginia's existing National Board Certification incentives, would boost the number of Virginia teachers who have the skills to help EL students succeed.

**Expand access to college & career readiness programs for EL students (HB1823 & SB1109):** Providing supports for EL students enrolling in CTE & apprenticeship programs, dual enrollment & AP courses, and IB Programs, and providing the instructors with professional development in effective education of EL students, will help make sure EL students have meaningful access to these important programs.