

In the 2004-05 school year, 2.6 million, or 42 percent, of California's 6.3 million public school students were linguistic minorities (LM), which means they came from households where a language other than English was spoken. The LM population consists of two subgroups, based on their level of English proficiency: students who are not yet proficient in English are classified as English learners (ELs), while students who are proficient in English are classified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP).

In California, 1.6 million linguistic minority students were designated as ELs in 2004-05 and another 1 million were designated as FEP. The proportion of EL to FEP students varies as students progress through school—in elementary school (grades K-5), about one in four linguistic minorities were FEP, whereas in secondary school (grades 6-12), just over 50 percent of linguistic minorities were classified as FEP.¹

The vast majority of linguistic minority students in California are Spanish-speaking. In 2004-05, 78 percent of all LM students and 85 percent of all ELs were Spanish speaking. In addition, the vast majority (70 percent) of Latino students in California in 2004-05 were linguistic minorities.

Table 1—California Linguistic Minority, Spanish-Speaking, and Latino Public School Students, 2004-05

	All Linguistic Minority Students			All Students
	English Learner	Fluent English Proficient	Total Linguistic Minority	
K-5	957,818	325,749	1,283,567	2,869,709
<i>Percent of all students</i>	33%	11%	45%	100%
Grade 6-12	612,818	737,480	1,350,298	3,398,375
<i>Percent of all students</i>	18%	22%	40%	100%
Ungraded	20,889	1,349	22,238	54,012
<i>Percent of all students</i>	39%	2%	41%	100%
Total	1,591,525	1,064,578	2,656,103	6,322,096
<i>Percent of all students</i>	25%	17%	42%	100%
	Spanish-Speaking Linguistic Minority Students			Latino Students
K-5	819,116	219,477	1,038,593	1,439,512
<i>Percent of Latino students</i>	57%	15%	72%	100%
Grade 6-12	519,018	505,340	1,024,358	1,488,861
<i>Percent of Latino students</i>	35%	34%	69%	100%
Ungraded	19,644	1,133	20,777	32,721
<i>Percent of Latino students</i>	60%	3%	63%	100%
Total	1,357,778	725,950	2,083,728	2,961,094
<i>Percent of Latino students</i>	46%	25%	70%	100%
<i>Percent of all students</i>	85%	68%	78%	47%

SOURCE: California State Department of Education, *Dataquest*. Retrieved September 30, 2006, from: <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

¹ In kindergarten, only 15 percent of linguistic minorities were classified as FEP.