

Clark County School District's English Language Learners
An Analysis of Enrollment, Educational Opportunities, and Outcomes in
Nevada and CCSD

Provided to The Lincy Institute at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas
by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University

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Introduction and Rationale

As the largest school district in Nevada and the fifth-largest school district in the country, Clark County School District (CCSD) served approximately 310,000 students in 341 schools during the 2010-2011 school year. Typical of urban districts, more than half of its students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 68 percent are students of color. Many schools are located in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, as well as racial and linguistic isolation (Terriquez, Flashman & Schuler-Brown 2009). Also, the patterns of enrollment show dramatic increases in the proportions of English language learners (ELLs) in CCSD over the last two decades. Currently, 23 percent of students in the district are limited English proficient (LEP).¹ The current district strategic plan illustrates the high priority placed on improving ELL student achievement in one of its eight Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO):

The District will demonstrate increased achievement as measured by the AMAO objectives such that: a) 52% of all LEP students achieve a 25 point gain in overall ELPA [English Language Proficiency Assessment] scaled scores each year; b) 14% of all LEP students achieve English language proficiency each year; and c) LEP students make AYP [adequate yearly progress] as determined by Title I.²

Nevada ranks forty-ninth out of fifty states in per-pupil spending on education. On several indicators of educational attainment, it is ranked the lowest in the nation (Horsford 2011). Moreover, Nevada is one of few states that do not take into account poverty or number of ELLs when distributing funding, and it underfunds special education students (Schwartz 2012). Because CCSD represents 71 percent of the state's students and 82 percent of its ELLs, a comprehensive review of the district's enrollment and outcomes for ELLs would pave the way for achieving its objective of increased ELL achievement.

The overarching goal of this study is to provide the public with an easy-to-understand review of the status of K–12 public education in CCSD, with a focus on ELLs.

This study is the result of a three-way partnership between CCSD, The Lincy Institute, and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Objectives of this analysis are:

Objective 1. To outline the enrollment, educational opportunities, and outcomes of CCSD students, with a focus on ELLs.

Objective 2. To probe for differential opportunities and outcomes in schools with high versus low enrollment of ELLs.

Objective 3. To inform the district and community about strengths and challenges in ELL outcomes and fruitful research directions that will guide policies and programs for ELLs.

¹ *English language learner* means a pupil whose: (1) primary language is not English; (2) proficiency in English is below the average proficiency of pupils at the same age or grade level whose primary language is English; and (3) probability of success in a classroom in which courses of study are taught only in English is impaired because of his or her *limited proficiency in English*. <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nac/nac-388.html#NAC388Sec610>. (We use the terms *ELLs* and *LEP students* interchangeably in this report.)

² Nevada Department of Education. <http://www.nevadareportcard.com/>

This analysis provides the findings for Objective 1. We begin by presenting enrollment, educational opportunity, and outcome data for Nevada as a whole and then continue with data specific to CCSD.

English Language Learners in Nevada’s Public Schools

From the 1997-1998 to the 2008-2009 school years, the population of U.S. ELLs grew by 51 percent, whereas that of other groups of students grew by only 7 percent (*Education Week* 2011). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 4.7 million public school students – 10 percent of the total U.S. public school population – were ELLs in 2010. Nevada was the state with the second-highest percentage of ELLs (at just over 16 percent), preceded by California at 29 percent and followed by New Mexico at 16 percent and Texas at 15 percent (Aud et al. 2012). According to the U.S. Department of Education National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, from 1998 to 2008, the number of students classified as ELLs in Nevada increased over 200 percent (Nevada State Senate 2011).

ELLs are tested annually for English language arts and mathematics achievement as part of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Thomas & Collier 1997). Not surprisingly, given their limited English proficiency, ELLs lag behind their peers in academic achievement as measured by local, state, and national assessments. According to a review of research on ELL achievement by Goldenberg (2006):

This discrepancy bodes ill for the society as a whole, since the costs of large-scale underachievement among large sectors of the populace are very high. The growing number of and the lack of adequate progress among English-learners – even many who were born in the United States or have lived here for years – should concern us all. (Goldenberg 2006)

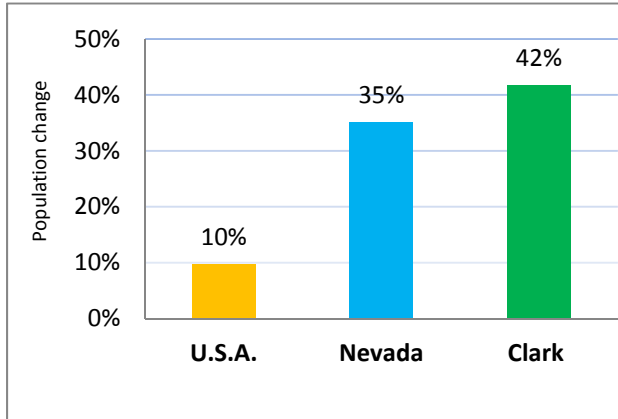
Multiple researchers have shown that high-quality instruction, including native language instruction and adequate accommodations, leads to better outcomes for ELLs (August & Shannon 2006). Unfortunately, many studies also explain that inadequate conditions of teaching and learning in our urban districts also lead to lower student performance (Gandara 2000; Parrish et al. 2006; Tung et al. 2009, p. 126). Because ELLs are overrepresented in urban districts – across the country, ELLs made up 18 percent of the total public school population in large cities (Aud et al. 2012) – they are disproportionately affected by these inadequate conditions.

Nevada data reflect these national trends. In 2011, 90 percent of fourth-grade ELLs in Nevada scored below proficiency in reading compared with 69 percent of English-proficient students. Eighth-graders fared even worse, with 98 percent of ELLs below proficiency compared with 71 percent of English-proficient students (Institute of Education Sciences 2012). Although the academic struggles of ELLs are not unique to Nevada nor to CCSD, specific data are necessary in order to advocate for change. Prior to examining the district ELL enrollment, opportunity-to-learn indicators, and achievement outcomes, we set the state-level context regarding immigration, language, race, economics, and educational attainment.

Immigration

Providing culturally and linguistically relevant services to meet the needs of all students during a time of rapidly shifting demographics is a national struggle (Campbell-Kiser & Bergquist 2011). The state of Nevada has undergone tremendous demographic shifts over the last few years. From 2000 to 2010, Nevada saw a 35 percent population increase – more than three times the rate experienced by the United States as a whole. CCSD saw an even higher rate of change at 42 percent (Figure 1).

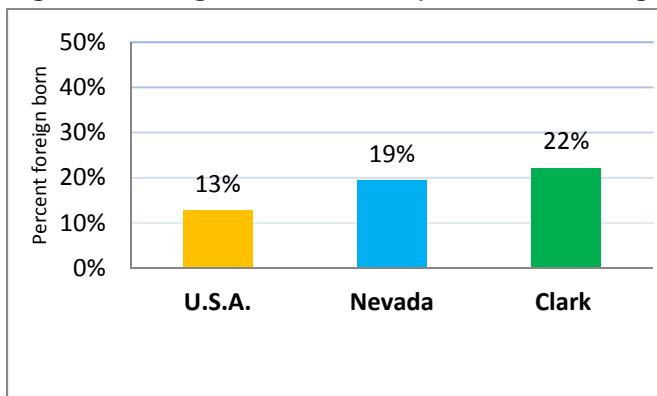
Figure 1: Population Change (2000–2010)³



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts.
<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-01.pdf>
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The average proportion of individuals born outside of the United States is also higher in Nevada (19 percent) and in CCSD specifically (22 percent) than for the country as a whole (13 percent) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Foreign Born Persons (2006–2010 average)

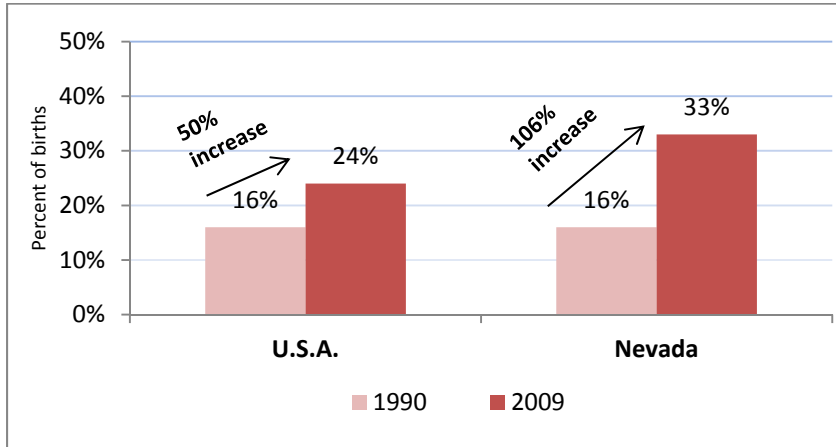


Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts.
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/32000.html>
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³ Different time points were chosen based on available data.

Between 2000 and 2010, Clark County ranked third-largest in absolute growth in immigrants among the nation’s counties – preceded by Harris County in Texas and Riverside County in California (Batalova & Lee 2012). Moreover, the number of children born to foreign-born mothers in Nevada increased 106 percent from 1990 to 2009, compared with half that rate (50 percent) for the country as a whole (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Births to Foreign-Born Mothers



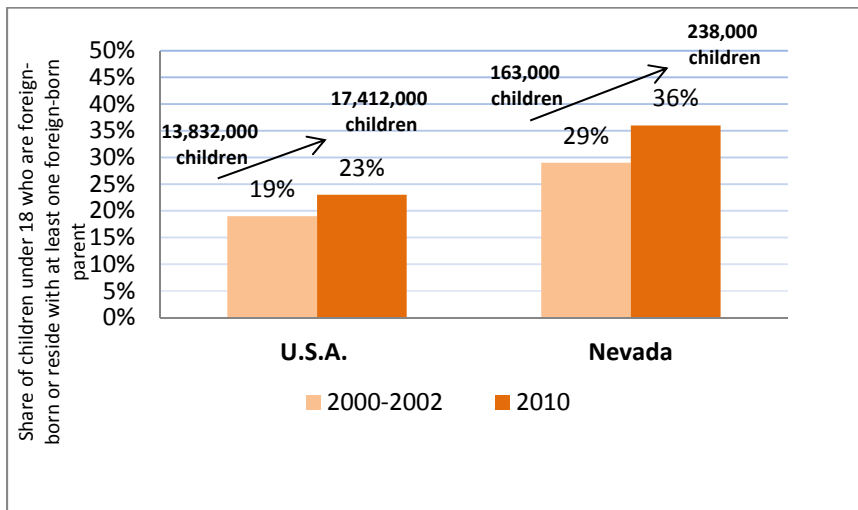
Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Analysis of 1990-2009 Natality files.

Notes: Births to women not born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands are not included in the U.S. average. *Foreign-born* in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are defined as born outside the fifty states and the District of Columbia.

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Aligned with the large increase in children born to foreign-born mothers, Nevada has a higher rate of children living in immigrant families (36 percent) compared with the country as a whole (23 percent). And, whereas the United States saw a 4-percentage-point increase from 2000 to 2002 (two-year census average) to 2010, Nevada saw a 7-percentage-point increase (an increase of 75,000 children in Nevada) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Children in Immigrant Families



Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Notes: *Foreign born* is defined as being either a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a citizen of the United States. *Native born* is defined as being born in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Marianas or born abroad of American parents. The foreign-born status of children not living with either parent is based solely on the status of the child and no other household member. Children living in subfamilies are linked to their parent(s) and not the householder.

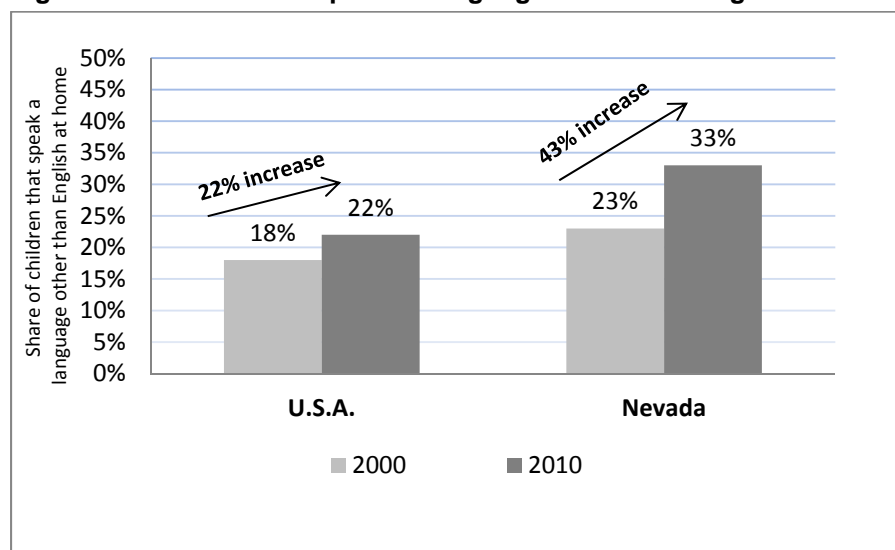
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Language

Over the last thirty years, language diversity in the United States has changed rapidly. Among the U.S. population aged 5 years and over, there has been the 148 percent increase from 1980 to 2009 in the number of individuals who speak a language other than English at home (Ortman & Shin 2011).

According to a nationwide analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, Nevada is home to the highest density of children who do not speak English as their first language (Joffe-Block 2011). One-third of children in the state of Nevada speak a language other than English at home, compared with just under a quarter nationwide. From 2000 to 2010, Nevada saw twice the percentage increase of children who speak a language other than English at home compared with that of the country as a whole – 43 percent compared with 22 percent, respectively (Figure 5). An important contextual piece to keep in mind is that about 90 percent of Nevada’s ELLs were actually born in the United States (Takahashi 2012).

Figure 5: Children Who Speak a Language Other than English at Home



Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Notes: The share of children ages five to seventeen who speak a language other than English at home.

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Other than English, Spanish is the most prevalent language spoken at home in Nevada. Twenty percent of Nevada’s population speaks Spanish or Spanish Creole⁴ at home, with much smaller proportions speaking Asian and Asian Pacific Island languages (5 percent) or other Indo-European languages (2 percent) (Table 1).⁵

Table 1: Nevada Population Five Years Old and Over by Language Spoken at Home

	2010
Speak only English at Home	71%
Speak a language other than English at Home	29%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	20%
Other Indo-European Languages	2%
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	5%
Other Languages	1%

Data Source: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Bureau of the Census. http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S1601&prodType=table

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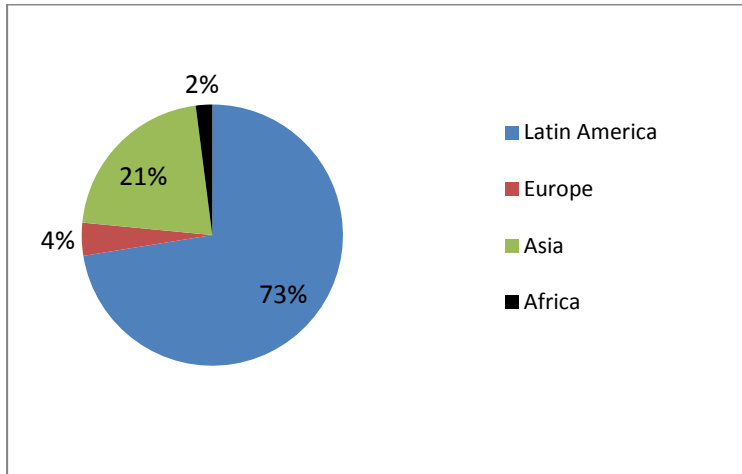
⁴ Creole: “Any of several languages developed in some Caribbean islands that combine African languages and Indian languages with French or Spanish.” See: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/american-english/creole_1?q=creole

⁵ Examples of Asian languages include Chinese, Korean, and Thai. Examples of Asian Pacific languages include Indonesian, Hawaiian, and Micronesian. Examples of other Indo-European languages include French, Portuguese, Hindi, and Persian.

Race and Origin

Almost three-quarters of Nevada’s children living in immigrant families have at least one parent who was born in Latin America, followed by 21 percent from Asia, 4 percent from Europe, and 2 percent from Africa (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Nevada Children in Immigrant Families by Parents’ Region of Origin (2010)



Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

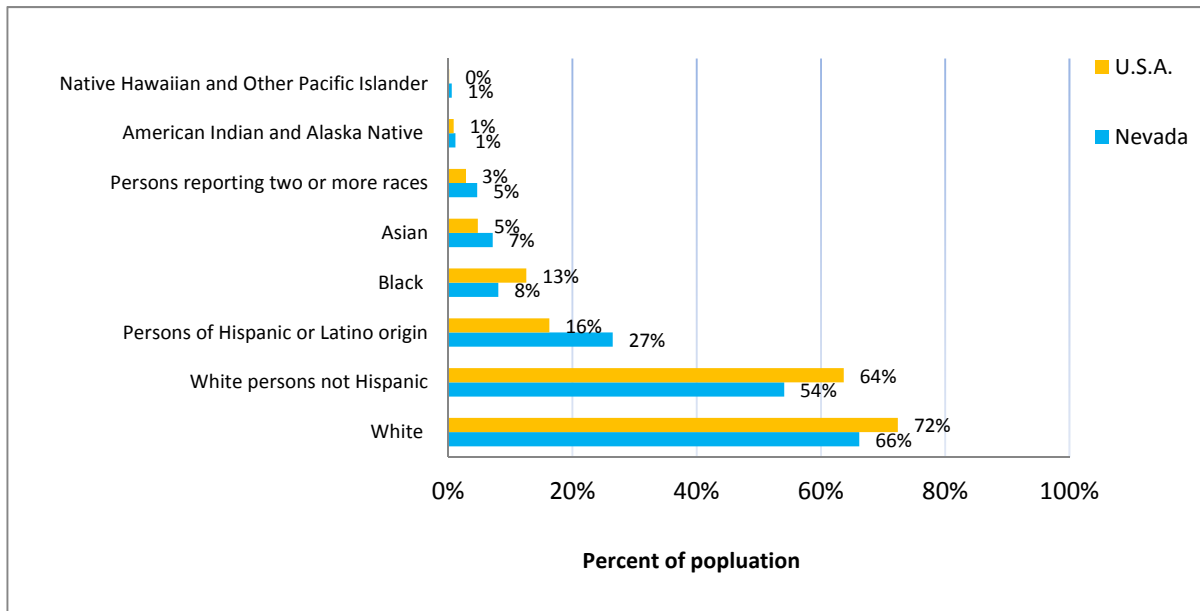
Notes: The share of children under age eighteen either foreign born or who have at least one foreign-born parent with at least one parent from Latin America, Europe, Asia, or Africa.

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Nevada’s population by race, compared with the nation as a whole, consists of higher proportions of multiracial, Asian, and Latino people. The largest non-White group in Nevada consists of persons of Hispanic or Latino origin⁶ at 27 percent, compared with 16 percent nationwide (Figure 7).

⁶ Hispanics or Latinos are those people who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the Census 2010 questionnaire – “Mexican,” “Puerto Rican,” or “Cuban” – as well as those who indicate that they are of “another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.” People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are of “another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin” are those whose origins are in Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic. The terms *Hispanic*, *Latino*, and *Spanish* are used interchangeably. See http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/long_RHI805210.htm

Figure 7: Nevada Population by Race (2010)



Data Source: State and County QuickFacts, U.S. Bureau of the Census,.

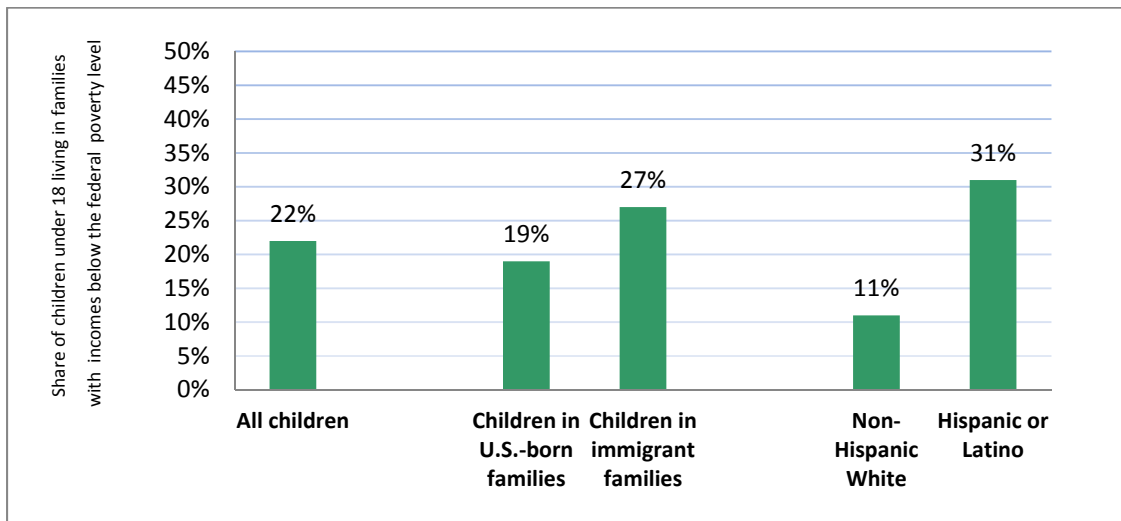
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/32000.html>

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Economics

Nevada’s non-White population struggles economically. Although 22 percent of all Nevada’s children live below the poverty threshold, that rate is higher for children in immigrant families (27 percent compared with 19 percent for children in United States-born families) and for Hispanic or Latino children (31 percent compared with 11 percent for non-Hispanic White children) (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Nevada Children Living Below the Poverty Threshold (2010)



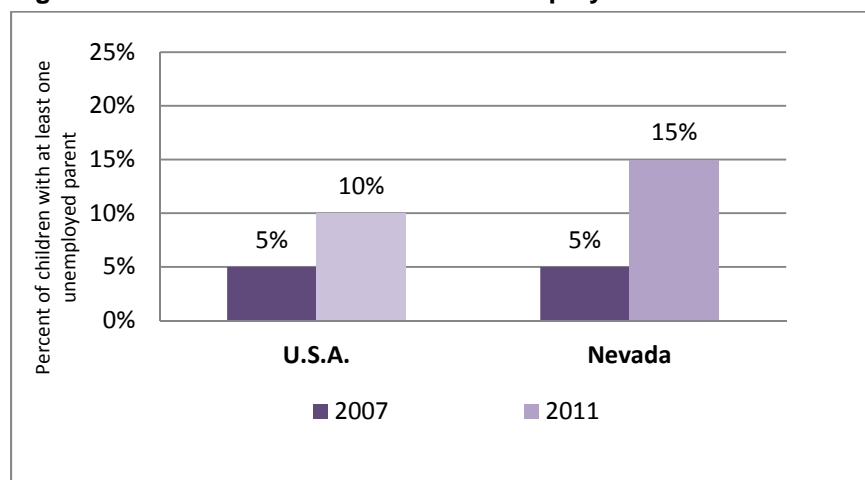
Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Notes: (1) The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition. In 2010, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$22,113. (2) Poverty status is not determined for people in military barracks or institutional quarters or for unrelated individuals under age fifteen (such as foster children). (3) Children in immigrant families are defined as children who are themselves foreign born or who reside with at least one foreign-born parent. *Foreign born* is defined as either a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a citizen of the United States. *Native born* is defined as born in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Marianas or born abroad of American parents. The foreign-born status of children not living with either parent is based solely on the status of the child and no other household member. Children living in subfamilies are linked to their parent(s) and not the householder.

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Nationally, twice as many children lived with at least one unemployed parent in 2011 (10 percent) compared with 2007 (5 percent). In Nevada, this was the reality for three times as many children in 2011 (15 percent) compared with 2007 (5 percent) (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Children with at Least One Unemployed Parent



Data Source: : Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey (CPS) Basic Monthly Data Files, 2007–2011.

Notes: The percentage of children under age eighteen living in families in which at least one parent does not have a job, has been actively looking for work in the past four weeks, and is currently available for work. For children living in single-parent families, this means that the resident parent is unemployed. For children living in married-couple families, this means that either or both parents are unemployed.

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Educational Attainment of Parents

Overall, almost one-quarter of Nevada’s children live in households in which the head is not a high school graduate; the equivalent figure for the country as a whole is 15 percent. Half of all Nevada’s children live in households in which the head has only a high school diploma or GED, compared with 47 percent nationwide. A smaller proportion of Nevada children than U.S. children live in households in which the household head has a college or university degree (Table 2).

Table 2: Children by Household Head’s Educational Attainment (2010)

	Not a high school graduate	High school diploma or GED	Associate’s degree	Bachelor’s degree	Graduate degree
Nevada	22%	51%	7%	13%	7%
U.S.A.	15%	47%	9%	18%	11%

Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, 2005–2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

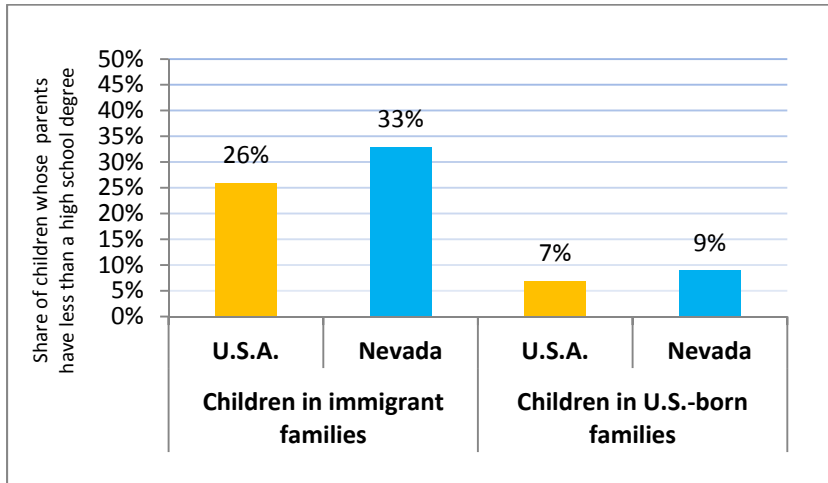
Note: The share of all children under age eighteen living in households by the head of household’s educational attainment.

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In particular, a greater proportion of children in immigrant families than of children in United States-born families live with parents who have less than a high school degree, and Nevada fares worse compared with the country as a whole. One-third of Nevada children in immigrant families have parents who have less than a high school diploma compared with one-quarter

nationally. The equivalent figures for children in United States-born families are 9 percent and 7 percent, respectively (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Children Whose Parents Have Less than a High School Degree (2010)



Data Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Notes: The share of children under age eighteen, none of whose resident parents has a high school diploma or equivalent, by children in foreign-born or U.S.-born families. For children living in a married-couple family or subfamily, this means that neither parent has a high school diploma. For children living in a single-parent family or subfamily, this means the resident parent does not have a diploma.

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Summary of Nevada Context

Taken together, these data paint a useful portrait of ELLs in Nevada’s education pipeline. Nevada is outpacing the rest of the nation both in increased immigration and increased ethnic and linguistic diversity among its children and families. In addition, higher percentages of Nevada families are experiencing economic hardship than in the nation as a whole. However, at the same time that Nevada has documented higher need, it ranks forty-ninth out of fifty states in per-pupil spending on education. Some of the specific observations found in the analysis of select data include:

A Changing Population of Children

- Increase in ELLs – from 1998 to 2008, the number of ELLs in Nevada increased over 200 percent (Nevada State Senate 2011).
- Increasing Latino population – if current demographic trends continue, the Latino population will double or even triple in size by 2050 (Wright, Tuman & Stevenson 2011).
- More of Nevada’s schoolchildren are part of immigrant families than ever before (24 percent increase from the early 2000s to 2010).
- In 2010, the vast majority (73 percent) of immigrant children had at least one parent who was born in Latin America.⁷

⁷ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

- Increasing births to foreign-born mothers (106 percent increase from 1990 to 2009).⁸
- Growing proportion of children speaking a language other than English at home – one-third of Nevada’s children ages five to seventeen years in 2010 (a 43 percent increase from the year 2000).⁹
- Approximately 90 percent of Nevada’s ELLs were born in the United States (Takahashi 2012).

Economic Insecurity

- Twenty-two percent of Nevada’s children lived below the poverty threshold in 2010. This challenge of poverty is even more pronounced among Nevada’s immigrant and Latino children. Twenty-seven percent of immigrant children and 31 percent of Latino children live in poverty¹⁰
- Unemployment is another problem many families in Nevada face; there has been a large increase in the percentage of children with at least one unemployed parent – tripling from 5 percent in 2007 to 15 percent in 2011¹¹

Challenges to Creating a College-Going Culture

- Low proportion of children living in a household in which the head has a college or university degree – 27 percent in 2010.¹²
- Large proportion of immigrant children with parents with less than a high school diploma – 33 percent compared with 9 percent of children in United States -born families.¹³
- The proportion of young people ages eighteen through twenty-four not attending school or working and without a degree beyond high school has increased at a higher rate in Nevada compared with the country as a whole from 2008 to 2010 – 19 percent to 24 percent and 14 percent to 17 percent, respectively. In 2010, one-quarter of young people in Nevada were living in such circumstances – 52,000 individuals.¹⁴

⁸ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Analysis of 1990–2009 Natality files.

⁹ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

¹⁰ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

¹¹ **Data Source:** : Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey (CPS) Basic Monthly Data Files, 2007–2011.

¹² **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, 2005–2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

¹³ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002– 2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

¹⁴ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, 2008–2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Notes: This measure reflects those young adults who are considered having difficulty navigating what most would consider a successful transition to adulthood. This measure is not comparable prior to 2008.

- Although the proportion of young people enrolled in or having completed college has increased from 2006 to 2010, only one-third of young adults in Nevada compared with close to half of young adults nationally fit this demographic.¹⁵

Linguistically, economically, and educationally, the population of Nevada faces numerous challenges. Under No Child Left Behind, all schools and school districts are required to meet certain minimum standards in order to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) set by the federal government. One of the main criteria that determine whether a school or district has met AYP is the academic performance of certain groups of students on state-administered proficiency tests (e.g., students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch, students receiving special education services, and ELLs). Failure of any of these student groups to meet AYP translates into failure of the entire school that they come from. In 2011, Nevada as a state did not make AYP. Under half (45 percent) of Nevada’s public schools made AYP in 2011. The state was given the designation of “watch.”¹⁶ Moreover, whereas National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores have increased nationally, average scores in Nevada continue to lag behind national averages (Tyler et al. 2012).

The trends among immigrants and children of immigrants prove particularly challenging. Children living in poverty and whose first language is not English tend to have more academic needs and access to fewer resources to meet those needs than do children who are not poor or whose native language is English. As noted in the next section, the trends for students in CCSD in many ways mirror the findings for Nevada, largely because CCSD encompasses 71 percent of students in the state.

Setting the Clark County School District Context for the Education of English Language Learners

Clark County, located in Southern Nevada, is the largest county in the state, accounting for nearly three-quarters of its residents. Several cities lie within its borders, including North Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City, and Mesquite. According to the Clark County Government web site, “With jurisdiction over the world-famous Las Vegas Strip and covering an area the size of New Jersey, Clark is the nation’s 14th-largest county and provides extensive regional services to more than 2 million citizens and 42 million visitors a year.”¹⁷

Enrollment

CCSD is the fifth-largest school system in the nation. During the 2010-2011 school year, there were 626 public schools in Nevada – 341 of which were in CCSD (the majority being public elementary schools at 218, with 38 public high schools). Nevada is also home to fifteen charter

¹⁵ **Data Source:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>, based on Population Reference Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002–2010 American Community Survey, analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

¹⁶ A designation given to a state, district, or school in its first year of not making AYP.

¹⁷ Clark County Nevada, <http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/pages/about.aspx>

schools, which educate about 2 percent of Nevada’s students. CCSD is home to 71 percent of all Nevada’s public school students, followed by Washoe County at 14 percent (Table 3).

Table 3: Public Schools and Enrollment by District, 2010-2011

	Student Enrollment (2011)	% of State Enrollment	Public Schools (N)
Nevada	437,057	–	626
Clark	309,749	71	341
Washoe	62,324	14	103
Elko	9,530	2	32
Lyon	8,541	2	19
State Public Schools* (Charters)	7,545	2	12
Carson City	7,529	2	14
Douglas	6,336	1	14
Nye	5,864	1	26
Churchill	4,168	1	9
Humboldt	3,376	1	15
White Pine	1,403	0.3	8
Lander	1,118	0.3	5
Lincoln	972	0.2	9
Pershing	677	0.2	4
Mineral	517	0.1	5
Storey	429	0.1	4
Eureka	239	0.1	3
Esmeralda	66	0	3

Data Sources: For number of public schools 2010–2011, Nevada Department of Education, Administrative and Fiscal Services, www.doe.nv.gov/Fiscal.htm; for student enrollment 2010–2011, Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: *Although the State Board of Education is not considered a “district,” it is the state sponsor of eleven charter schools and one university school in Clark and Washoe counties, which are listed separately.

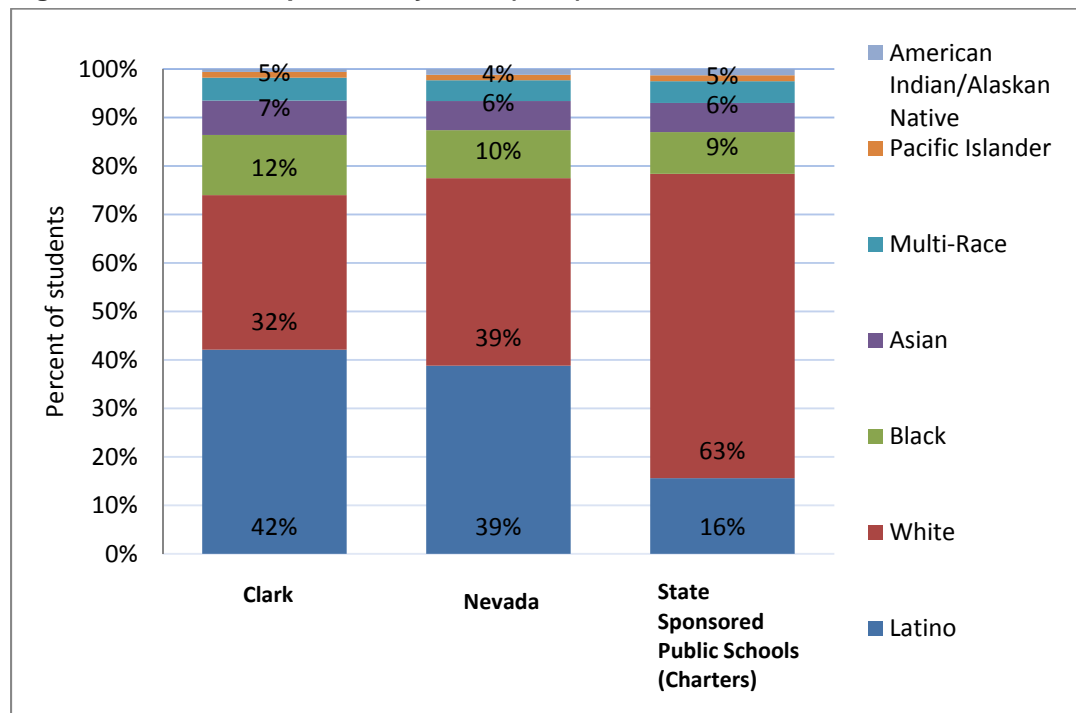
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CCSD has the largest proportion of Latino students compared with any other of Nevada’s school districts and with the state as a whole. More students are attending Clark County public schools than ever before – currently, the count stands at 311,380 students for the 2012-2013 school year, about 3,007 students more than the previous year. Latino students, who surpassed White students in 2006 as the largest group in CCSD, became an even larger group in 2012-2013. The number of Latino students increased by 3,223 students, and the number of White students decreased by

1,652 students. Latino students now make up 44 percent of district students, and White students make up 29 percent. All other student ethnic groups increased their numbers, except for Native Americans (Milliard 2012).

In contrast to CCSD’s and Nevada’s demographics, Nevada’s charter schools enroll a different racial mix. In 2011, 63 percent of students enrolled in charter schools were White, and only 16 percent were Latino. They also enroll a smaller proportion of Black students compared with CCSD and the state as a whole (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Student Population by Race (2011)



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data.

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Along with a steadily increasing Latino population in CCSD, over the 1992-1994 and the 2000-2001 school years, the number of students enrolled in the ELL program increased 245 percent, to 35,296, while total student enrollment in the district grew 59 percent. Presently, CCSD has the second largest ELL population in the country (second only to the Los Angeles Unified School District). In 2010, of the total 299,854 enrolled students in the CCSD, 90,295 were enrolled in the ELL program, with an annual growth of 3.44 percent. CCSD ELLs represent 134 different languages and 150 various countries of origin (Wright, Tuman & Stevenson 2011).

In 2011, about one-quarter (23 percent) of CCSD students were ELLs, a slightly higher number than the state proportion at 20 percent. On the other hand, the ELL rate in Nevada’s charter schools was only 0.4 percent in 2011 (prior to 2011, this figure was suppressed for charters due to small populations).

Table 4: English Language Learners (2011)

English Language Learners	
Clark	23%
Nevada	20%
State Sponsored Public Schools (Charters)	0.4%

Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: 2008–2011 district totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals included district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data.

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Important to note is that close to 90 percent of CCSD’s ELLs were born in the United States (Curtis 2011).

Opportunity-to-Learn Indicators

Opportunity to learn refers to equitable conditions within schools or classrooms that facilitate learning for all students. According to the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, “It includes the provision of curricula, learning materials, facilities, teachers, and instructional experiences that enable students to achieve high standards. This term also relates to the absence of barriers that prevent learning.”¹⁸ Due to our reliance on publicly available data, our access to opportunity-to-learn indicators is limited to a handful of measures that have been shown to be linked to student outcomes. We review the following opportunity-to-learn indicators for CCSD students, regardless of ELL status: class size, highly qualified teachers, and accredited paraprofessionals.

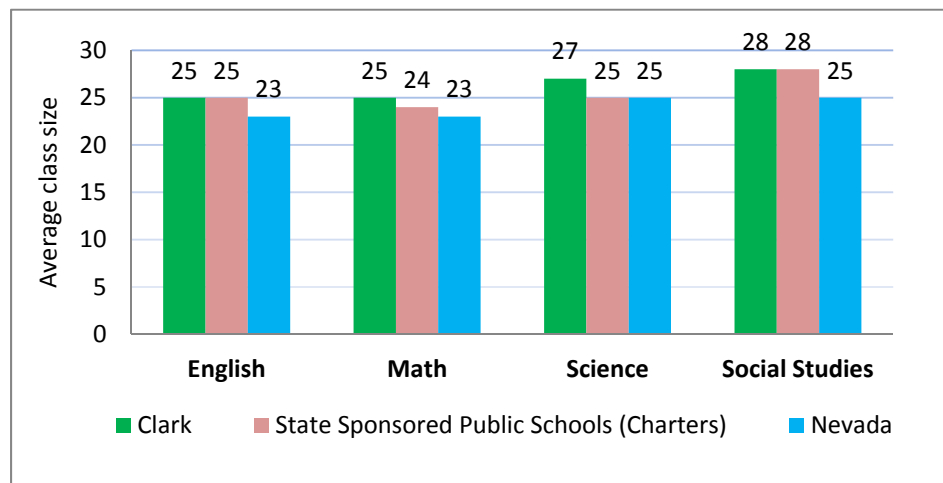
Several studies point to larger achievement gains for students who are enrolled in smaller classes.¹⁹ CCSD has higher than average class sizes across all of the major subjects compared with the state of Nevada as a whole. In contrast, charter schools in Nevada fell either below or at the national class size average except in social studies. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that nationally the current average class size is close to twenty-five students (Sparks 2010). Science and social studies classes in Clark County exceeded this national class size average (Figure 12).

¹⁸ North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, “Opportunity to Learn.”

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/assment/as8lk18.htm>

¹⁹ See: http://www.classsizematters.org/topics/benefits_of_smaller_classes/research_and_links/

Figure 12: Average Class Size (2011)



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: 2011 district totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data.

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Whereas the student-teacher ratio for CCSD in 2011 was 18:1 in first grade, by fourth and fifth grades ratios increased to 27:1 and 28:1, respectively (CCSD 2011). Moreover, class sizes in CCSD are set to increase. District officials recently issued layoff notices to more than 400 licensed teaching personnel as part of its reduction of more than 1,000 teaching positions for the 2012-2013 school year. It has been estimated that the elimination of these positions will force class sizes to increase an average of three students per class (CCSD 2012).

Inequalities in students' access to qualified teachers have also been shown to have an effect on students' opportunities to learn. In particular, the lack of access to highly qualified teachers for students in low-income schools is correlated with low achievement (Darling-Hammond 2004). The Nevada Department of Education defines high-poverty schools as being within the bottom quartile throughout the state for percentages of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty schools are defined as being within the top quartile throughout the state for percentages of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. A higher proportion of high-poverty schools in Clark County offer core subject classes not taught by highly qualified teachers compared with low-poverty schools in the district – 10 percent of high-poverty schools versus 6 percent of low-poverty schools (Table 5). A similar trend exists for the state, but at lower proportions than Clark County, and at even lower proportions for all districts other than Clark.

Table 5: Core Subject Classes Not Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers²⁰ (2011)

	Low-Poverty Schools	High-Poverty Schools
Nevada	6%	8%
Clark	6%	10%
All Other Districts	3%	4%

Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

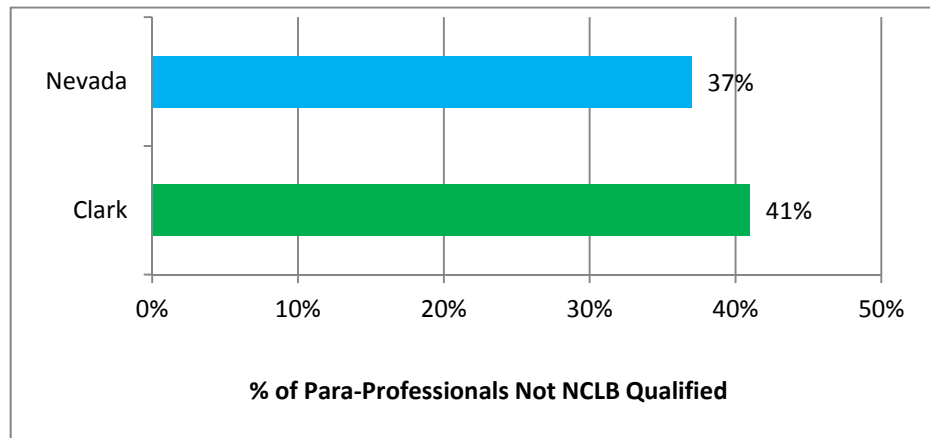
Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data.

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With respect to particular core subjects taught in CCSD, 12 percent of English classes, 11 percent of math classes, 9 percent of science classes, and 8 percent of social studies classes were not taught by highly qualified teachers in 2011. In every case, these proportions were higher than in the state as a whole (CCSD 2011).

Clark County also has a high proportion of paraprofessionals who are not NCLB qualified. Paraprofessionals are aides who work directly with students in classrooms, labs, and libraries. In order to meet the requirements of NCLB, paraprofessionals must have a high school diploma or its equivalent and have done one of the following: (1) completed at least two years at an accredited institution of higher education; (2) obtained an associate’s (or higher) degree; or (3) successfully completed a formal state or local academic assessment (Nevada State Senate 2011). In 2011, 41 percent of paraprofessionals in Clark County were not NCLB qualified – higher than the overall state percentage at 37 percent (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Paraprofessionals who are Not NCLB Qualified (2011)



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data.

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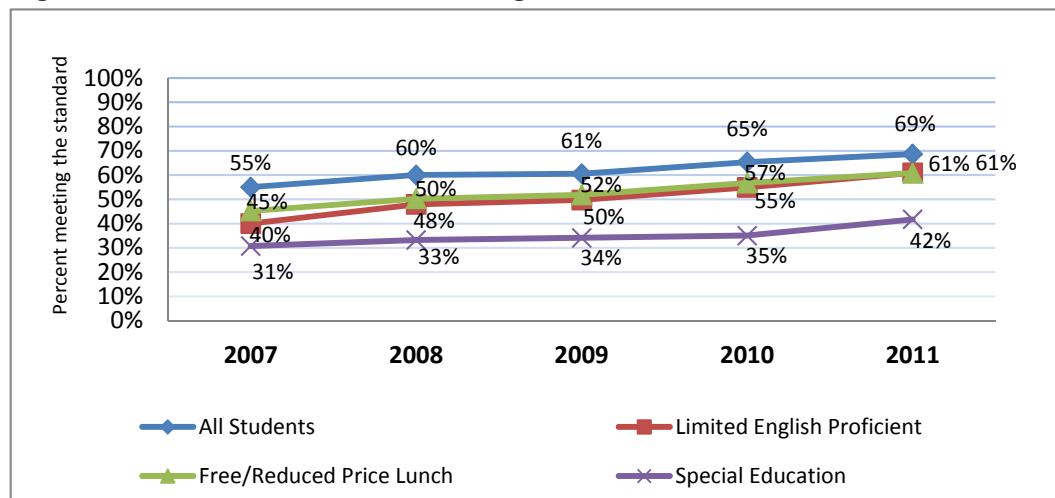
²⁰ Highly qualified teachers hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, are licensed to teach in the State of Nevada, and show demonstrated competence in their teaching area.

Educational Outcomes

Ten of Nevada’s school districts made AYP in 2011, but CCSD was not one of them – and it is under a “watch” designation (Tyler et al. 2012). In 2011, 54 percent of CCSD schools were classified as “in need of improvement” (CCSD 2012). A Title I school that fails to make AYP for two consecutive years is designated “in need of improvement, year 1” and receives specific consequences (e.g., school transfer options). For each subsequent year that a school fails to meet its AYP goals, the school’s “in need of improvement” status advances, and the school faces additional consequences (e.g., supplemental services, corrective action). A school is no longer considered “in need of improvement” when it meets AYP for two consecutive years.²¹

An examination of achievement trends for elementary, middle, and high school students in CCSD illustrates that although students overall are struggling, ELLs are faring particularly poorly. Although third-grade math achievement rates have been increasing over time, only 69 percent of third-grade students in Clark County met the state grade-level standard in 2011. The rate was lower for ELLs, at 61 percent (Figure 14).²²

Figure 14: Third-Grade Students Meeting the Math Standard



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data.

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In 2011, third-grade students attending charter schools did slightly worse overall, with 63 percent meeting the math standard; pass rates for ELLs attending charters were suppressed due to small counts.

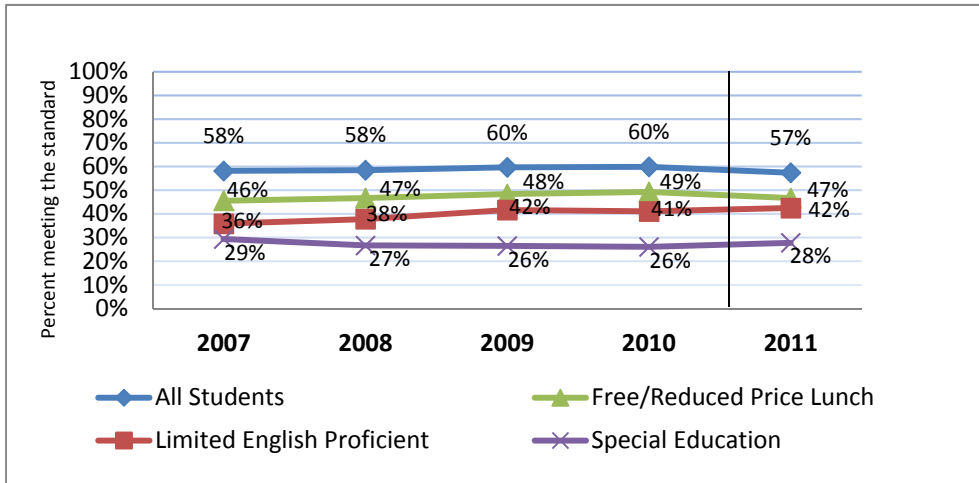
Third-grade students fared worse on the state reading test than on the math test. Prior to examining the results, it is important to note that as a result of substantive changes to the content

²¹ No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Requirements for Schools. <http://www.greatschools.org/definitions/nclb/nclb.html>

²² The terms *English language learner* (ELL) and *limited English proficient* (LEP) are used interchangeably.

and rigor of the 2011 reading assessments, direct comparisons should not be made between 2011 performance and performance in previous years. In 2011, 57 percent of CCSD students overall, and less than half (42 percent) of ELLs, met the standard. Between 2007 and 2010, rates increased slowly for students overall and for ELLs. However, rates decreased for ELLs between 2009 and 2010 and remained stagnant for students overall (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Third-Grade Students Meeting the Reading Standard



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

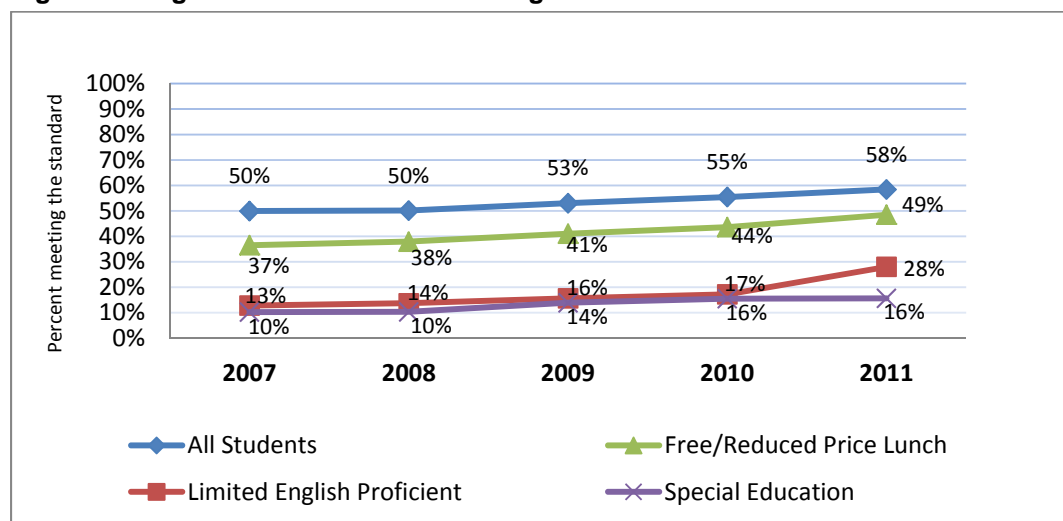
Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data.

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Third-graders attending charters performed better on the reading test in 2011, with 61 percent of all students meeting the standard; ELL student results were suppressed due to small population numbers.

In middle grades, despite increases over time, eighth-grade students fared even worse than third-grade students on the math test, with 58 percent of CCSD students meeting the standard in 2011. Only 28 percent of ELLs met the standard on the eighth-grade math test (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Eighth-Grade Students Meeting the Math Standard



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

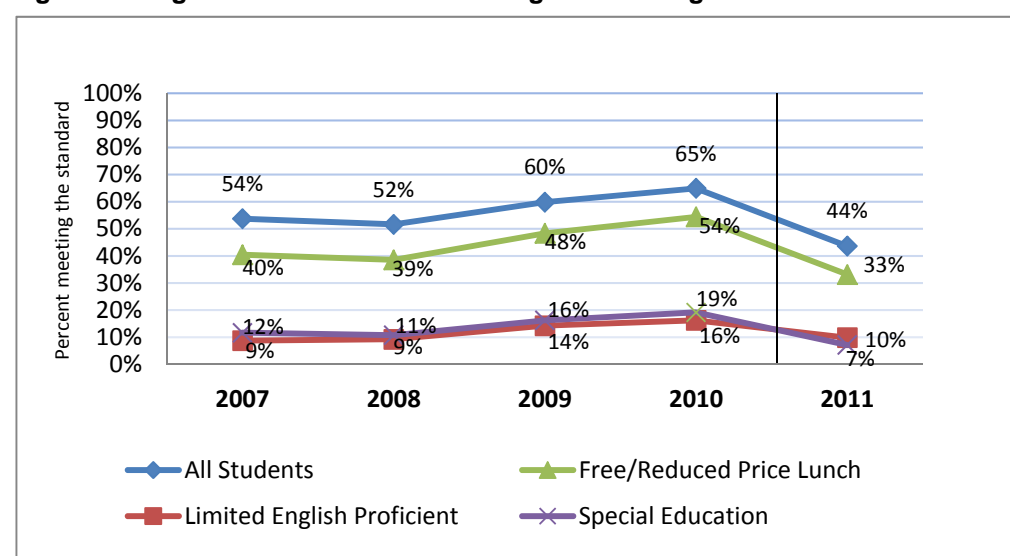
Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data.

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Eighth-grade students attending charters performed slightly worse on the math test in 2011, with only 37 percent meeting the standard; ELL student results were suppressed due to small population numbers.

Although eighth-grade passing rates on the reading test increased between 2007 and 2010, less than half of all eighth-grade CCSD students (44 percent) and only 10 percent of ELLs met the standard in 2011 (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Eighth-Grade Students Meeting the Reading Standard



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data.

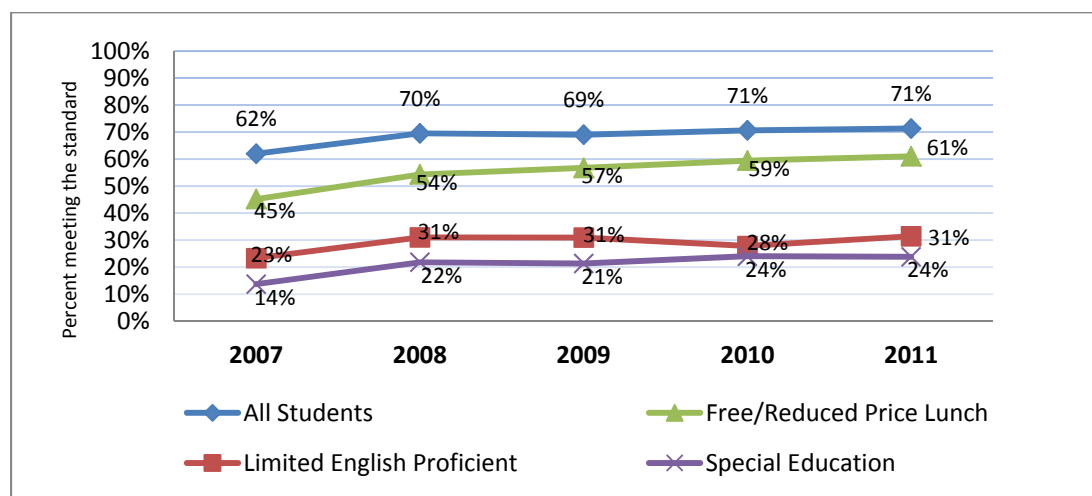
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Charter school students performed slightly worse, with 40 percent of eighth-graders reading at standard; ELL student results were suppressed due to small population numbers.

Furthermore, the proportion of K–8 students in Clark County performing at the lowest range of achievement (emergent/developing) on the standard-based tests comprised almost one-quarter of students in both reading and science in 2011 (CCSD 2011).

At the high school level, Nevada’s students are given six chances to pass the proficiency exam. The test is first administered in the fall during sophomore year, twice during junior year, and three times during senior year. The standardized exam mainly tests students on ninth-grade material in reading, writing, math, and science. Once a student receives a passing score in each of the four subject areas, he or she is no longer required to take the exams. All students in Nevada must pass the proficiencies to graduate from high school (Takahashi 2012). The proportion of eleventh-grade CCSD students meeting the standard on the high school proficiency math exam has increased over time. However, there remain large achievement gaps between students overall and ELLs. Whereas 71 percent of all eleventh-grade students met the standard in math in 2011, only 31 percent of ELLs met the standard.

Figure 18: Eleventh-Grade Students Meeting the Standard on the High School Proficiency Math Examination



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

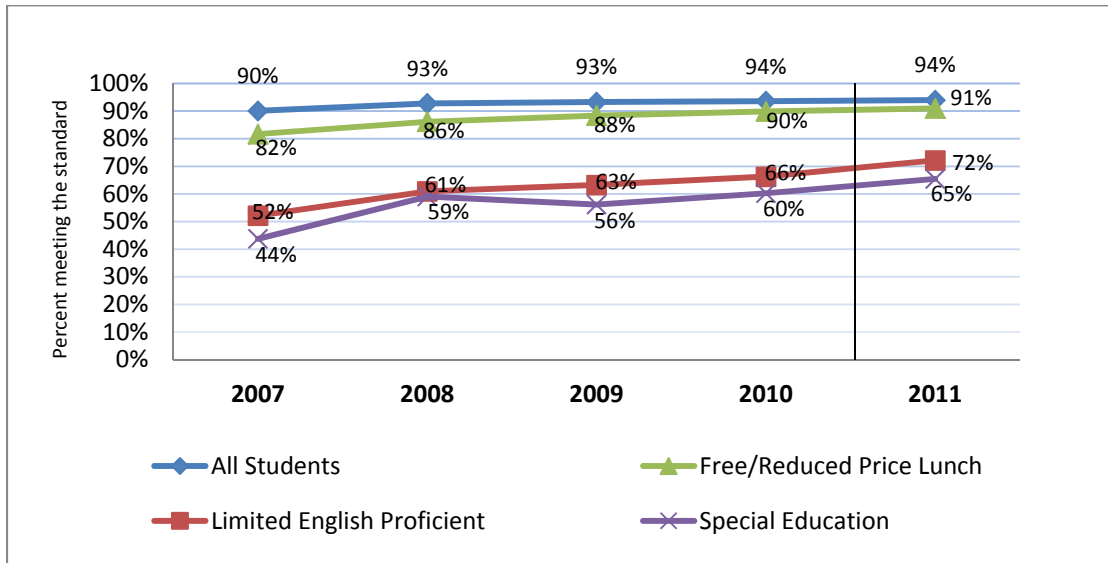
Notes: (1) District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data. (2) Proficiency rates for the high school proficiency exam (HSPE) in reading and mathematics represent cumulative data from a student’s first opportunity to pass the assessments in grade 10 through the student’s second opportunity in grade 11. Although students have five additional opportunities to pass the HPSE in grade 12, cumulative pass rates are currently calculated through the spring of grade 11 in accordance with the Nevada Consolidated Plan for Accountability approved by the federal government.

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A lower proportion of all eleventh-grade charter school students met the math standard in 2011 (53 percent); the results for ELLs attending charters were suppressed due to small population numbers.

The proportion of eleventh-grade CCSD students meeting the standard on the high school proficiency reading exam has increased over time. However, as with the math test, there are large achievement gaps between certain groups of students. Whereas 94 percent of all grade 11 students met the standard in reading in 2011, only 72 percent of ELLs did so (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Eleventh-Grade Students Meeting the Standard on the High School Proficiency Reading Examination



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: (1) District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data. (2) Proficiency rates for the HSPE in reading and mathematics represent cumulative data from a student's first opportunity to pass the assessments in grade 10 through the student's second opportunity in grade 11. Although students have five additional opportunities to pass the HPSE in grade 12, cumulative pass rates are currently calculated through the spring of grade 11 in accordance with the Nevada Consolidated Plan for Accountability approved by the federal government. (3) **As a result of substantive changes to the content and rigor of the 2011 reading assessments, direct comparisons should not be made between 2011 performance and performance in previous years.**

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A slightly lower proportion (92 percent) of all eleventh-grade students attending charters met the standard in reading in 2011; the results for ELLs attending charters were suppressed due to small population numbers.

Analyses of high school graduation and dropout rates also reveal achievement gaps between groups of students.²³

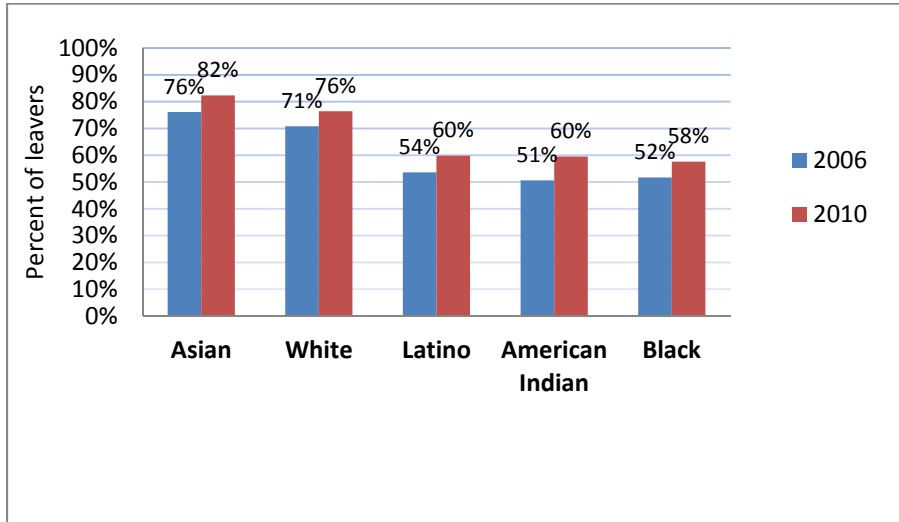
Overall graduation rates for CCSD went from 60 percent in 2006 to 68 percent in 2010²⁴ (the rate in 2010 for Nevada was 70 percent). Although graduation rates increased slowly for White, Black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian students in CCSD from 2006 to 2010, a closer look

²³ Graduation and dropout rates reported by CCSD are not four-year cohort rates; they are leaver rates. Nevada uses the NCES leaver-rate formula, which measures the percentage of students leaving high school with a standard high school diploma, expressed as a proportion of all those documented leaving with a diploma, other completion credential, or as dropouts.

²⁴ CCSD will begin to calculate four-year cohort rates this year. Leaver rates have been widely criticized as leading to overestimates in terms of graduation rates and underestimates with respect to dropout rates. See Miller (2011).

reveals that the racial achievement gap between certain groups has remained the same in 2006 and 2010: 19 percentage points between White and Black students and 17 percentage points between White and Latino students (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Graduation Rates²⁵



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data. District totals in reports released prior to 2006–2007 do not include charter school data.

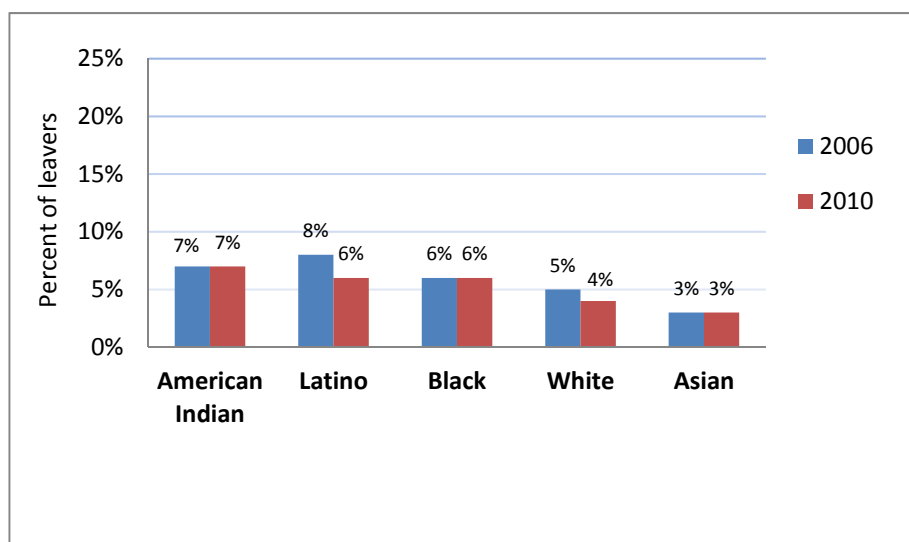
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Although charter schools had higher overall graduation rates in 2010 at 78 percent and higher rates for each ethnic group, they also enroll much smaller proportions of Black and Latino students.

Although annual CCSD dropout rates decreased from 7 percent in 2006 to 5 percent in 2010, the achievement gap between White and Black students increased by 1 percentage point. Moreover, overall annual dropout rates have increased for Black students between 2009 and 2010 and remained stagnant for Latino, White, and Asian students over this recent time period. In 2010, dropout rates in CCSD were highest for American Indian students (7 percent), followed by 6 percent for Black and Latino students, 4 percent for White students, and 3 percent for Asian students (Figure 21).

²⁵ Unfortunately, graduation and dropout data are not disaggregated by ELL status.

Figure 21: Dropout Rates



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data. District totals in reports released prior to 2006-2007 do not include charter school data.

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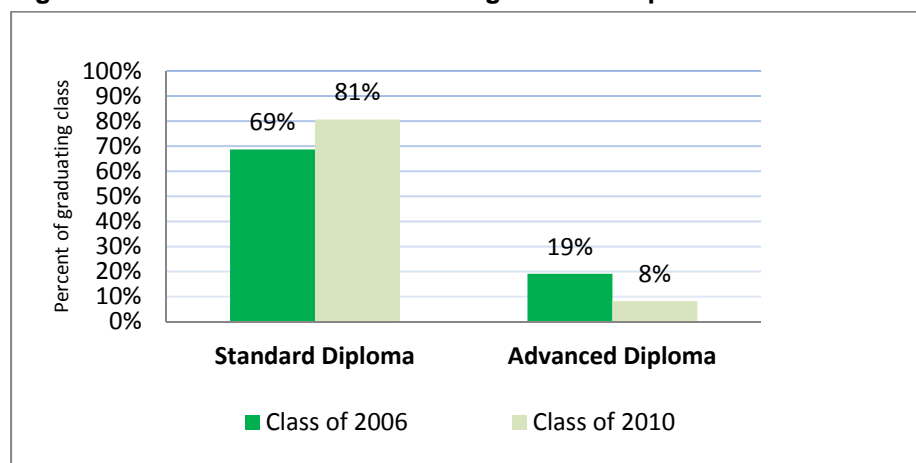
In 2010, charter schools in Clark County had a slightly lower overall dropout rate (4 percent). Latino and Black students in charter schools had similar 2010 dropout figures (6 percent) to those who did not attend charters. However, even though White students made up a much larger proportion of the charter school student population in 2010, they had a lower dropout rate (3 percent).

Furthermore, of the CCSD students who entered high school in the fall of 2009, 29 percent are not on track to graduate with the class of 2013 due to credit deficiencies (CCSD 2011). Nevada's college readiness standards recommend the completion of the Nevada advanced diploma course requirements.²⁶ In 2010, a much higher proportion of CCSD students graduated with a standard diploma (81 percent) than with an advanced diploma (8 percent).²⁷ And, whereas the number of students receiving standard diplomas has increased from 2006 to 2010, the number of those receiving advanced diplomas has decreased (Figure 22).

²⁶ http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/Academics/reports/College_Readiness_Presentation_for_Web.pdf

²⁷ To be awarded a standard high school diploma, a student must earn a total of 22 1/2 credits and receive a passing score on the Nevada proficiency exams. Currently, 16 credits are required courses, and 6 1/2 are electives. Beginning with the 2010 graduating class, a student can receive an advanced diploma by completing a minimum of 24 credits, including all requirements for a standard diploma plus one additional credit of science and one additional credit of math. The minimum 3.25 GPA, weighted or unweighted, includes all credits applicable toward graduation. The student must also pass the Nevada high school proficiency exams. <http://www.washoe.k12.nv.us/students/graduation-requirements>

Figure 22: Standard and Advanced High School Diploma Rates



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

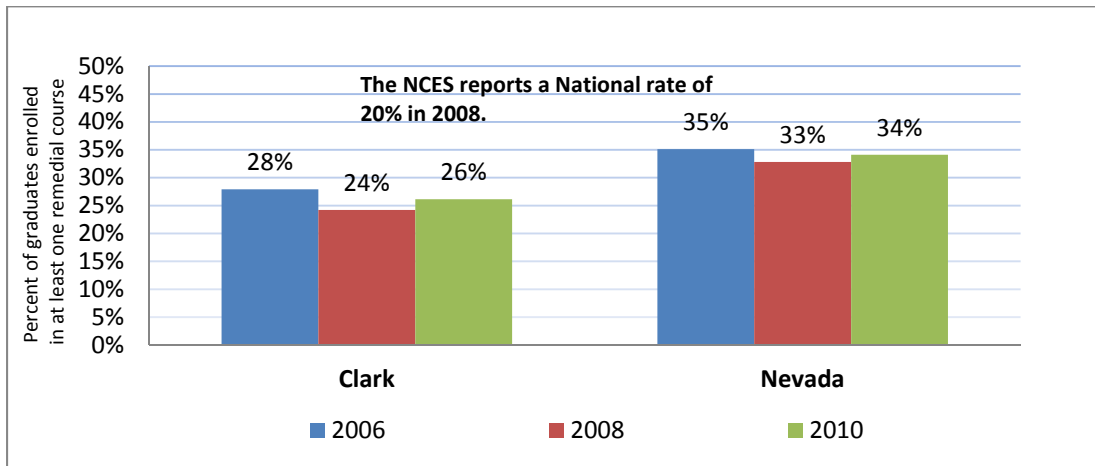
Notes: (1) District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data. District totals in reports released prior to 2006–2007 do not include charter school data. (2) The remainder of the graduating class received an Adult Diploma, an Adjusted Diploma, or a Certificate of Attendance.

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Compared with CCSD, Nevada has a lower proportion of students who graduated with standard diplomas in 2010 (72 percent) and a higher proportion who graduated with advanced diplomas (17 percent). Both CCSD and Nevada as a whole have experienced increases in standard diploma rates and decreases in advanced diploma rates from 2006 to 2010. Charter schools, on the other hand, had higher advanced diploma rates and lower standard diploma rates in 2010; and both have increased over time (2006 compared with 2010).

One post-high school outcome that informs school districts about their preparation of students for postsecondary education is the rate of remedial course enrollment. The remediation rate is the proportion of students who graduated from a Nevada high school between September and August (“recent high school graduates”) and who are enrolled in at least one remedial math or English course at a Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institution in the following summer or fall. Although CCSD remediation rates are lower than in the state as a whole, they are higher than national rates and still represent a significant proportion of students who are not graduating from high school college-ready. In 2010, one-quarter (26 percent) of CCSD graduates were enrolled in at least one remedial course in NSHE institutions immediately following graduation, up 2 percentage points from two years prior. In raw numbers this rate translates into 1,467 remediated students out of 5,629 enrolled (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Remedial Enrollment in Nevada System of Higher Education NSHE Institutions Immediately Following Graduation



Data Source: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com.

Notes: District totals do not include state- or district-sponsored charter school data. In 2007 district totals include district-sponsored charter school data, but not state-sponsored charter school data. District totals in reports released prior to 2006–2007 do not include charter school data.

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In 2011, the overall remediation rate for CCSD remained at 26 percent. Specific remediation rates for recent CCSD high school graduates enrolled at various NSHE institutions ranged from 19 percent to 55 percent (Table 6). In 2011, CCSD spent a total of \$393,403 on remedial course delivery (Office of Academic and Student Affairs 2011).

Table 6: CCSD Students: Remedial Enrollment Rates at NSHE Institutions Immediately Following Graduation

Institution Attended	Remediation (2011)
College of Southern Nevada	19%
University of Nevada, Las Vegas	30%
University of Nevada, Reno	33%
Nevada State College	55%

Data Source: Office of Academic and Student Affairs 2011.

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Summary of Clark County School District

With respect to enrollment, opportunity to learn, and educational outcomes, our analysis of CCSD reveals the following trends overall and for ELLs in particular:

More English Language Learners in CCSD

- In 2011, CCSD was home to almost three-quarters of all Nevada’s public school students, and more students were attending CCSD schools than ever before.²⁸
- The largest proportion of CCSD students in 2011 were Latino (44 percent), and this population has been increasing over time (Milliard 2012).
- The ELL population (which stood at 23 percent in 2011) continues to increase, and CCSD currently has the second largest ELL population in the nation (Wright et al. 2011).

Fewer Opportunities and Resources to Learn in CCSD

- CCSD schools have higher than average or at-capacity class sizes in key subjects, and they are set to increase by an estimated average of two or three students per class. The national average is approximately twenty-five students per class, and in 2011, CCSD science and social science classes had twenty-seven and twenty-eight, respectively.²⁹
- As of 2011, CCSD schools exhibited increasing student-teacher ratios over the course of students’ careers – 18:1 in first grade, rising to 28:1 by fifth grade.³⁰
- A higher proportion of core classes during 2011 were not taught by highly qualified teachers in high-poverty (10 percent) compared with low-poverty (6 percent) CCSD schools.
- A high proportion of CCSD paraprofessionals (41 percent) working in 2011 were not NCLB-qualified.
- While CCSD public schools are struggling to meet the needs of ELL and other high-needs students, the state’s charter school enrollment of ELLs and Black and Latino students is disproportionately low compared with that of the district. In 2011, the state’s public charter schools were 24 percent Black and Latino, compared with 55 percent for CCSD schools. ELLs made up 0.4 percent of the student population at state charters in 2011, compared with 23 percent at CCSD schools.
- The vast majority (88 percent) of CCSD’s ELLs were born in the United States (Curtis 2011).

Lower Educational Achievement for all CCSD Students

- ELLs in particular are struggling academically (particularly in reading) at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In 2011, less than half (42 percent) of third-grade ELLs met the standard in reading; only 10 percent of eighth-grade ELLs met the standard in reading; and one-third of eleventh-grade ELLs met the standards in math and reading.³¹
- Although graduation and dropout rates are not reported by ELL status, Whites and Asians do far better than Latino or Black students. For example, in 2010, 58 percent of Black and 60

²⁸ Sources: For number of public schools 2010–2011, Nevada Department of Education, Administrative and Fiscal Services, www.doe.nv.gov/Fiscal.htm; for student enrollment 2010–2011, Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, www.nevadareportcard.com.

²⁹ Data sources: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, www.nevadareportcard.com; Sparks (2010); Clark County School District (2012); Schwartz (2012a, 2012b).

³⁰ Data source for this and the following three bullets: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, www.nevadareportcard.com

³¹ Data source for this and the following two bullets: Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, www.nevadareportcard.com

percent of Latino students graduated, compared with 76 percent of Whites and 82 percent of Asians.

- In 2010, only 8 percent of CCSD students overall graduated with advanced diplomas, recommended by Nevada’s college readiness standards.
- Remedial enrollment at NSHE institutions immediately following high school graduation in 2010 stood at 26 percent of high school graduates (Office of Academic and Student Affairs 2011)

CCSD has the second largest ELL student population in the nation (Wright, Tuman & Stevenson 2011), and in fact, the vast majority (almost 90 percent) of the district’s ELLs were born in this country – thus perhaps implying that their ELL status has more to do with residential and linguistic isolation than with their immigrant status.

Although they are important in the national context, understanding what these statistics mean to CCSD school leaders, teachers, families, and students is even more important. In 2011, about one out of every six students in CCSD was enrolled in some kind of ELL instruction – translating into about 92,000 students. In most schools in CCSD, ELLs are placed into math, history, and science classes alongside their English-speaking peers. Teachers are trained to teach both native English speakers and ELLs at the same time (Joffe-Block 2011). Teaching in this manner is not simple or basic; rather, it requires advanced training and specialized support and materials. Yet these teachers and schools receive little to no extra resources or training to accomplish this very challenging work. In fact, Nevada does not allocate any additional funds to districts to educate ELLs beyond what it pays for regular students (*Las Vegas Review-Journal* 2011). Even worse, state-level spending per student in Nevada already falls short of what most states spend per student (Maxwell 2009). In 2010, the per-student state aid in Nevada was \$8,483, compared with the national average of \$10,615 (Dixon 2012). CCSD schools have more needs and fewer resources than other school districts in the nation – especially when it comes to educating ELLs.

It is not surprising, then, that ELLs in CCSD are not performing as well as their peers. In 2011, less than half (42 percent) of third-grade ELLs met the standard in reading; only 10 percent of eighth-grade ELLs met the standard in reading (one-quarter did so in math); one-third of eleventh-grade ELLs met the standards in math and reading. Although the lack of resources is particularly acute for ELLs, this report provides evidence that the system as a whole also needs support. For example, in 2010, only 8 percent of CCSD students overall graduated with advanced diplomas, recommended by Nevada’s college readiness standards.³²

Recently a legislative committee has supported a new funding formula for Clark County that would allocate higher per-pupil funding for low-income students, ELLs, and others who require more supports and services. The proposal would increase Clark County’s state and local funding per pupil, but other Nevada county districts would experience cuts. The current funding formula was created in 1967, when 90 percent of Nevada’s students were White (Milliard 2012). This

³² Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability. www.nevadareportcard.com

new state funding proposal for Clark County schools would address both the changing demographics and the reality that it costs more to educate low-income and ELLs. Important to note is that educators have pushed for targeted ELL funds in the past, and they have not been successful (Maxwell 2009). The exact weight the state should give to each student in distributing funds will not be determined until 2013, when the legislature meets (Schwartz 2012).

Given the large proportion of CCSD students who are immigrants and children of immigrants, speaking a language other than English at home, attention must be paid to English language acquisition in the school setting. This report and others document the persistent achievement gap for ELLs, and further research would identify the nature of the teaching and learning that ELLs experience in CCSD. Under what conditions do ELLs acquire English more efficiently? How do schools create those conditions? What do district supports, such as programming, curriculum, and professional development, contribute? Our follow-up to this analysis, Objective 2 – “to probe for differential opportunities and outcomes in schools with high versus low enrollment of ELLs” – will shed some light on such issues.

This report confirms that extra supports are required for Clark County’s ELLs in order to reverse current dismal academic trends among this group, thereby helping to ensure that they have the academic skills to succeed. According to a recent Grantmakers for Education report:

Unless we are willing to see one in ten of our students underserved and our nation’s collective economic stability imperiled, we must make certain that our education systems have the capacity and commitment to drive success for ELL students. (Grantmakers for Education 2011)

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