

# Educational Investments Can Help English Language Learners Succeed

## 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, 17% of Accomack County's, 16% of Charlottesville's, and 19% of Richmond City's students are English Learners.

Around 54% of Virginia public school students who speak English less than "very well" speak Spanish. Other common languages include Hindi and related languages, Arabic, Amharic and related languages, and Vietnamese, according to 2022 Census data.

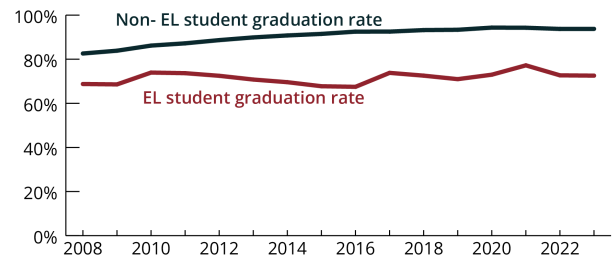
## English learners are behind their peers in Virginia and other states

Virginia ranks 32nd out of 46 states plus DC for average 4th grade reading scores for English learners according to 2022 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.

### 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



## Policymakers can improve educational opportunities

### Provide more state funding to hire ELL teachers (HB828, HB1247, and SB272):

Boosting funding for school divisions for instructors for English learners, especially for students with low English proficiency, will reduce class sizes, increase retention, and help students succeed. (2021 Board of Education recommendation)

### Provide a flexible per student add-on (SB228; included in HB624 & SB227):

Providing flexible per pupil add-ons for students with disabilities and English language learners, with amounts based on actual average school division expenditures, will increase support and flexibility to help every student learn and thrive. (JLARC July 2023 Policy Option 5)