

Demographic Overview of English Learner Students and
Former English Learner Students in Michigan

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on English Learner (EL) students in Michigan in order to aid administrators and instructors in better understanding students who have limited proficiency in English. This paper discusses who were identified as EL students in 2011-2012 and what kinds of characteristics they represent. Specifically, this paper discusses whether these EL students received immigrant services, what was their socioeconomic status, languages spoken, and countries of birth, and how many of them were identified as students with disabilities. Since sub-population in each intermediate school district (ISD) or district is often different, this study takes a closer look at how these characteristics were different by individual ISDs and districts, the size of ISDs and districts, and languages spoken. The same set of questions is also explored for former EL (FLEP¹) students.

Introduction

According to the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) count in 2012-13, there were 76,955 EL students in Michigan who were funded by Title III, the English Language Acquisition Program. These students constitute about 4 percent of the Michigan student population. Title III law requires local Title III plans to include scientifically based best practices that ensure EL students acquire English language proficiency and achieve the state academic standards.

As Michigan continues to support these EL and FLEP students, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding about who these students are and what kinds of characteristics they represent. With the implementation of the MDE Entrance and Exit Protocol (EEP) for English Learner Program in 2012, a consistent process is now in place for local districts to use when determining English learner eligibility for English language acquisition program. With such process in place, this study attempts to provide a demographic overview of who EL students are.

The terms English Learners (EL) and Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are used interchangeably. For the precise definition of an EL or LEP student, please refer to the MDE EEP² manual.

Data

Data collection

For each EL or FLEP student, the most recent student record from the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) 2011-2012 was collected. MSDS has three collection periods every school year:

¹ Former EL students who achieved proficiency in English and exited the language program

² http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Entrance_and_Exit_Protocol_10.30.12_402532_7.pdf

fall, spring, and the end of the year. In order to collect the most recent records, entries from the end of the year were collected. If no record was found at the end of the year for a student, fall or spring data were collected, whichever more recent. Some students had multiple records for one collection period, perhaps due to moving across school districts. In such cases, the most recent records based on the date of enrollment were collected.

The list of EL students who received Title III funding (76,955 students) in 2012-2013 was used to collect student records from MSDS 2011-2012. The time discrepancy was inevitable, since the end of the year data for MSDS 2012-2013 was not yet available at the time of the analysis³. As a result of this time discrepancy, records of two students who received Title III funding in 2012-2013 were not found in MSDS 2011-2012. However, since the number of unmatched students is very small, the analysis was conducted using the records of 76,953 LEP students.

In this analysis, FLEP students refer to those who exited the LEP status in 2011-2012. Therefore, the results of the analysis do not represent those who exited the LEP status prior to 2011-2012. In 2011-2012, 9,801 students exited the LEP status and became FLEP students. However, those who exited for reasons other than proficiency in English (e.g. graduation, parent request⁴, etc.) were not included in this analysis.

Finally, it is important to note that this analysis may not represent the entire population of EL students in Michigan. The analysis mainly includes students who are at least 3 years old, as Title III funding programs start at the age of 3. In addition, it is possible that this analysis does not capture the EL population who are over 21 years old, given the difficulty of capturing such student population. Lastly, there may be other potential EL students whose districts did not apply for Title III funding or who were not reported by local districts for some reason.

Notes for Interpretation of Results

The size of ISDs and districts has been determined in the following way. Based on the number of total students enrolled, the largest one-third of ISDs and districts were determined as large, the next largest one-third as medium, and the smallest one-third as the small. The detailed characteristics of small, medium, and large ISDs and districts will be available in the next section.

It is also important to note that immigrant services are offered to local districts (not individual students) where there has been a recent and significant increase in the immigrant population. Therefore, certain local districts where there are many immigrants may not qualify for funding for immigrant services.

Results of the Analysis

EL students

³ As of July 19, 2013

⁴ Parent request to remove a student from the language program is not a valid reason for exit. However, data has identified and coded parental request as one of exit reasons.

In 2011-2012, 76,953 students were identified as EL students, and the majority of them came from large regions (Figure 1). As described in the section above, large, medium, and small ISDs and districts were determined based on the number of total students enrolled. The detailed characteristics regarding the size of ISDs and districts are provided in the Table 1.

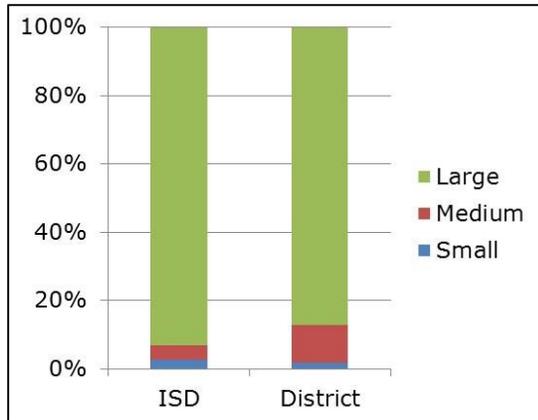


Figure 1

		Small	Medium	Large
ISDs	Average # of students	5,823	11,441	63,256
	Total # of students	110,649	217,378	1,201,860
	# of ISDs	19	19	19
Districts	Average # of students	191	853	4,195
	Total # of students	56,058	248,973	1,224,856
	# of districts	293	292	292

Table 1

The EL population was heavily concentrated in a few ISDs and districts. Approximately 80 percent of the EL population was from four ISDs (Wayne, Oakland, Kent, and Macomb) as shown in Figure 2.

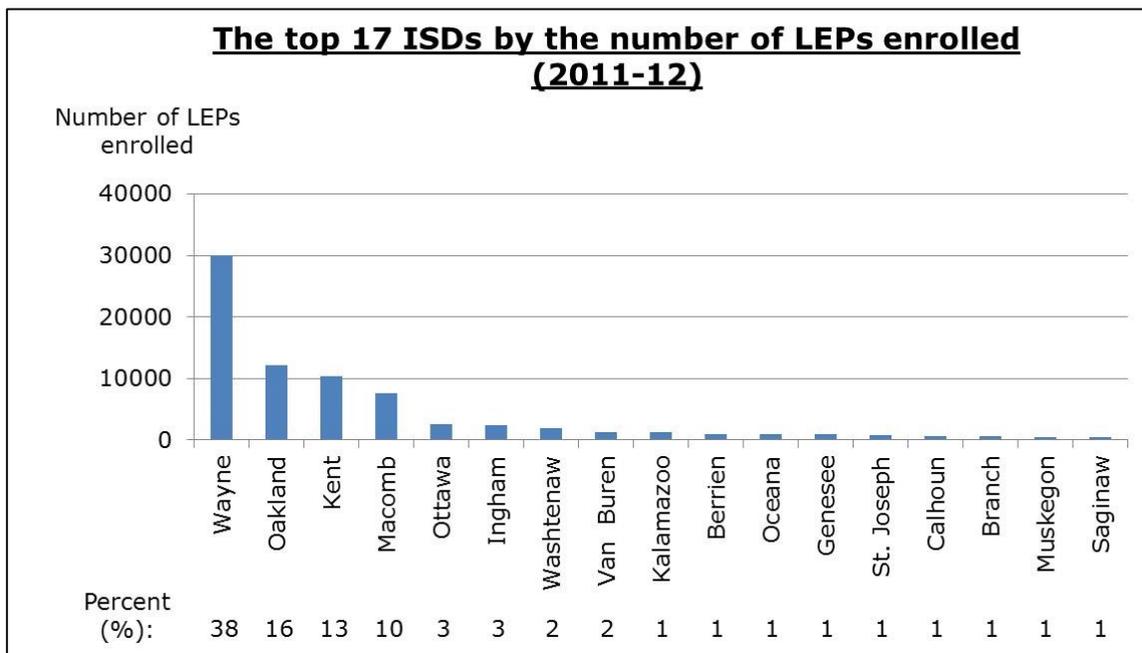


Figure 2

At the local district level, one can see that a significant portion of the EL population was concentrated in Dearborn and Detroit (Figure 3). As it was the case with ISDs, the EL population was heavily focused in a few districts, mainly in the metro-Detroit area.

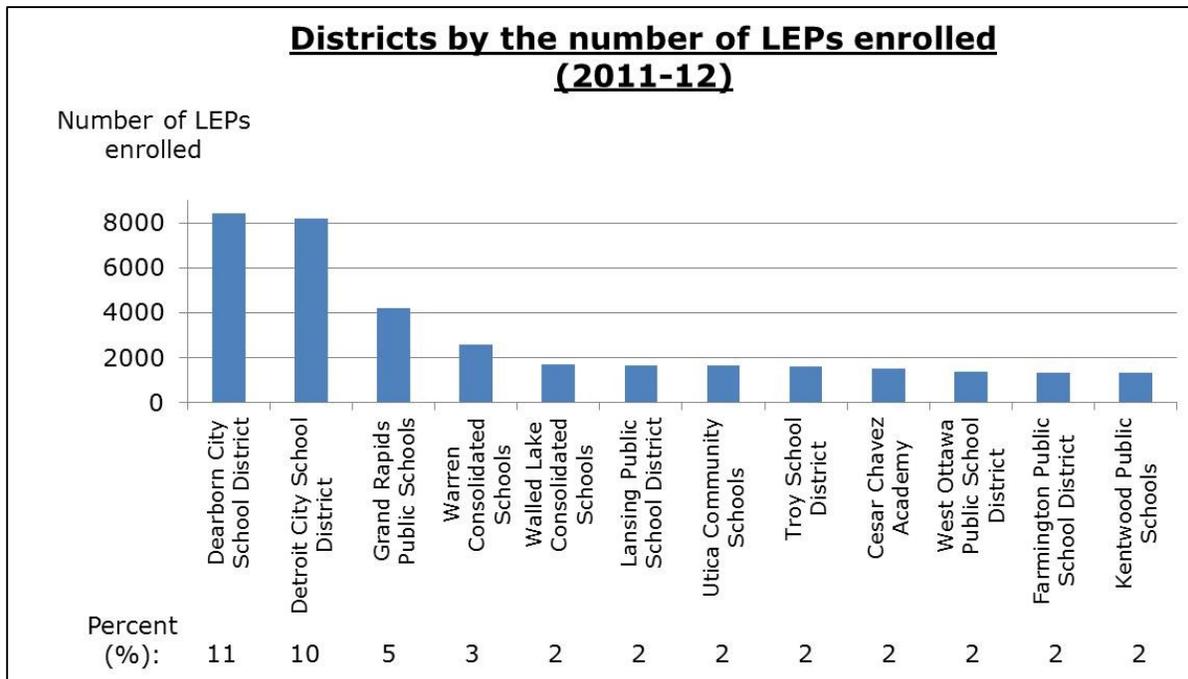


Figure 3

Of all native and/or home languages spoken by EL students, approximately 70 percent of them were Spanish and Arabic (Figure 4). In all ISDs and districts, regardless of their sizes, there was the large presence of Spanish and Arabic speaking EL students, although large ISDs and districts had more diversity in languages spoken (Figure 5 and 6).

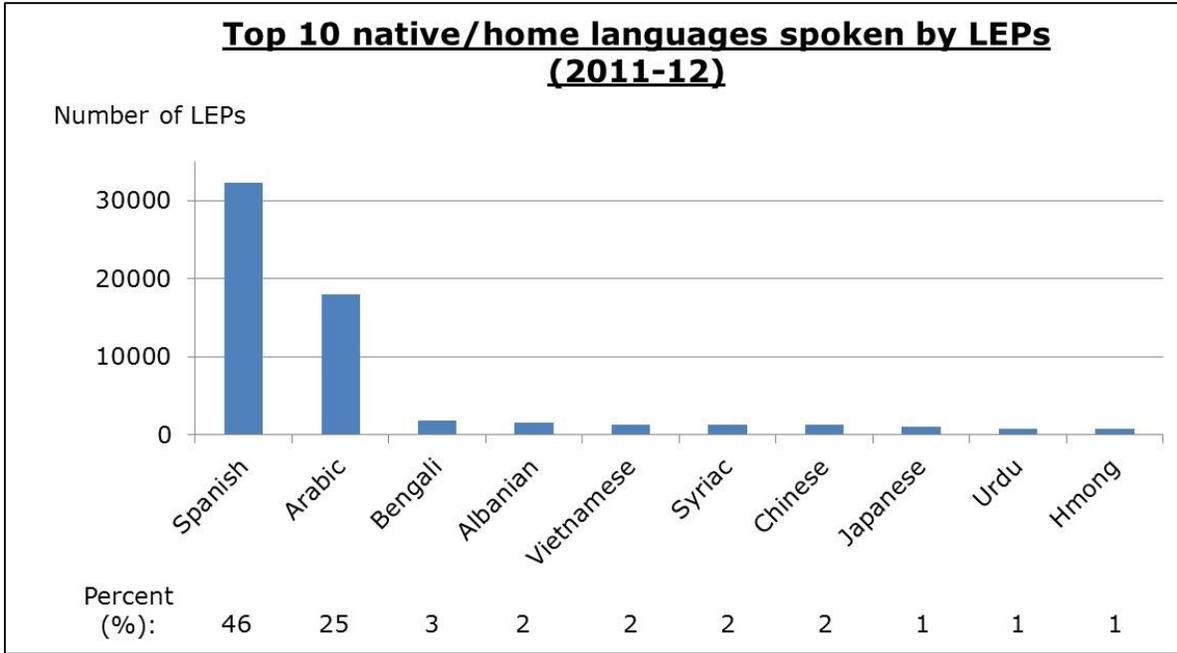


Figure 4

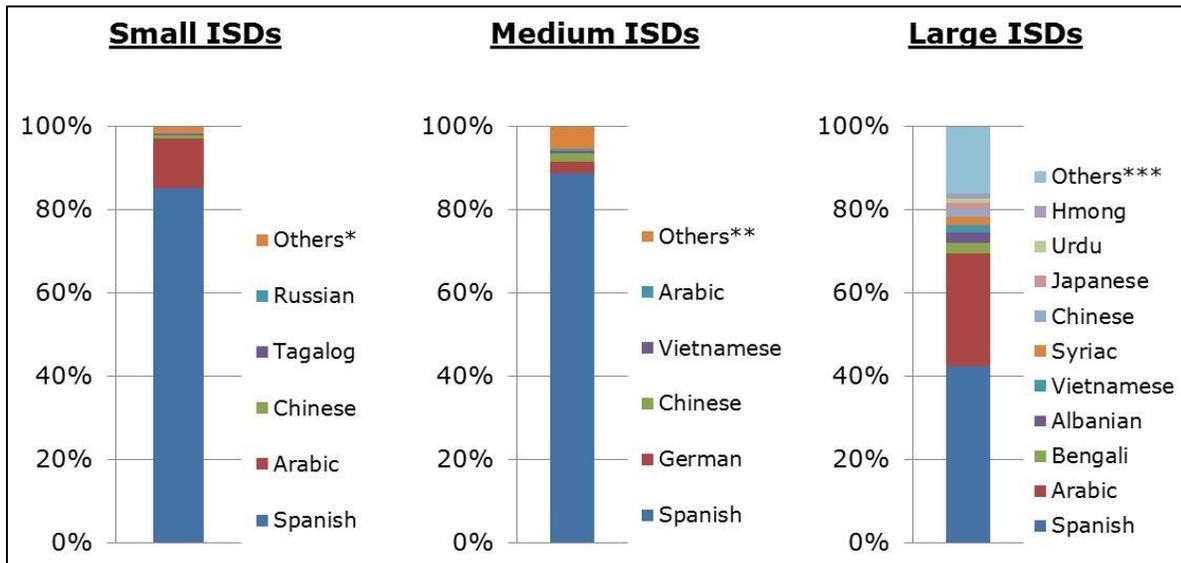


Figure 5

* Other languages in small ISDs included German, Korean, Gujarati, German, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Japanese, Telugu, Thai, Oromo, etc.

** Other languages in medium ISDs included Korean, Punjabi, Japanese, Portuguese, Urdu, Russian, Telugu, Hindi, Hmong, French, etc.

*** Other languages in large ISDs included Korean, Romanian, Aramaic, Burmese, Bosnian, Telugu, French, Somali, Russian, etc.

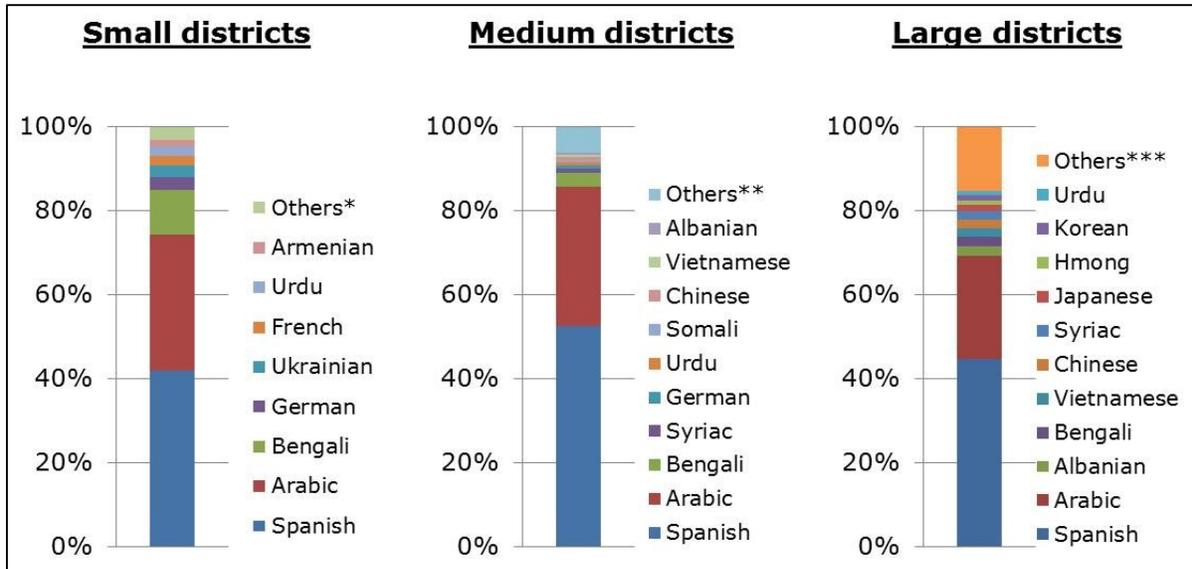


Figure 6

* Other languages in small districts included Somali, Mandingo, Gujarati, Vietnamese, Amharic, Tagalog, etc.

** Other languages in medium districts included Romanian, Punjabi, Gujarati, Aramaic, Telugu, Bosnian, Tagalog, etc.

*** Other languages in large districts included Urdu, Romanian, Aramaic, Burmese, Bosnian, Telugu, French, Russian, Hindi, Somali, etc.

Almost 74 percent of the EL population (56,995 students) was economically disadvantaged and eligible for free or reduced lunch. Most of them were from large ISDs and districts (Figure 7). However, given that the majority of the EL population was from large ISDs and districts, such results are not surprising.

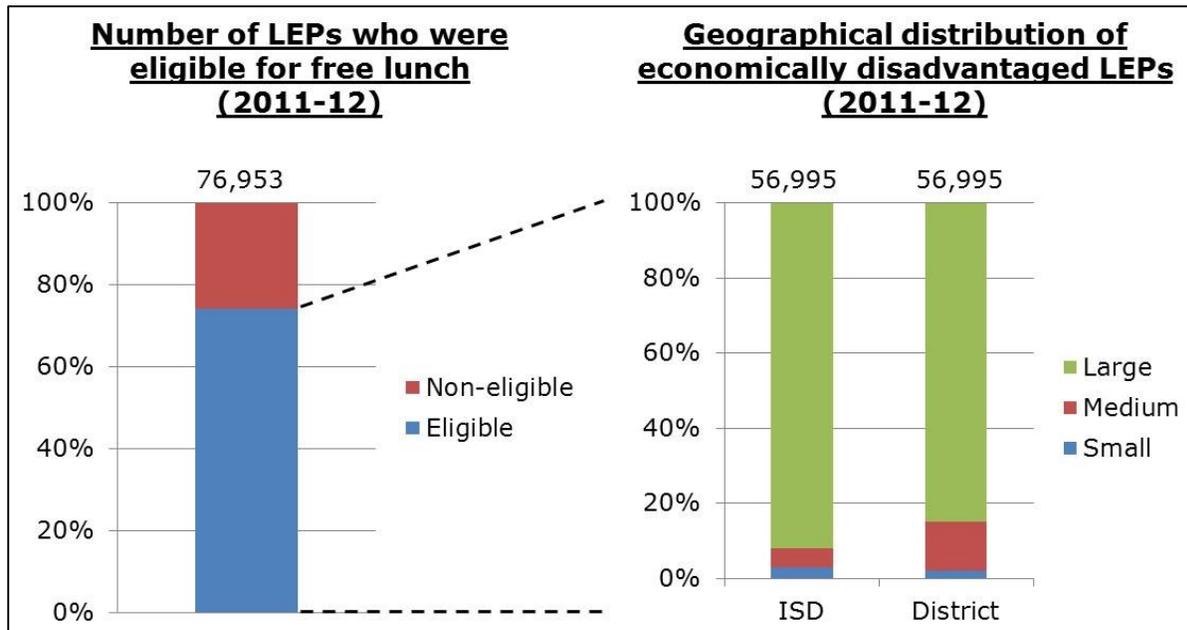


Figure 7

Among 56,995 economically disadvantaged EL students, about 80 percent spoke Spanish and Arabic as native and/or home languages (Figure 8). However, since the majority of the EL population spoke Spanish and Arabic, it is not surprising that many of economically disadvantaged LEP students also spoke Spanish and Arabic. In fact, if one looks at the percentage of economically disadvantaged LEPs by languages, other languages such as Somali, Aramaic, and Bengali ranked high as well (Figure 9). However, it is notable that both Spanish and Arabic ranked high not only in the total number of economically disadvantaged ELs, but also in the percentage of such population.

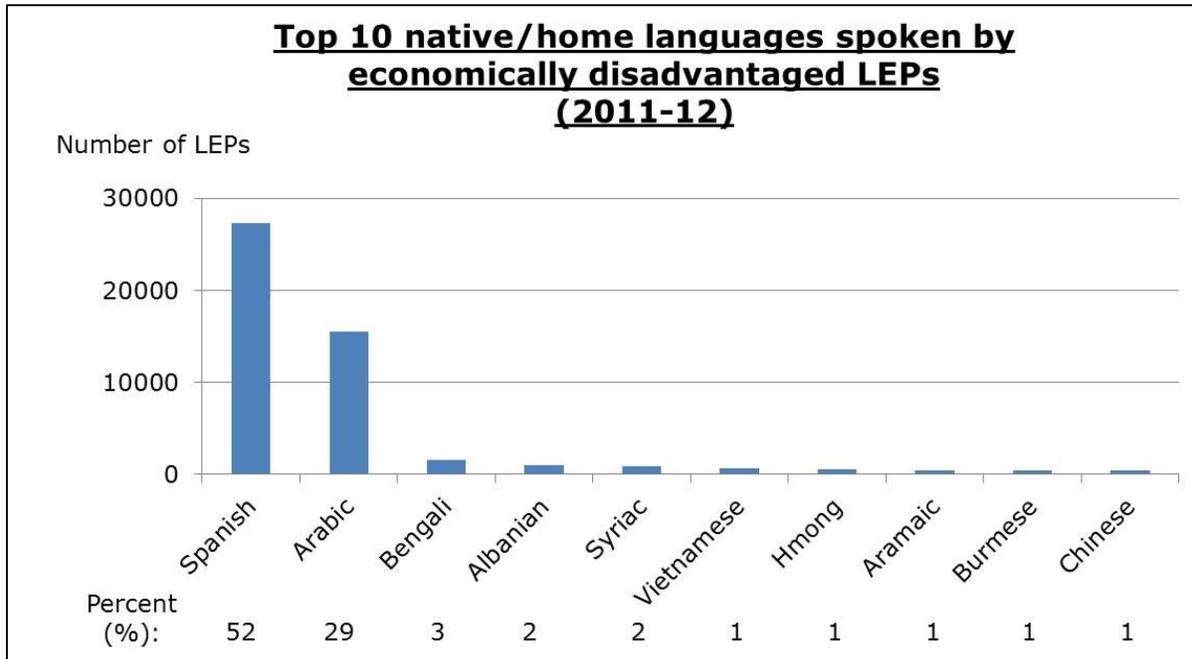


Figure 8

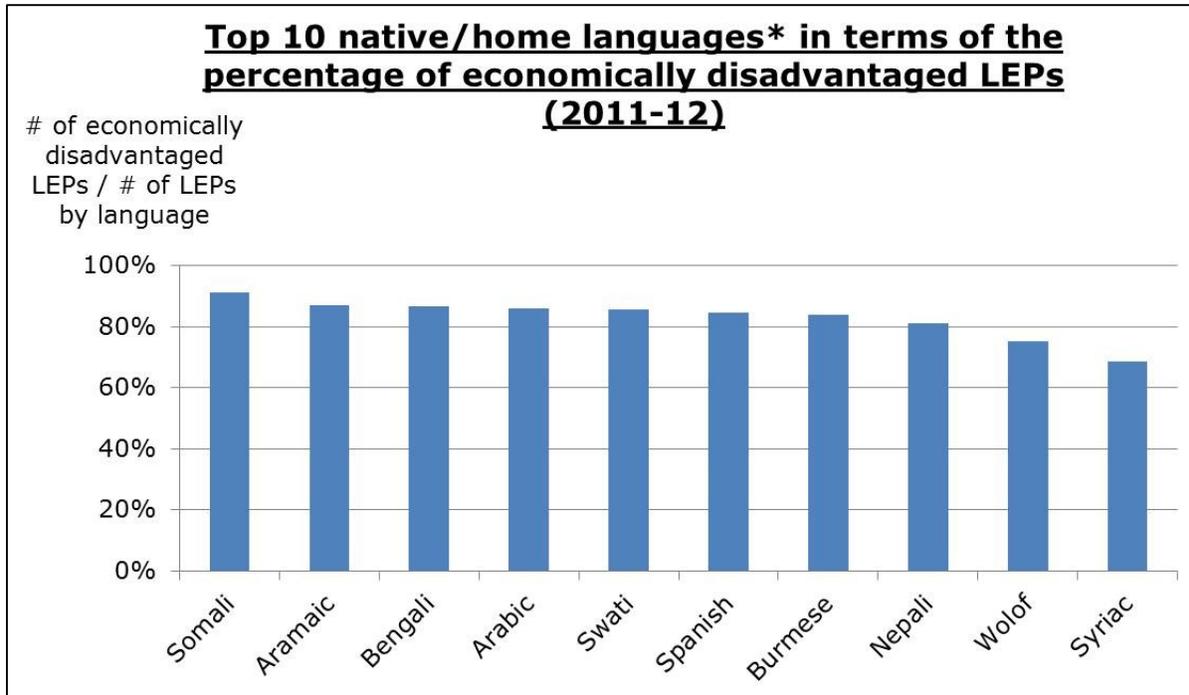


Figure 9

* Languages spoken by more than 100 LEPs

Around 10 percent (7,862) of the EL population received immigrant services in 2011-2012 (Figure 10). As described in the section before, it is critical to note that local districts, not individual immigrant students, receive funding for immigrant services if there has been a recent and significant increase in the number of immigrants in the district. Therefore, even if one district may have many immigrants, such district may not have qualified for immigrant funding if those immigrants have resided in the United States (therefore Michigan) for more than 3 years.

As Spanish and Arabic speaking EL students constituted the majority, many who did not receive immigration services in 2011-2012 (73 percent) were Spanish and Arabic speaking students (Figure 11). However, almost half of those who received immigrant services were Arabic speaking students (Figure 12). Among those who received immigrant services, only 8 percent spoke Spanish. This result makes sense given that the recent immigrants to the United States (therefore Michigan) have come from Arabic speaking countries. Despite the large presence of Spanish speaking immigrants in Michigan, the recent immigration from Mexico or other Spanish speaking countries has not been very significant.

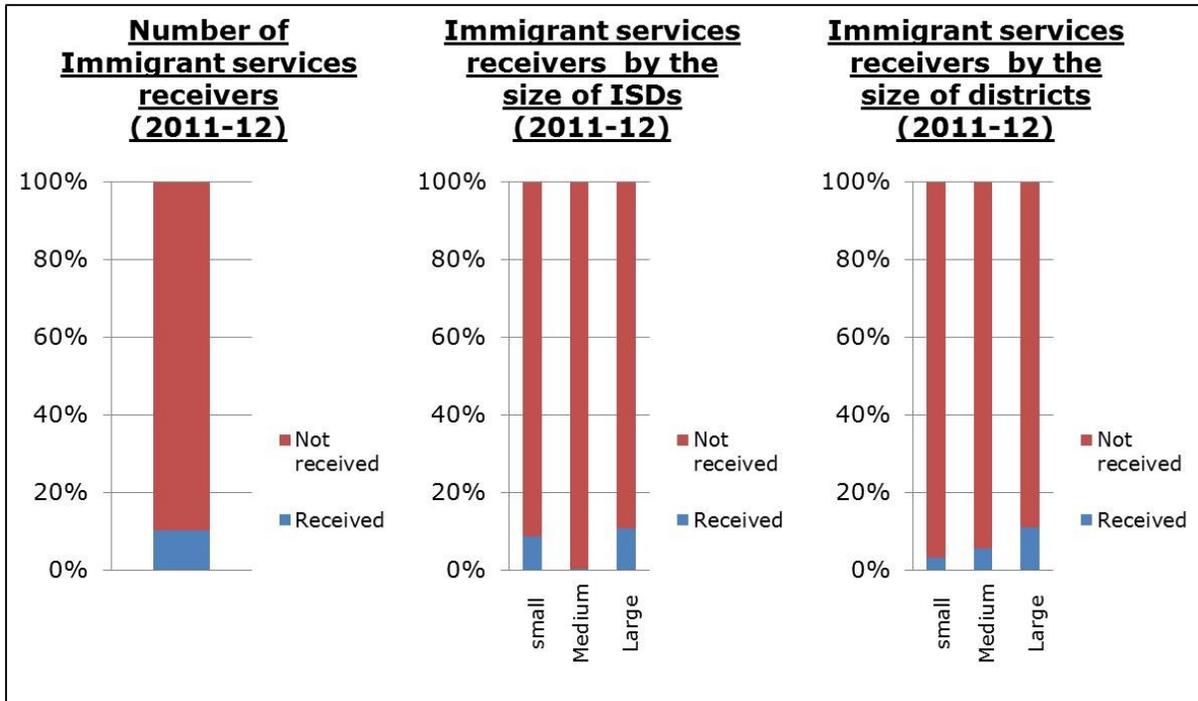


Figure 10

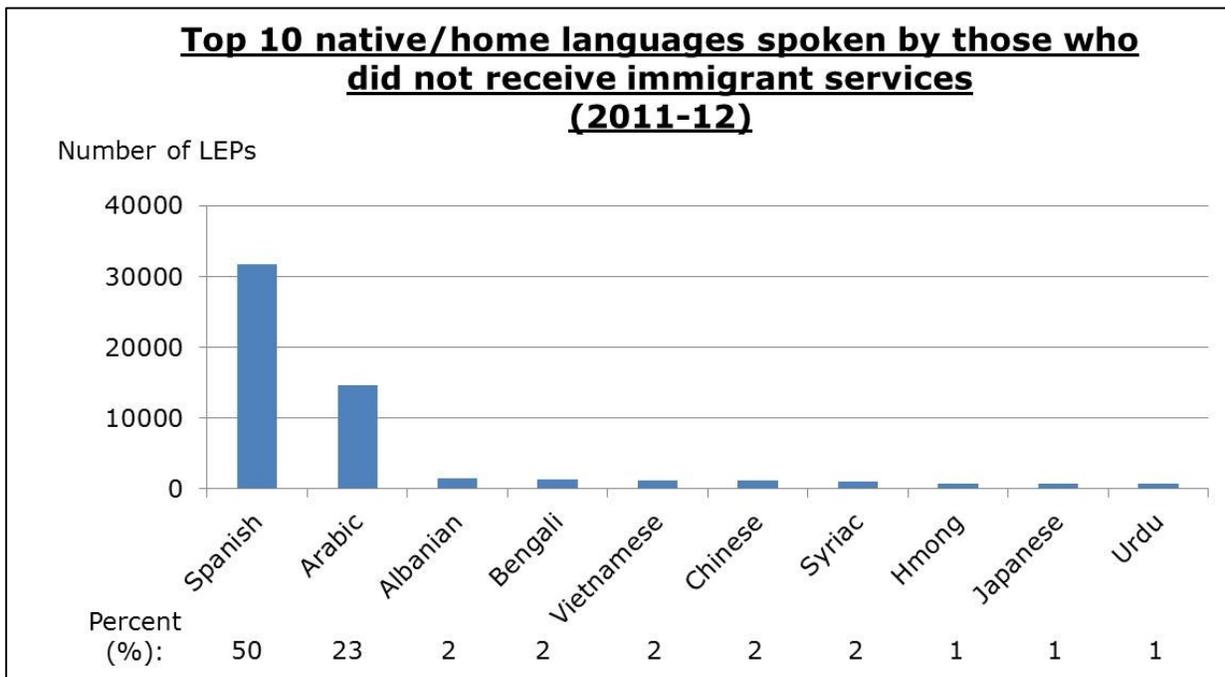


Figure 11

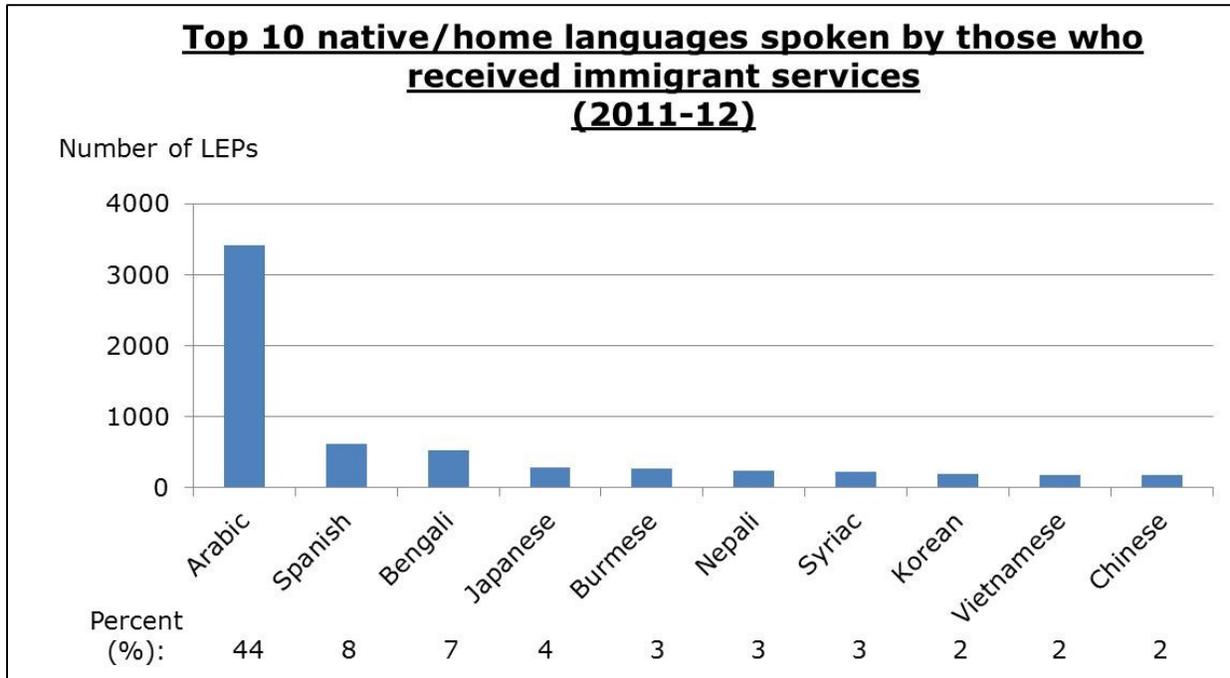


Figure 12

Many of EL students who were born in the United States were not proficient in English. In 2011-2012, nearly 60 percent of the EL population was born in the United States (Figure 13). Among foreign born EL students, many came from Iraq, Yemen, and Mexico. More than 70 percent of EL students who were born in the United States spoke Spanish and Arabic (Figure 14).

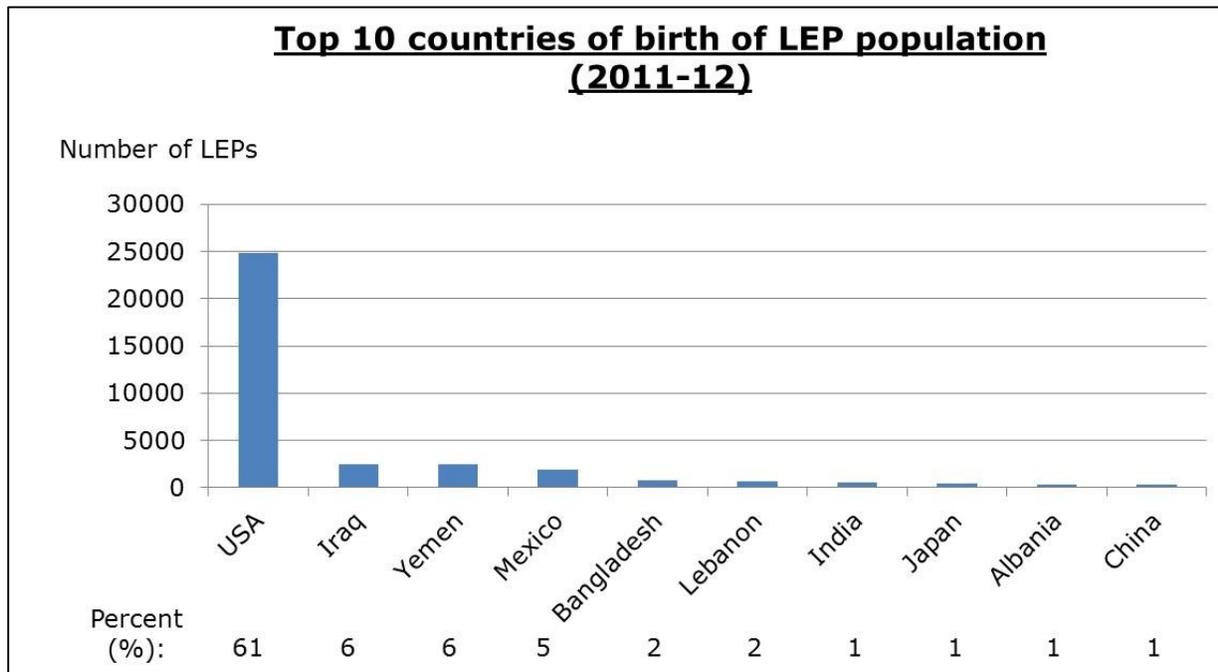


Figure 13

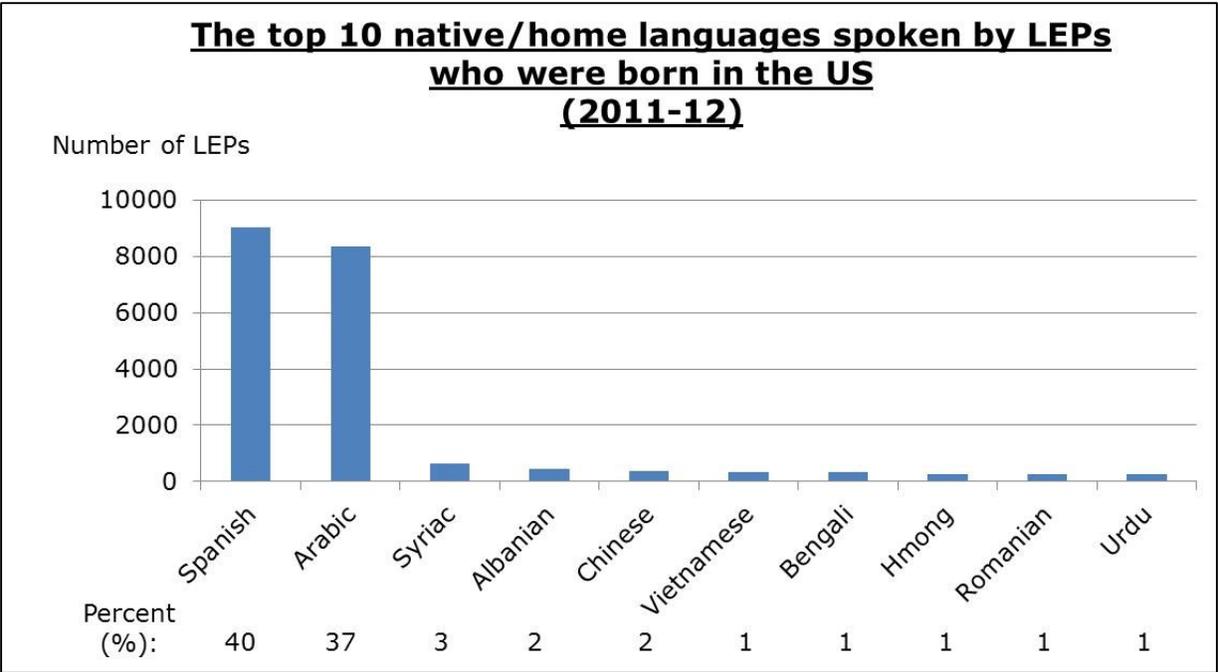


Figure 14

Large ISDs and districts had more diversity in countries of birth, yet the overall ranking was similar across all sizes of ISDs and districts (Figure 15 and 16).

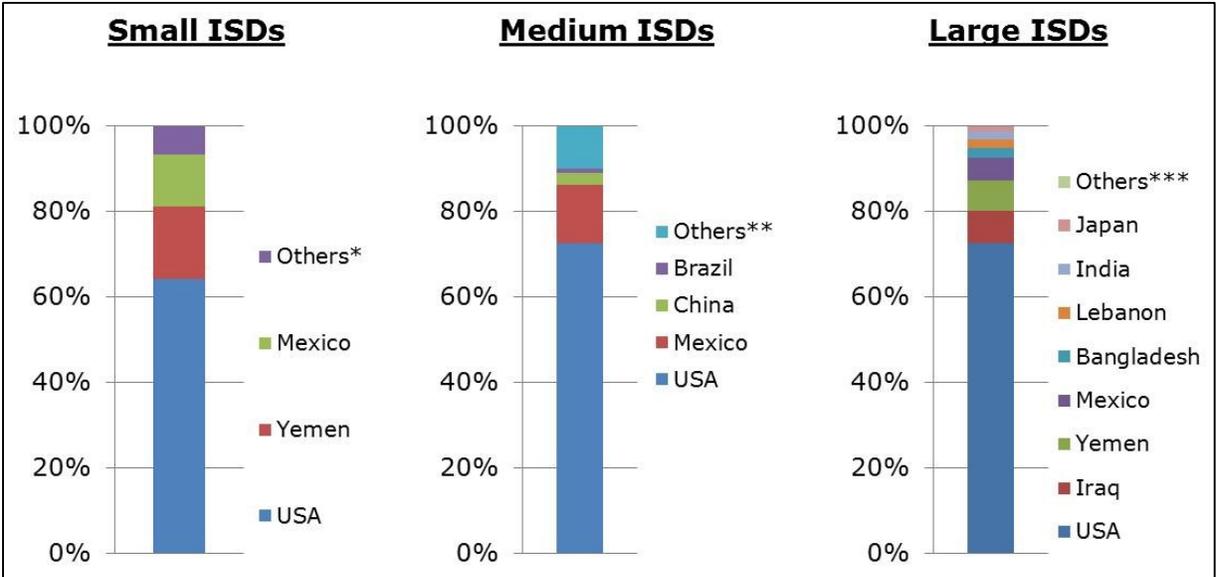


Figure 15

* Other countries in small ISDs included Philippines, China, Thailand, Ethiopia, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, etc.
 ** Other countries in medium ISDs included Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Ethiopia, Thailand, India, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Haiti, etc.
 *** Other languages in large ISDs included Myanmar, China, Korea, Vietnam, Syria, Puerto Rico, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, etc.

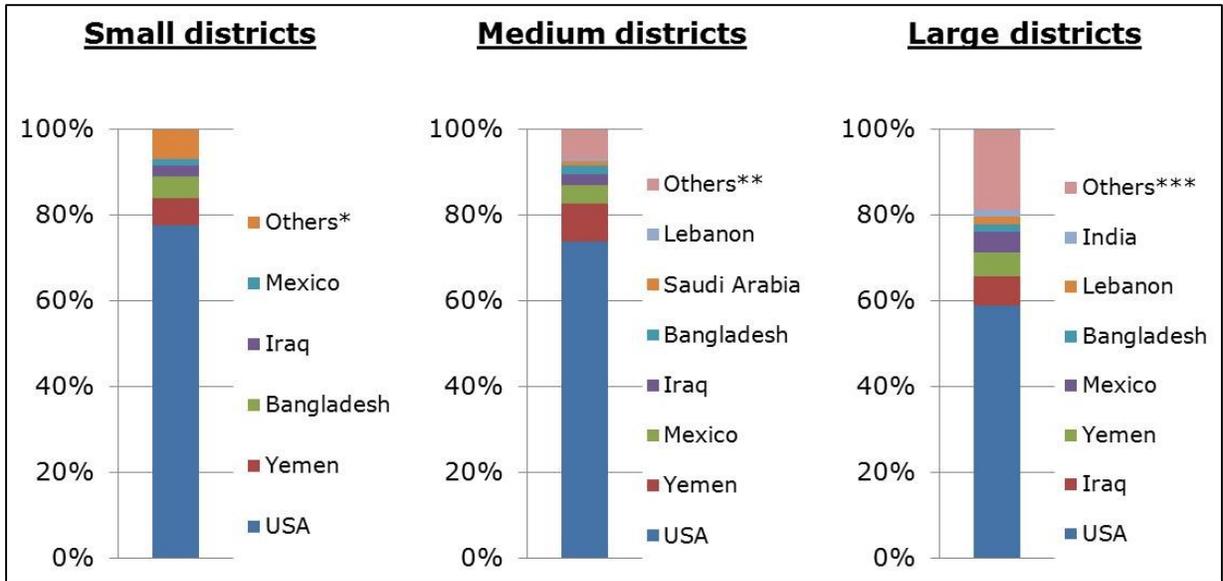


Figure 16

* Other countries in small districts included Pakistan, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Honduras, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, etc.
 ** Other countries in medium districts included Jordan, India, Canada, Liberia, Puerto Rico, Kenya, Philippines, etc.
 *** Other languages in large districts included Japan, Albania, Canada, Myanmar, Korea, Vietnam, Syria, etc.

About 11 percent (8,510 students) of the EL population had primary disabilities. In particular, 3 percent of the EL population had speech and language impairment (Figure 17).

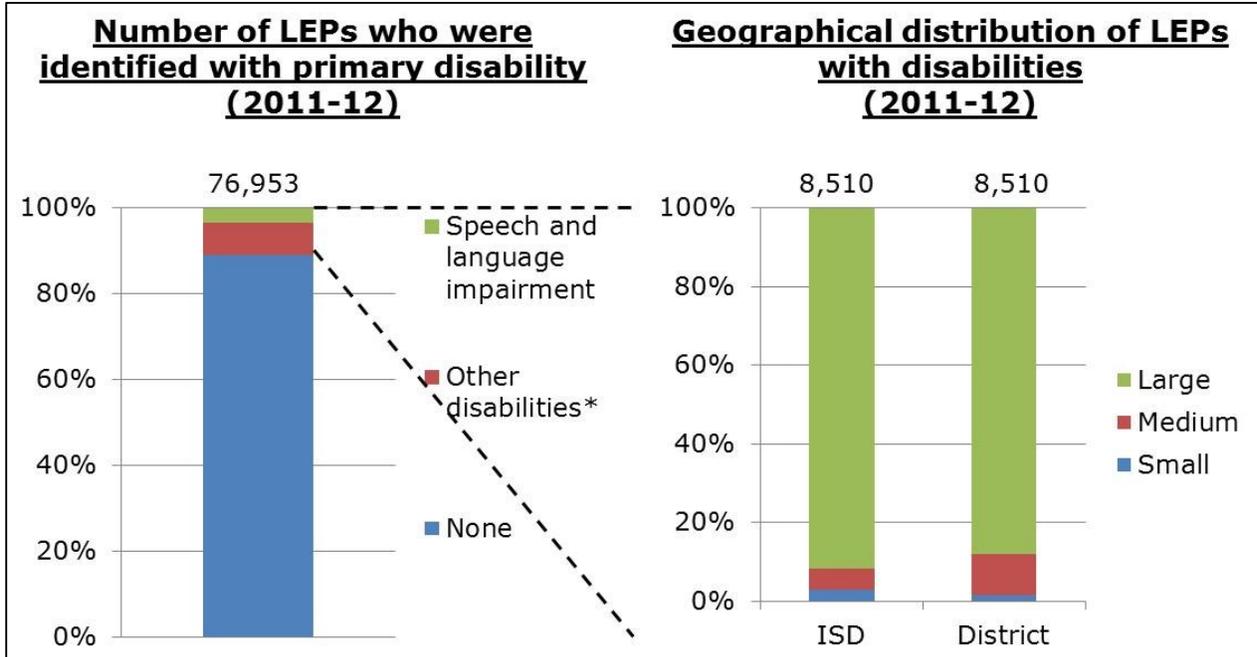


Figure 17

* Other disabilities included cognitive, emotional, hearing, visual, and physical impairments, early childhood developmental delay, specific learning disability, severe multiple impairment, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, deaf-blindness, and other health impairment

However, there was no distinct pattern in geographical distribution of speech and language impairment (Figure 18).

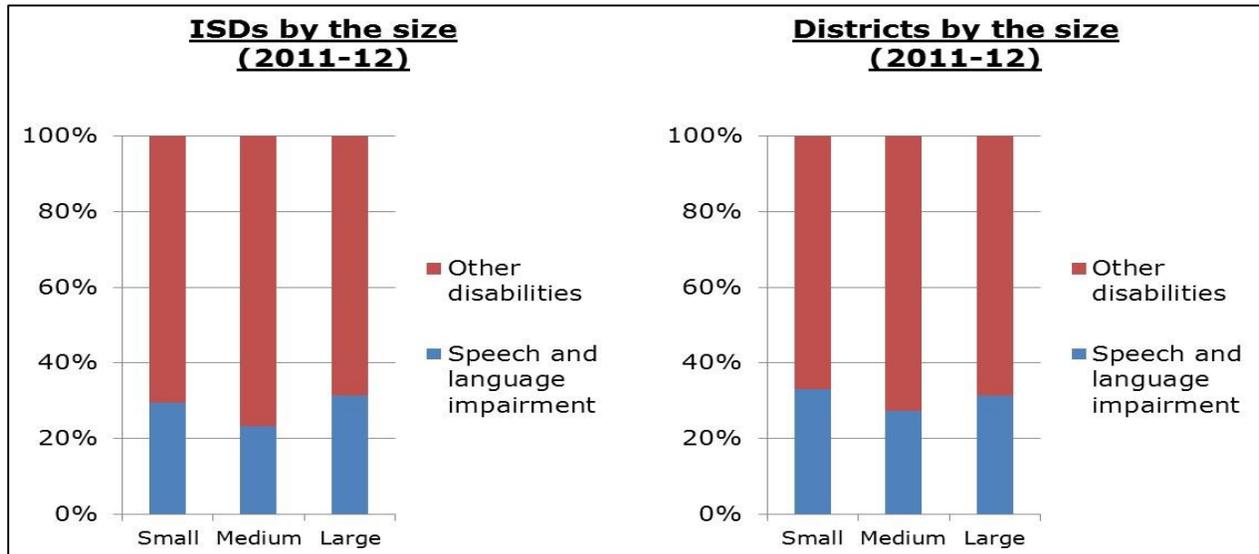


Figure 18

FLEP students

There were 6,213 FLEP students or EL students who achieved proficiency in English in 2011-2012. Although 9,801 students exited the LEP program in 2011-12, those who exited for reasons other than proficiency in English (e.g. graduation, parent request, and others) were not counted as FLEP students in this analysis.

It is no surprise that most FLEPs were from large ISDs and districts, since EL students were heavily concentrated in large regions. However, medium ISDs and districts showed better progress in LEP students’ improvement in English proficiency, as medium ISDs and districts had much higher percentages of LEP students who became FLEP students (Figure 19).

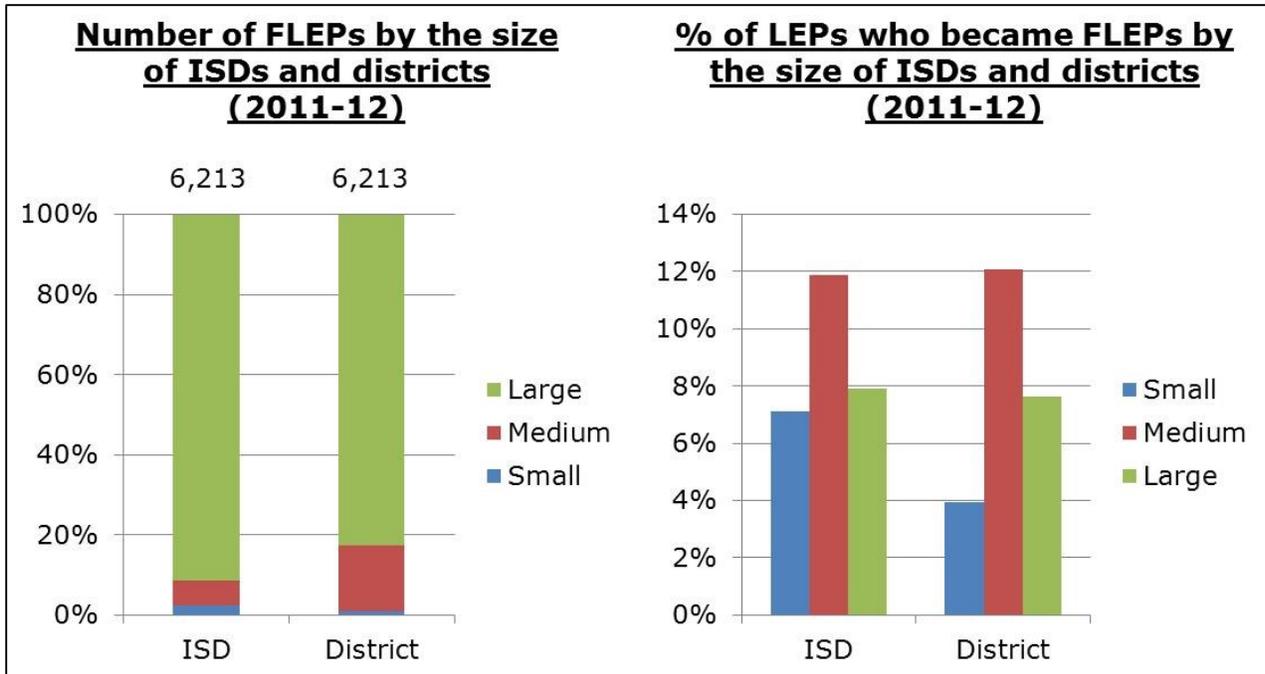


Figure 19

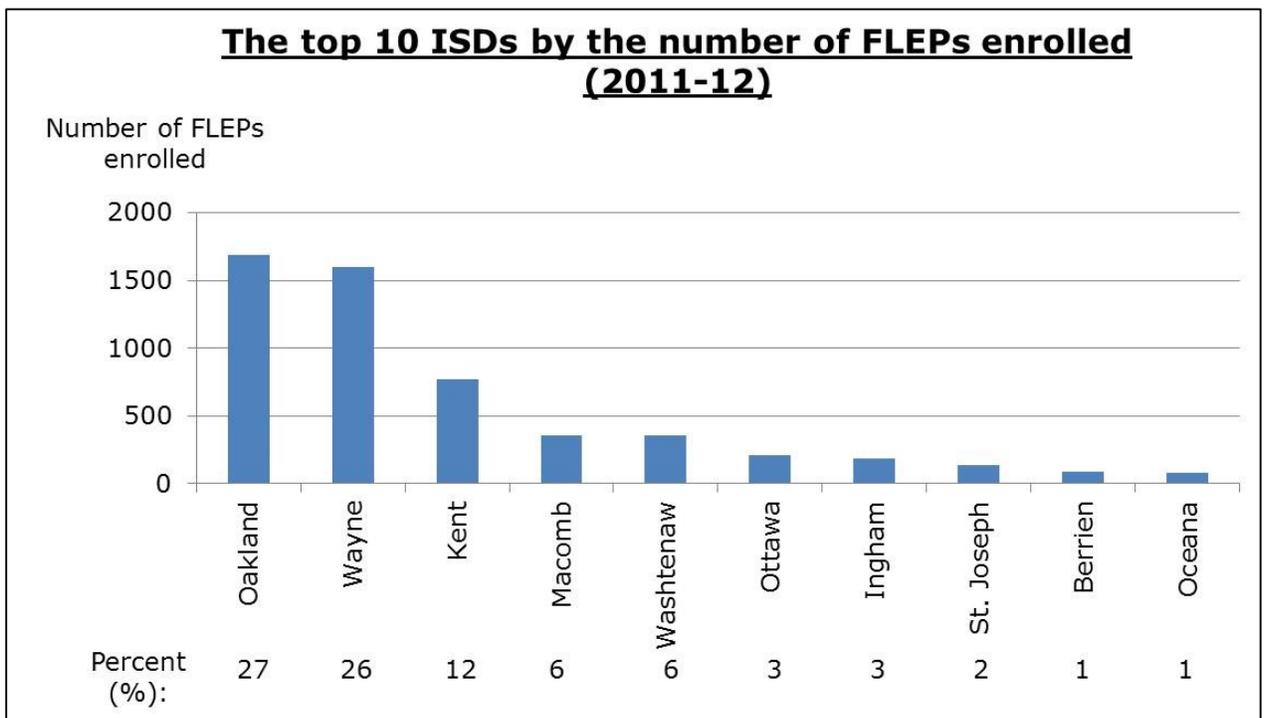


Figure 20

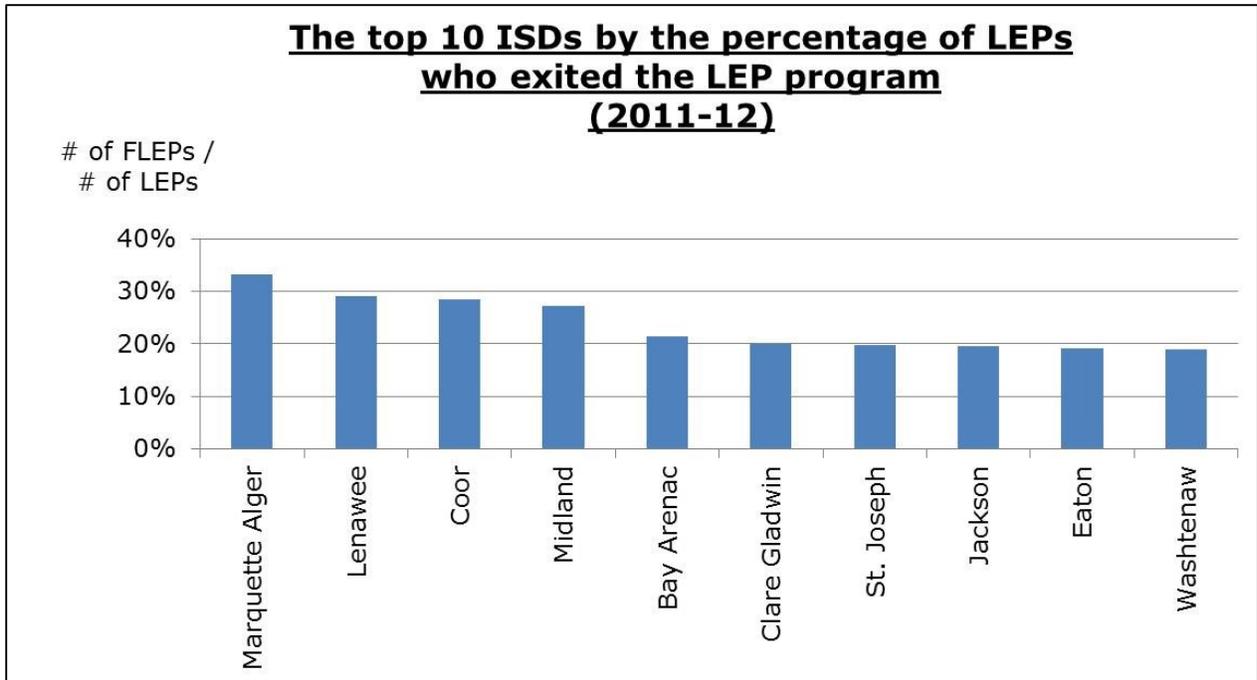


Figure 21

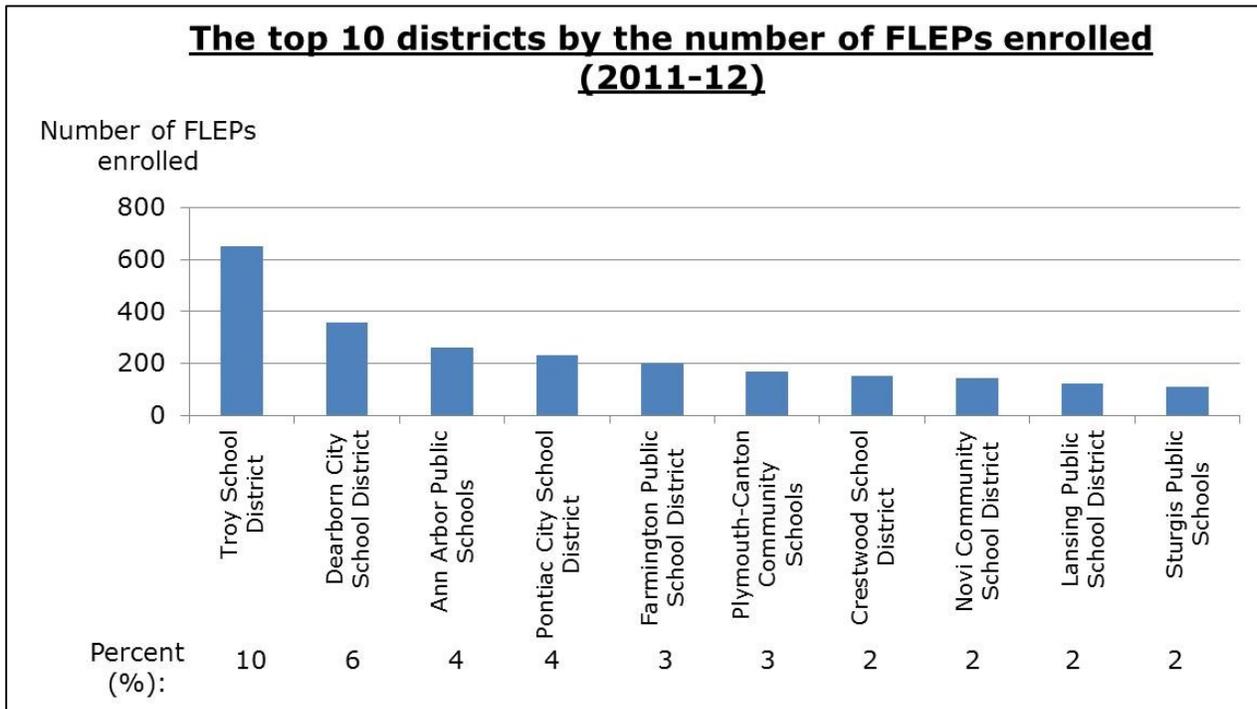


Figure 22

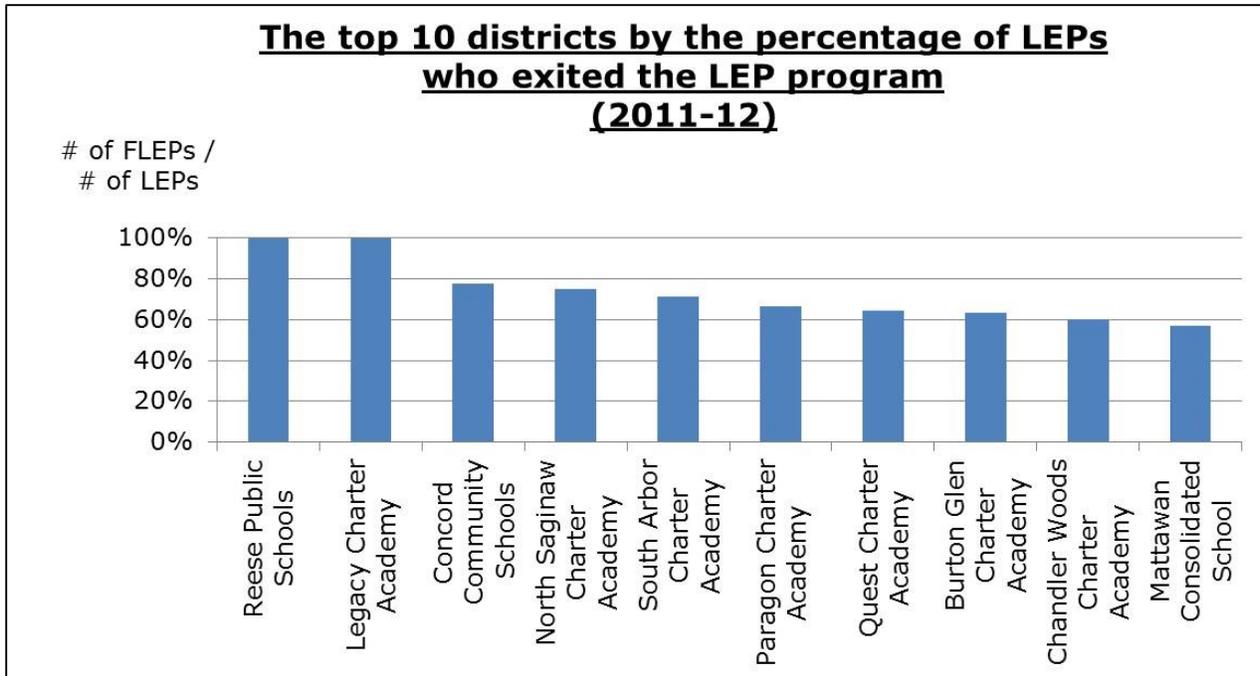


Figure 23

Compared to EL students, FLEP students seemed relatively better off in terms of economic situation. 56 percent of FLEP students were eligible for free or reduced lunch, when nearly 74 percent of LEP students were eligible for free or reduced lunch (Figure 24). Most of economically disadvantaged FLEPs came from large ISDs and districts.

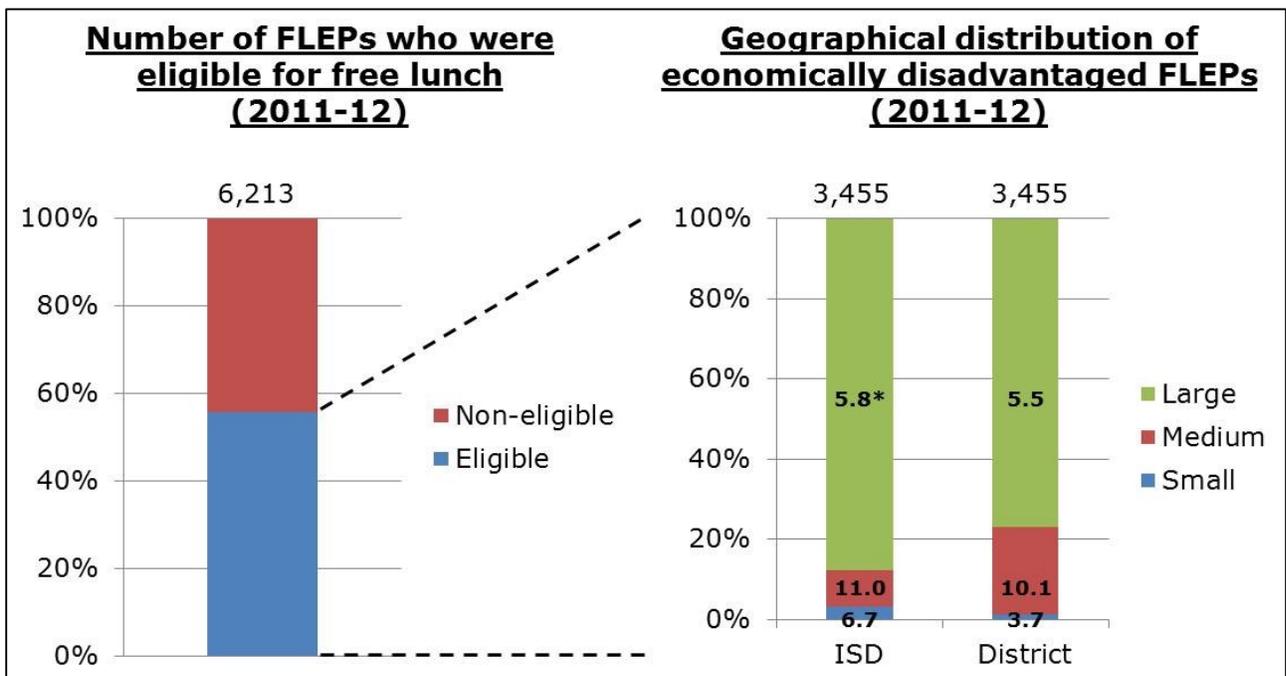


Figure 24

* Percentages in the bar indicate the percentage of FLEP in each size category of ISDs or districts

Most of FLEP students who were economically disadvantaged spoke Spanish and Arabic. However, the result was quite different, if one controlled for the large presence of Spanish and Arabic speaking FLEP students by calculating the percentage of disadvantaged, but proficient EL students by languages. Other languages ranked higher in terms of the progress in EL students' improvement in English proficiency (Figure 26).

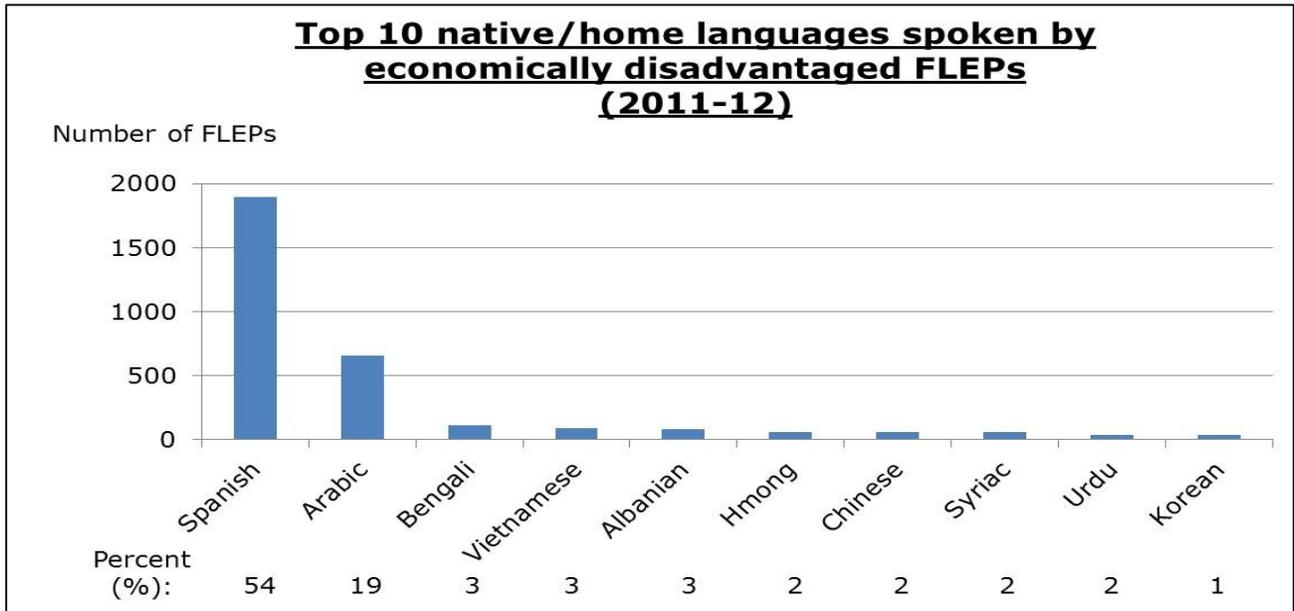


Figure 25

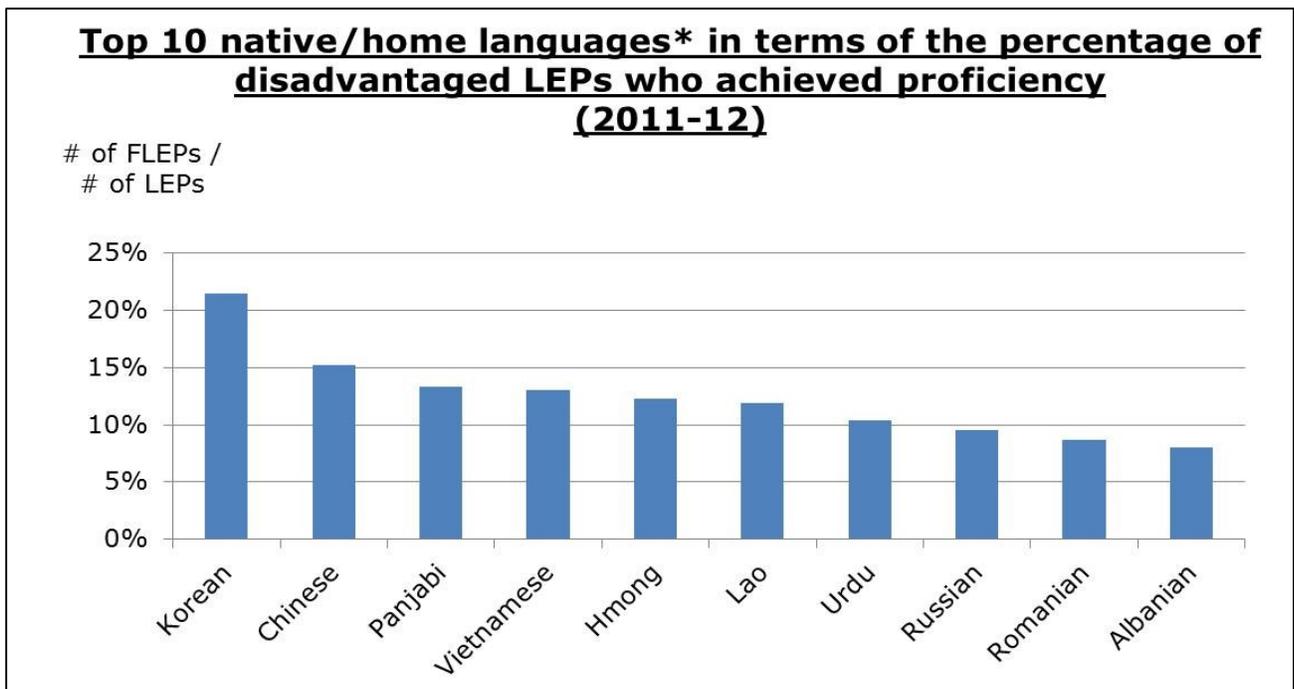


Figure 26

* Languages spoken by more than 100 LEPs

Of all native and/or home languages spoken by FLEP students, 53 percent of them were Spanish and Arabic (Figure 27). Given the fact that nearly 70 percent of EL students spoke Spanish and Arabic, this result indicates that smaller percentage of Spanish and Arabic speaking EL students tended to exit the LEP program, compared to EL students who spoke other languages (Figure 28).

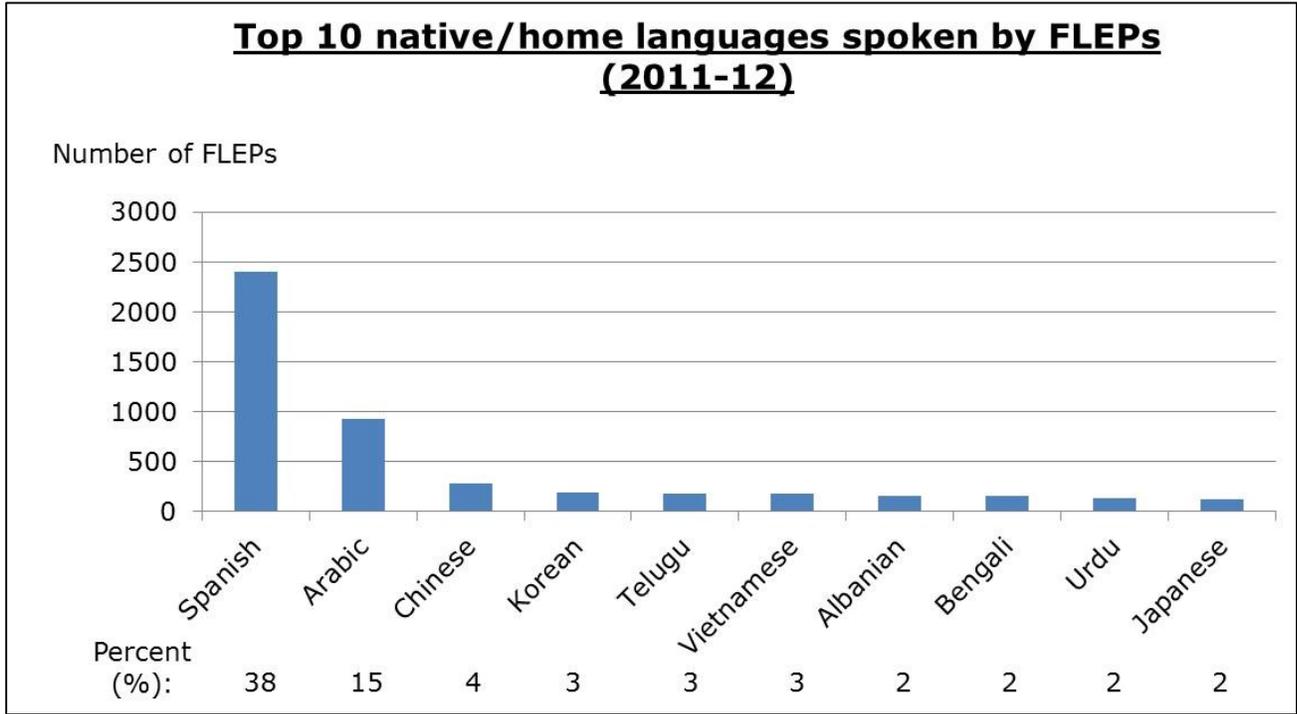


Figure 27

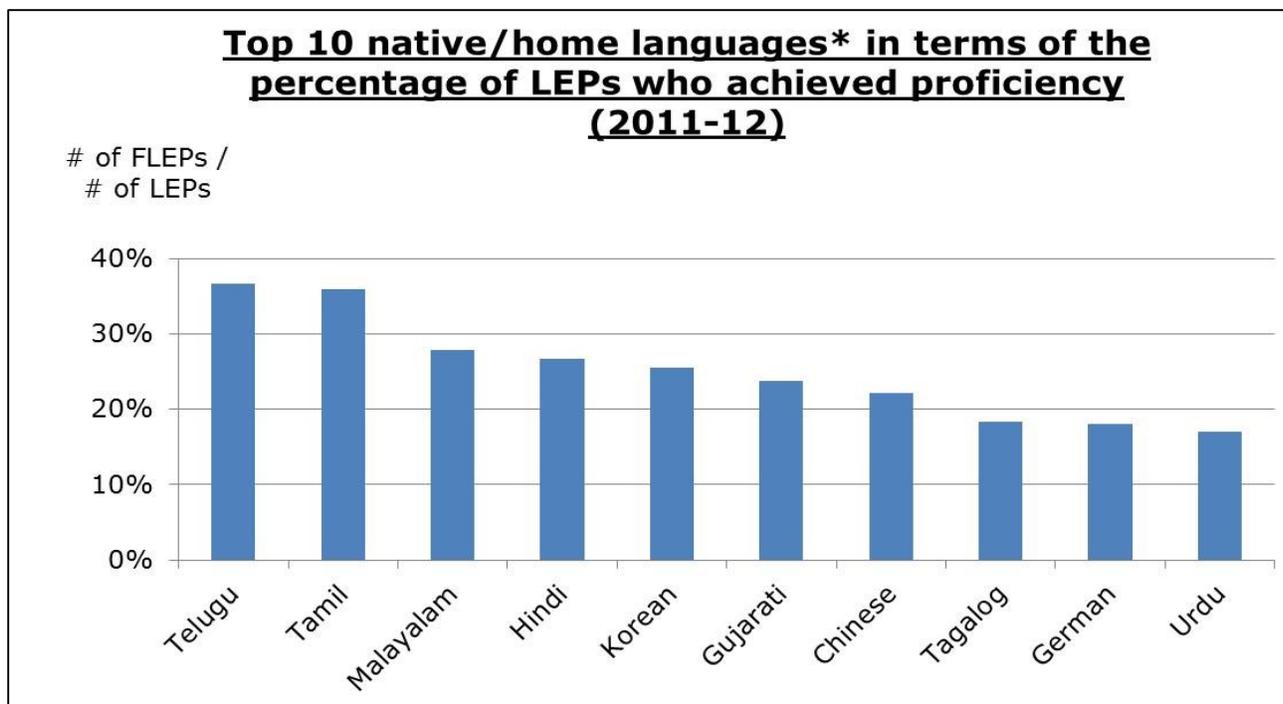


Figure 28

* Languages spoken by more than 100 LEPs

As it was the case with EL students, Large ISDs and districts both had more diversity in languages spoken by FLEP students (Figure 29 and 30).

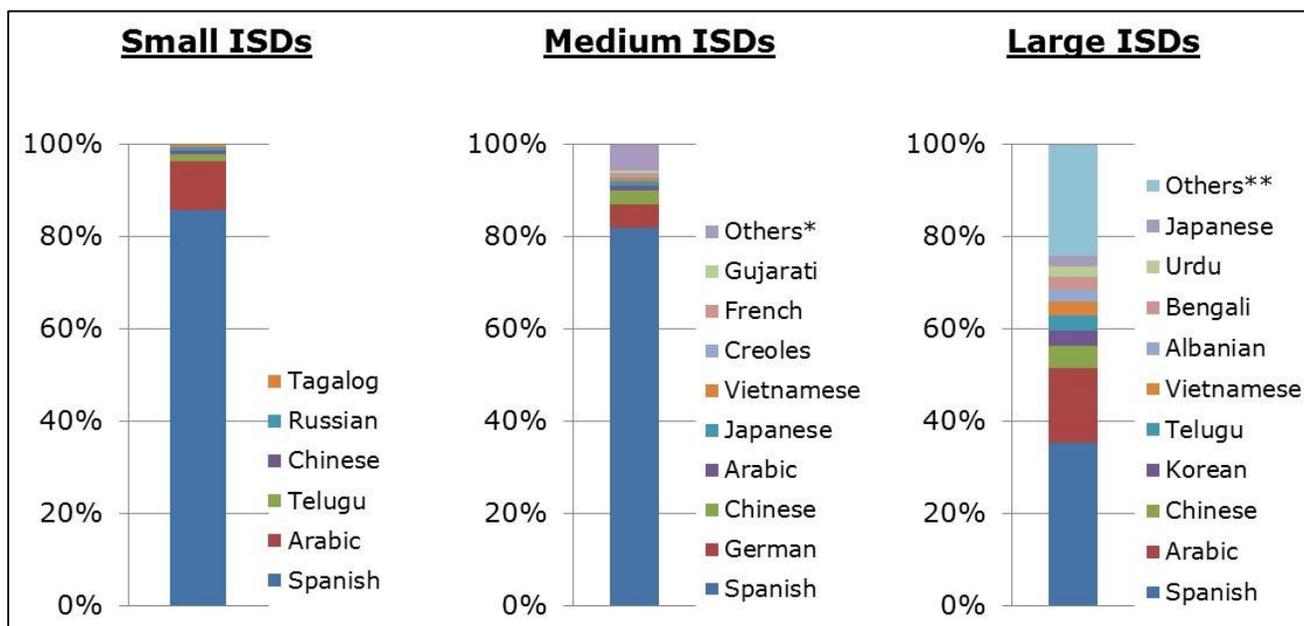


Figure 29

* Other languages in medium ISDs included Hmong, Korean, Macedonian, Mandar, Tamil, Telugu, Armenian, Bengali, etc.

** Other languages in medium ISDs included Hmong, Hindi, Syriac, Tamil, Romanian, Gujarati, German, Bosnian, Telugu, etc.

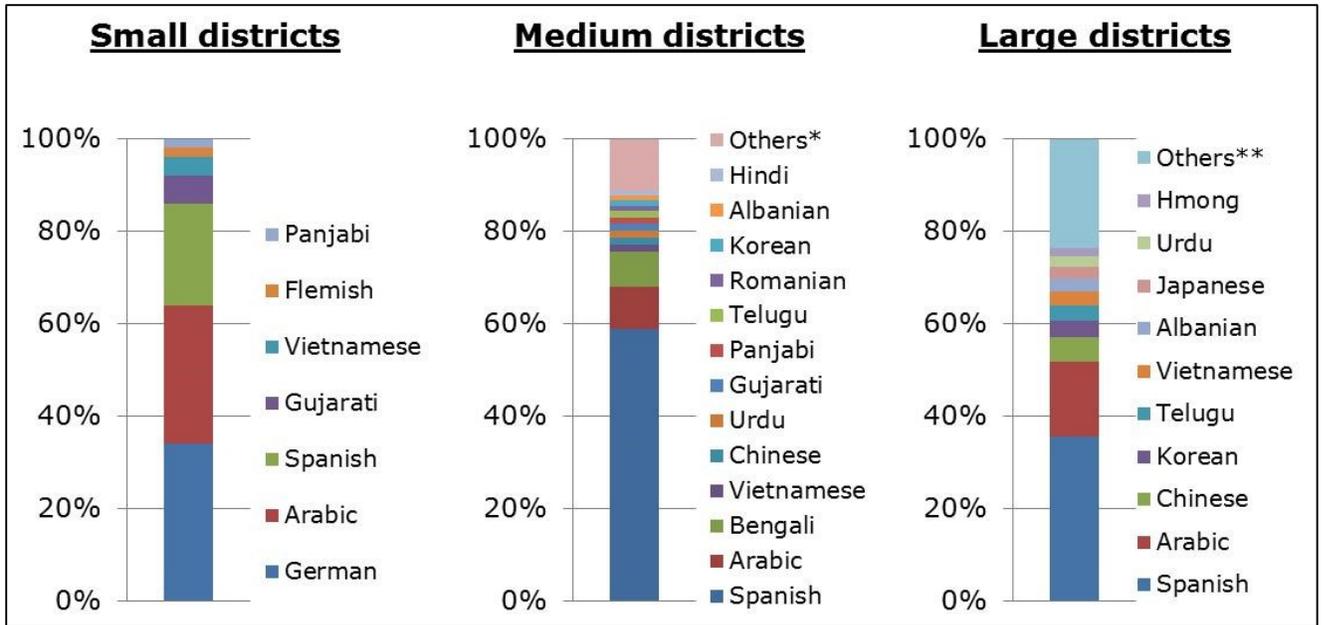


Figure 30

* Other languages in medium districts included Bosnian, Polish, Tagalog, Lao, Tamil, Somali, French, Oromo, etc.

** Other languages in large districts included Hindi, Syriac, Tamil, Bengali, Romanian, Gujarati, German, Bosnian, etc.

Around 6 percent of FLEP students received immigrant services, but there was no distinct geographical pattern (Figure 31).

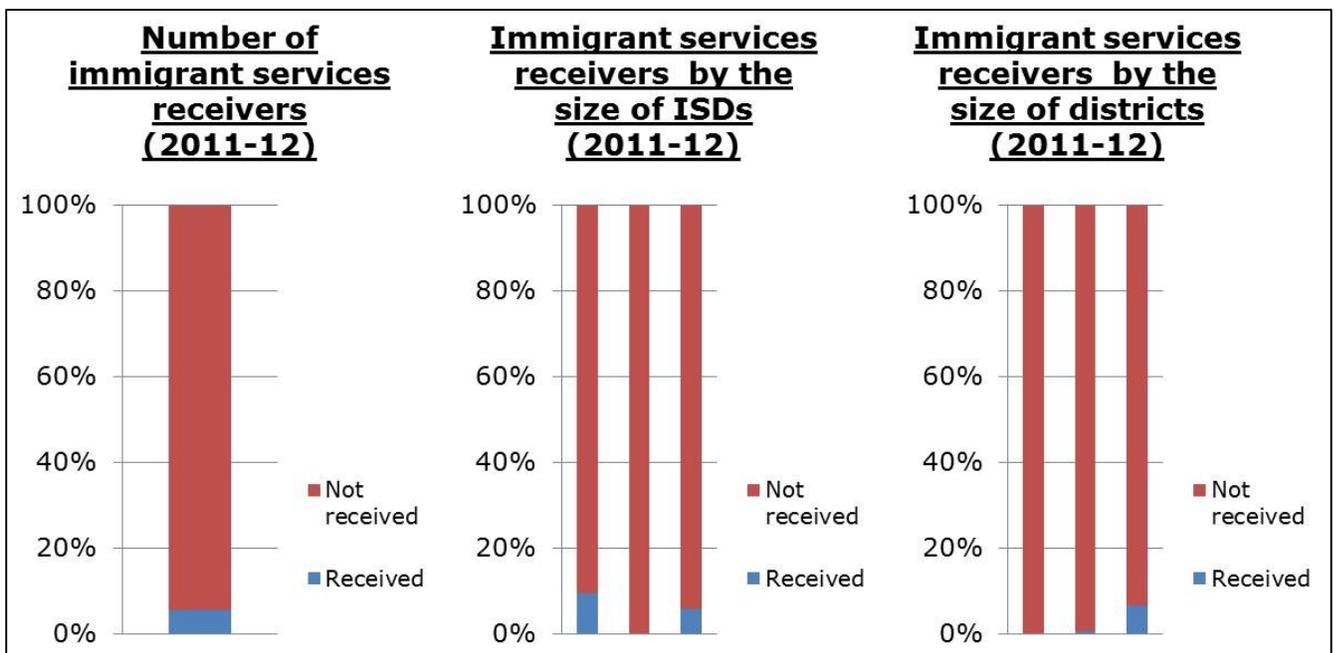


Figure 31

Among FLEP students who did not receive immigrant services, 55 percent spoke Spanish and Arabic (Figure 32).

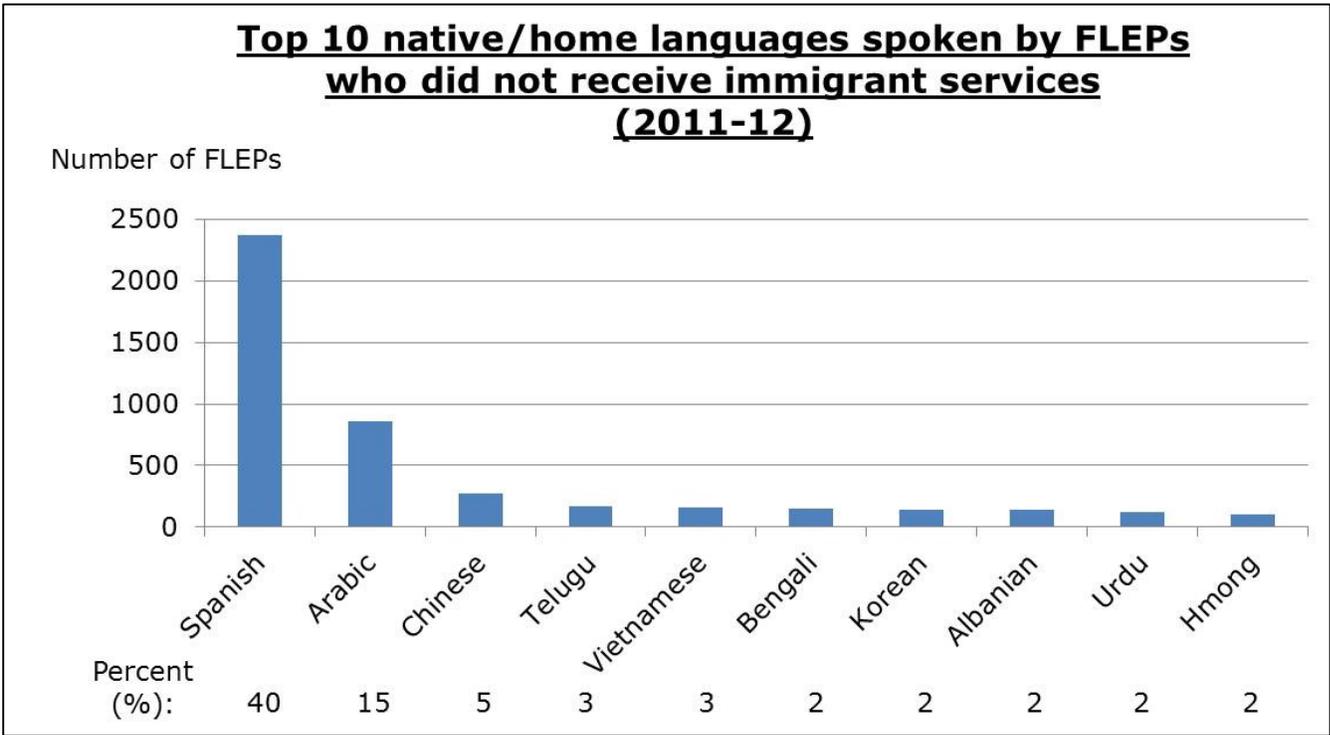


Figure 32

FLEP students who came from districts where there had been a significant increase in the number of immigrants recently received funding for immigrant services (Figure 33). As it was the case for EL students, Spanish speaking LEP students did not receive as much immigrant funding as Arabic speaking students did. It was due to the recent trend that the number of immigrants from Mexico or other Spanish speaking countries has been steady, while immigration from Arabic speaking countries has increased significantly.

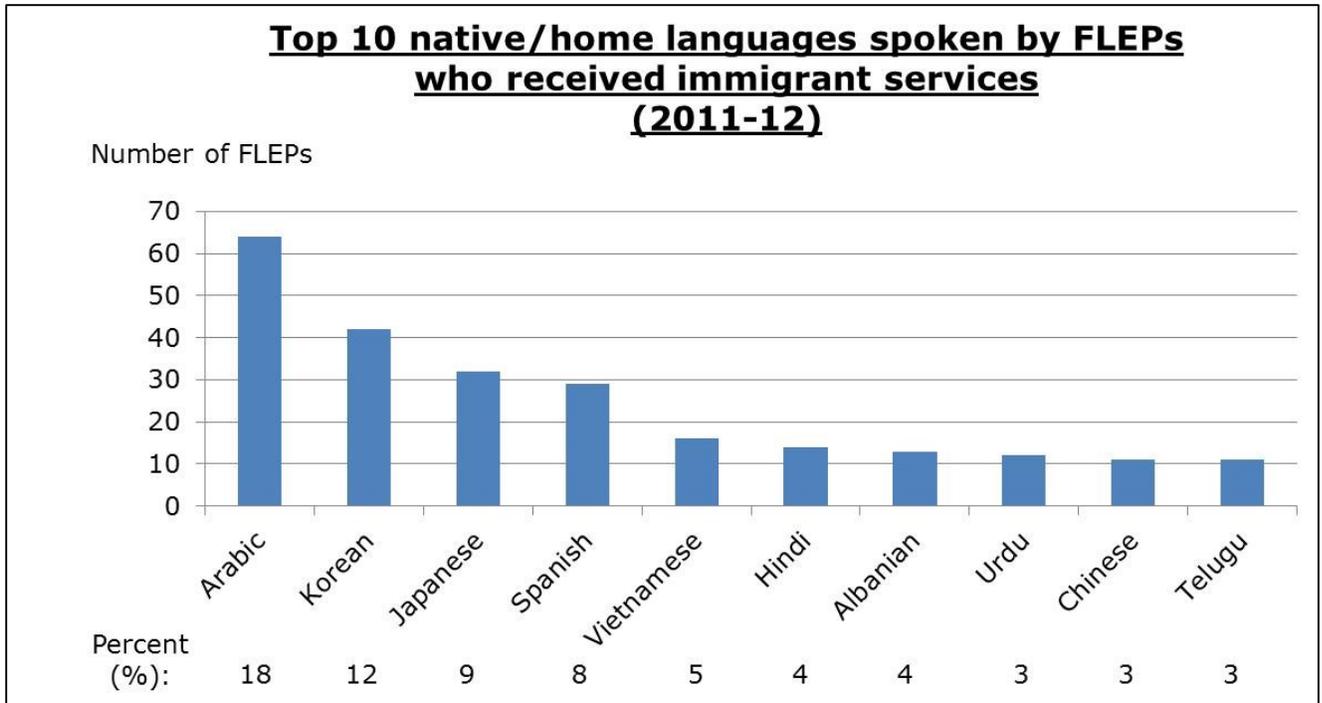


Figure 33

Nearly 70 percent of the FLEP population was born in the United States (Figure 34). However, higher percentage of those who were born in other countries achieved English proficiency (Figure 35). About half of FLEP students who were born in the United States spoke Spanish and Arabic (Figure 36).

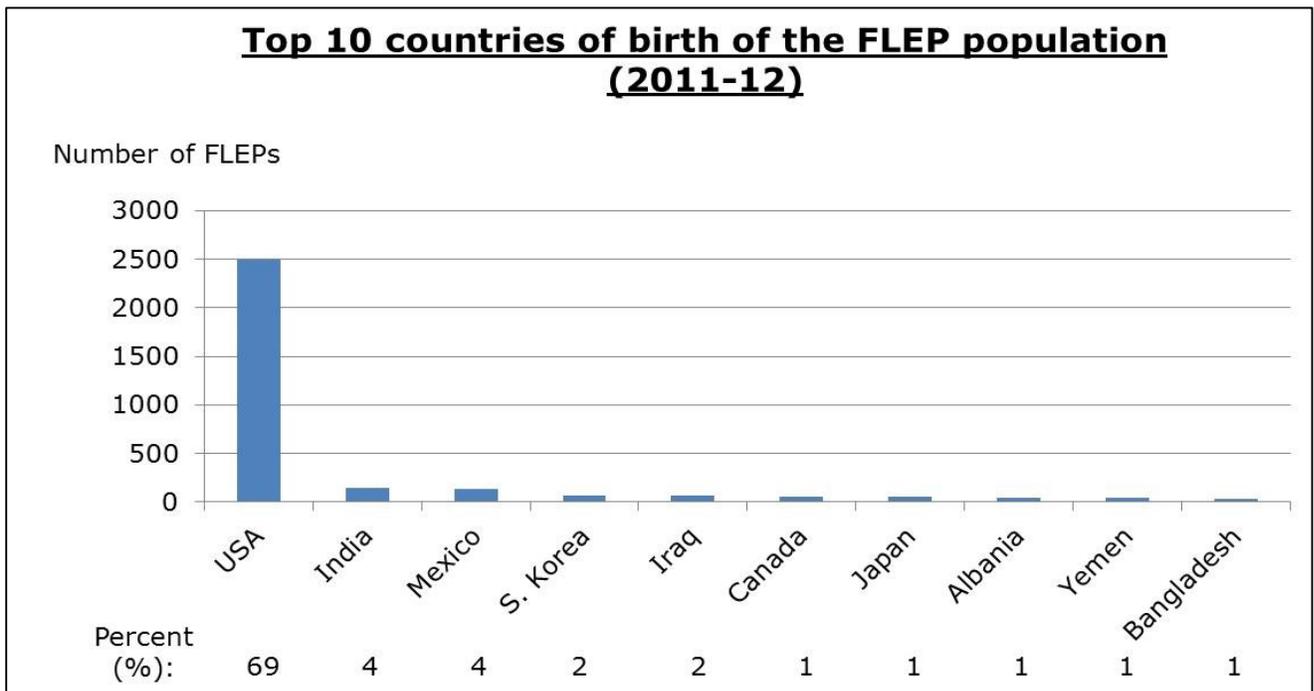


Figure 34

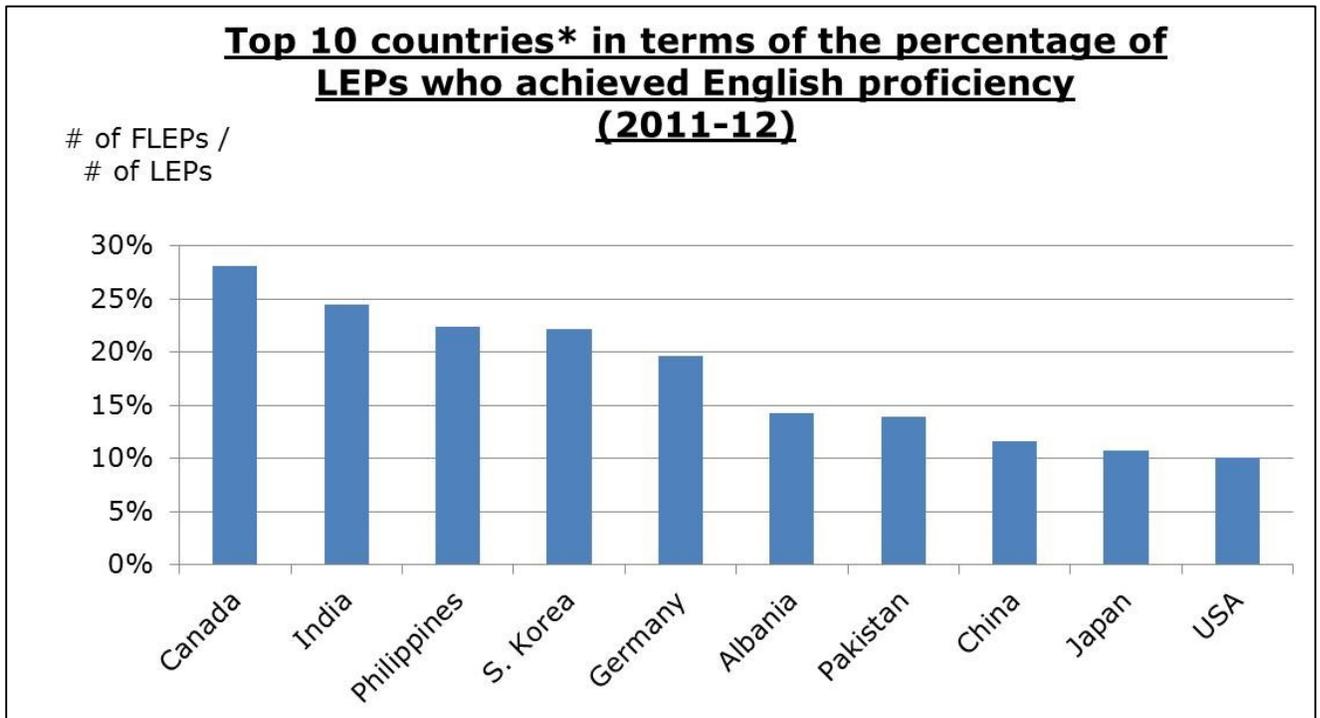


Figure 35

* Countries where more than 100 LEPs were born

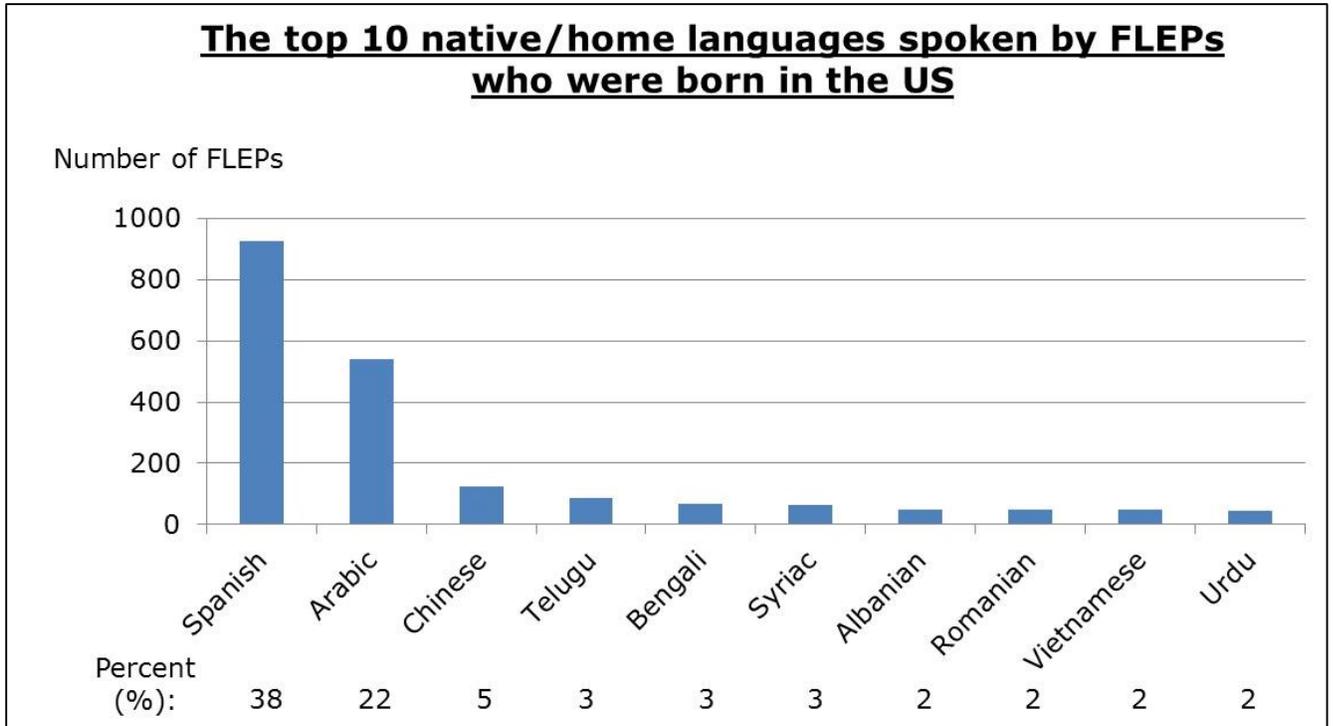


Figure 36

As it was the case with LEP students, both large ISDs and districts had more diversity in birthplaces (Figure 37 and 38).

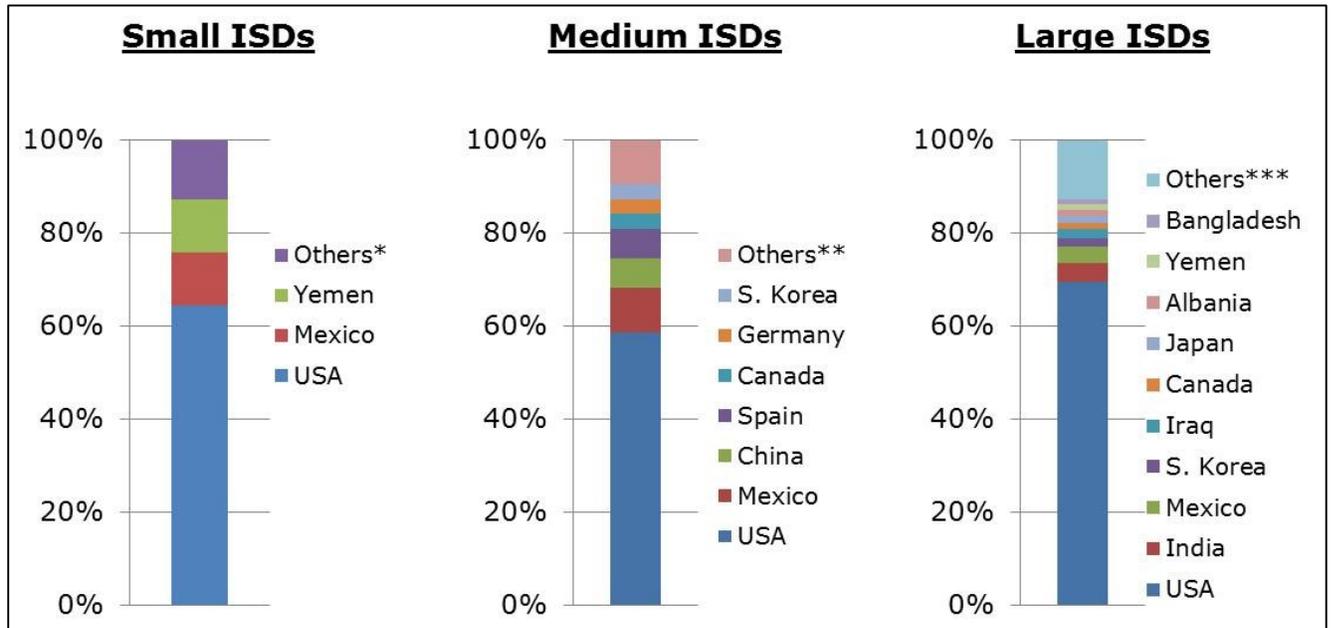


Figure 37

* Other countries in small ISDs included Philippines, United Arab Emirates, China, Honduras, India, Italy, etc.

** Other countries in medium ISDs included Philippines, India, Brazil, Japan, Niger, Netherlands, etc.

*** Other languages in large ISDs included Germany, China, Philippines, Pakistan, Vietnam, Lebanon, etc.

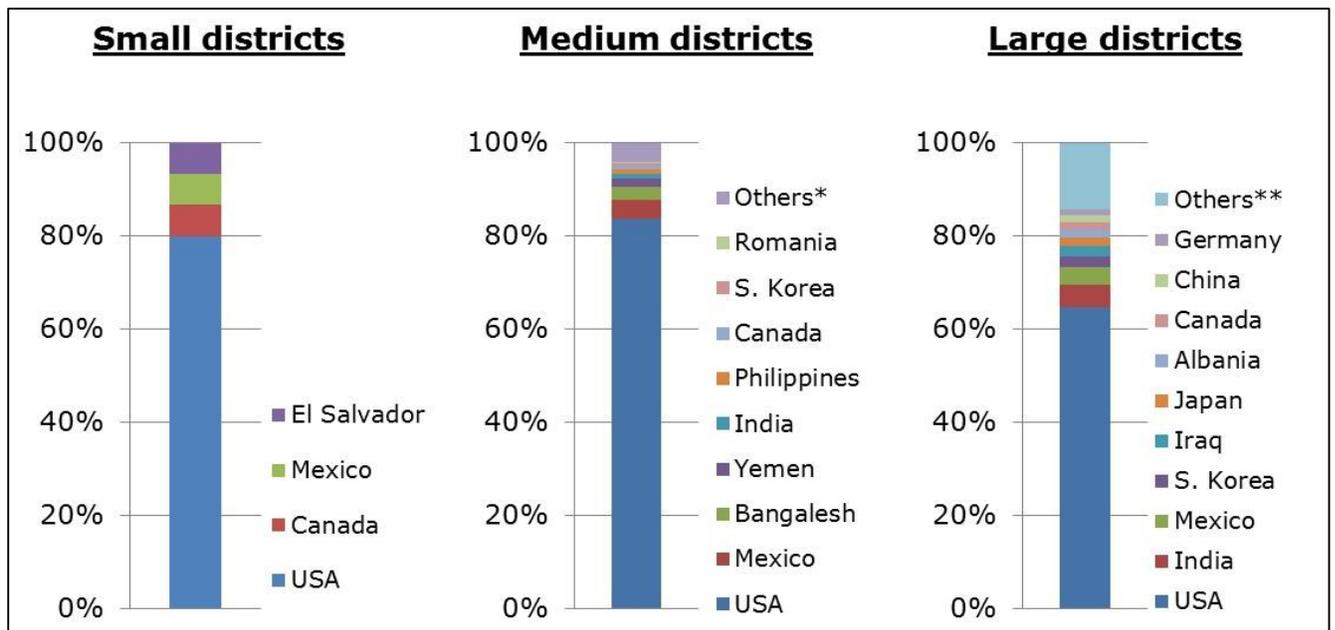


Figure 38

* Other countries in medium districts included Honduras, Puerto Rico, Albania, Cuba, Iraq, Liberia, Ukraine, etc.

** Other countries in large districts included Yemen, Pakistan, Vietnam, Philippines, Lebanon, Bangladesh, etc.

3 percent of FLEP students had disabilities. In particular, 1 percent of the FLEP population had speech and language impairment (Figure 39). There was no geographical pattern in the distribution of speech and language impairment (Figure 40).

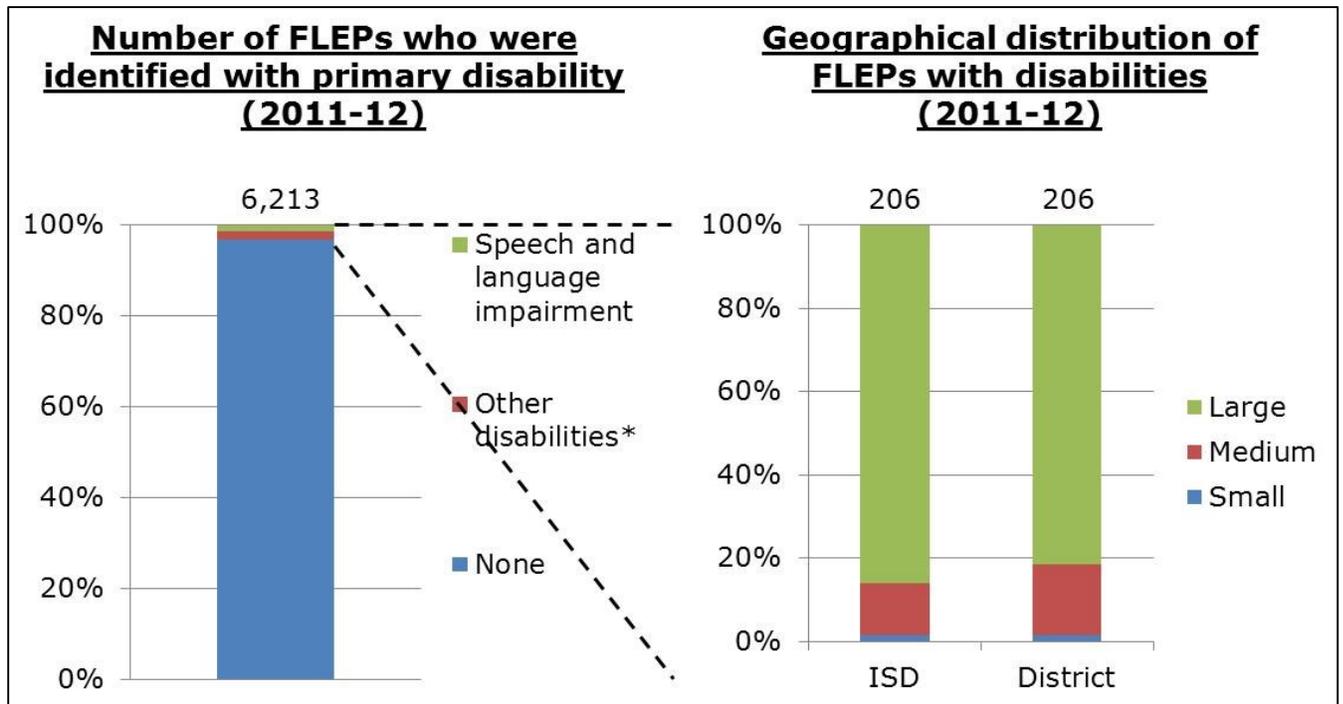


Figure 39

* Other disabilities included cognitive, emotional, hearing, visual, and physical impairments, early childhood developmental delay, specific learning disability, severe multiple impairment, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, deaf-blindness, and other health impairment

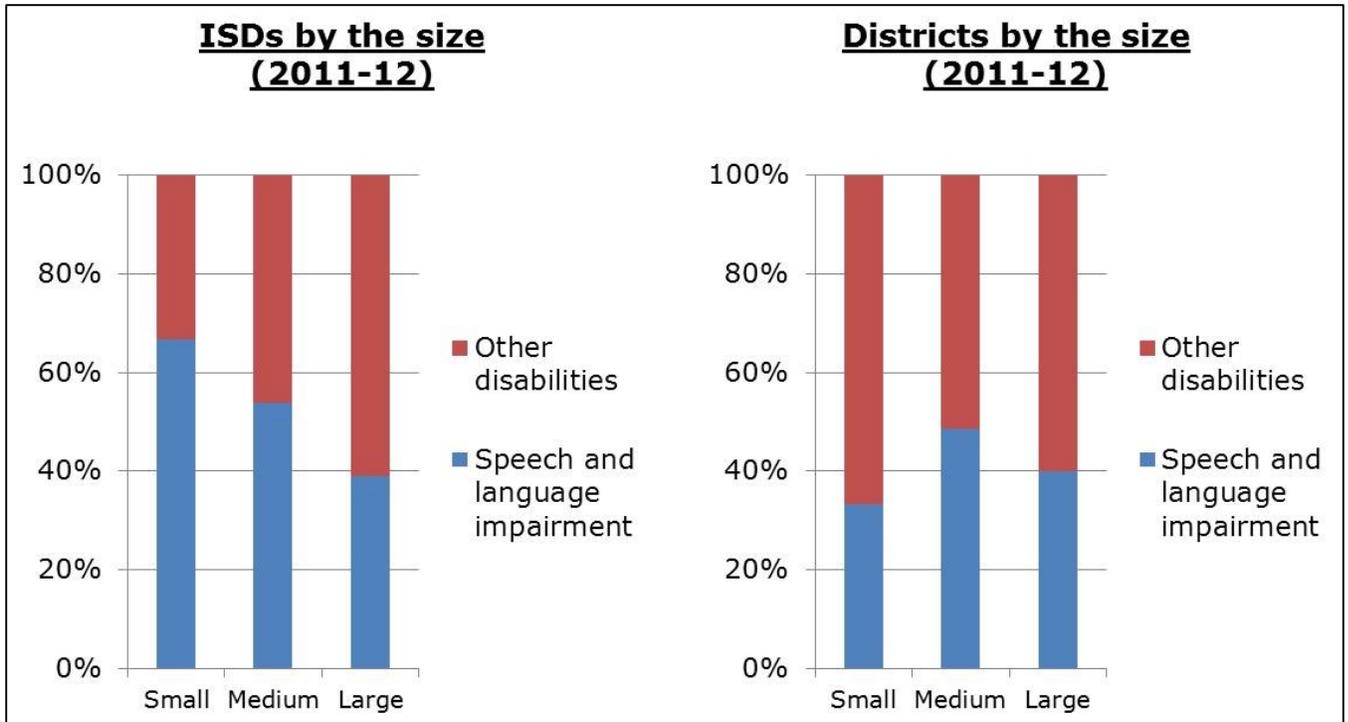


Figure 40

5 percent of the FLEP population re-entered the LEP program in 2011-2012 (Figure 41). Successful FLEP students maintain proficiency on state and local assessments. However, if FLEP students do not continue to meet required protocols for exit, local educational agencies may choose to re-classify these students as EL. Additional possible scenarios for re-entry include students' moving to other states or countries, and premature exit some of which might have been due to lack of common exit protocol before 2012.

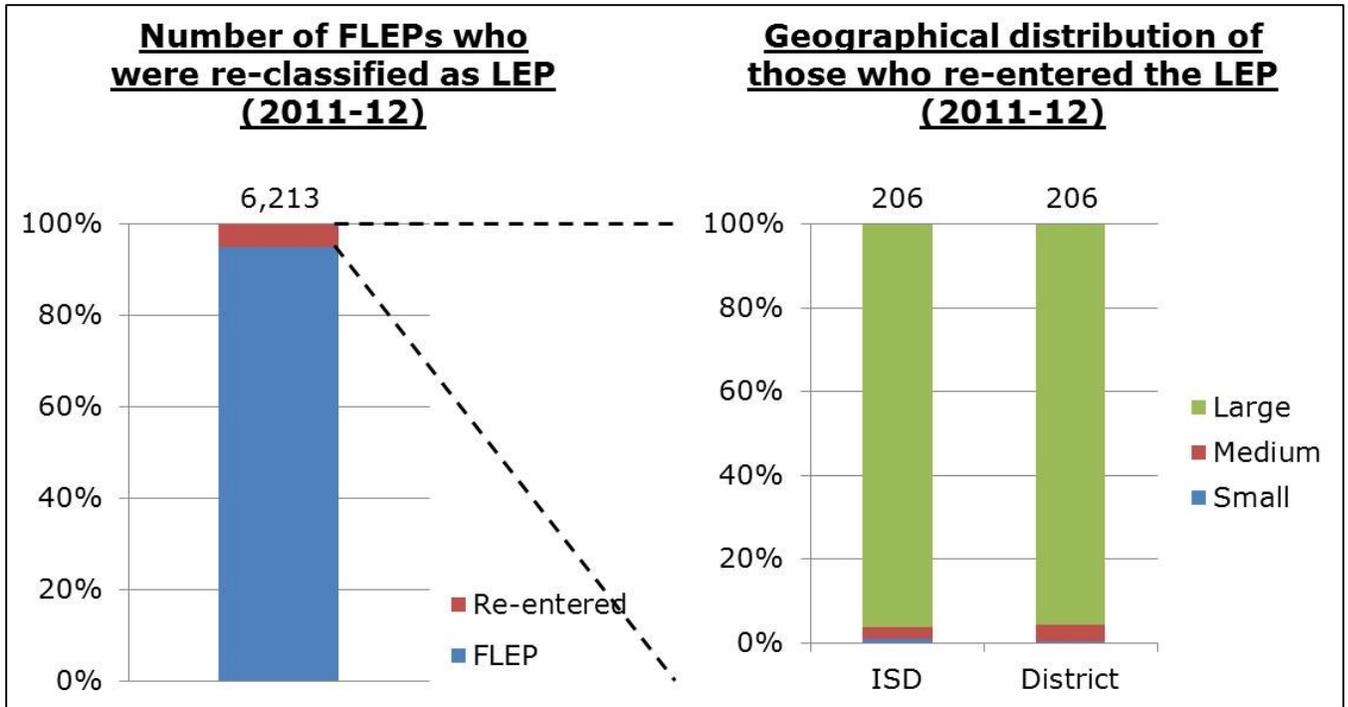


Figure 41

The percentage of re-entered FLEP students was greater in large ISDs and districts (Figure 42).

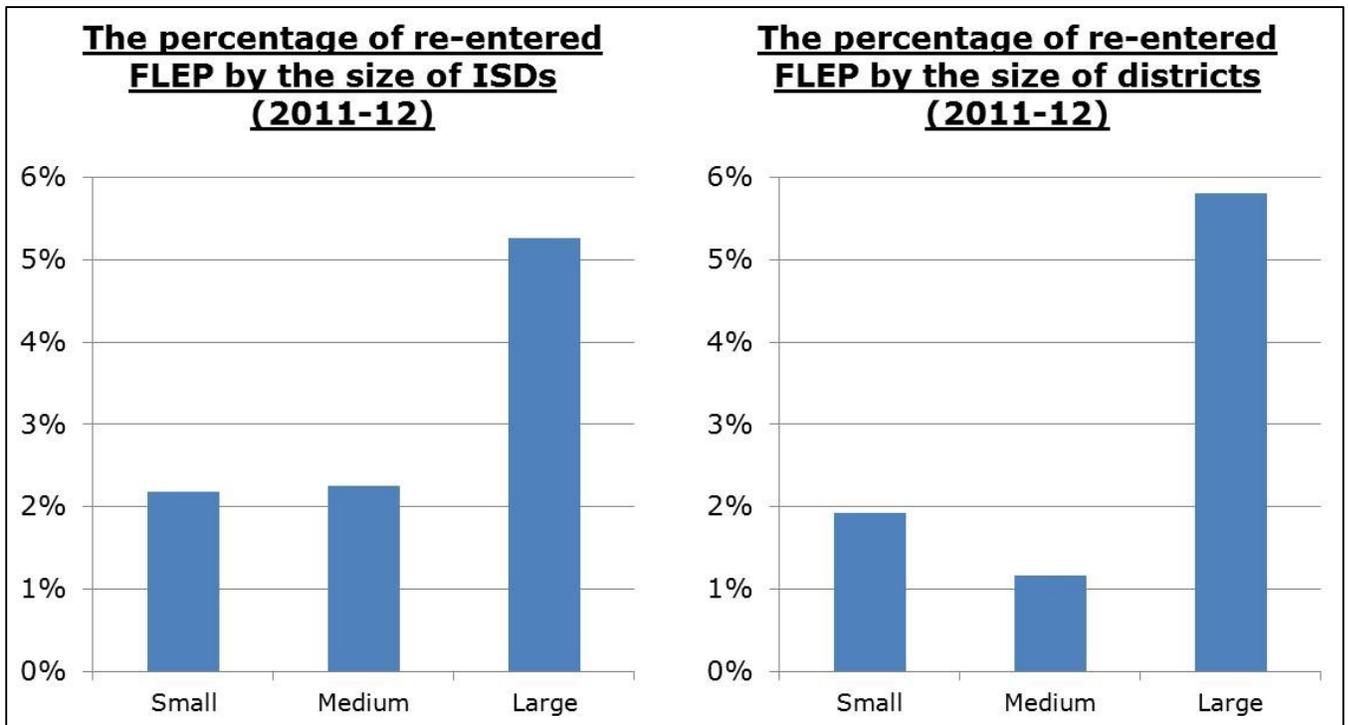


Figure 42

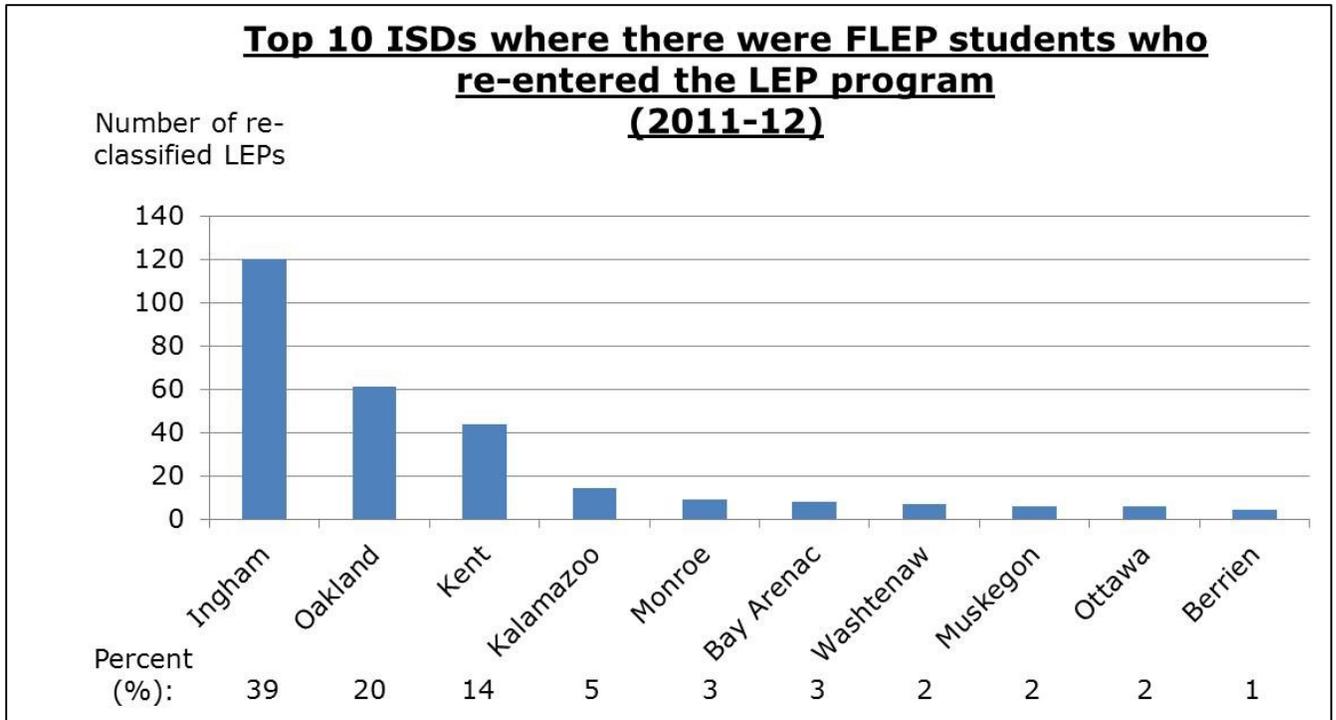


Figure 43

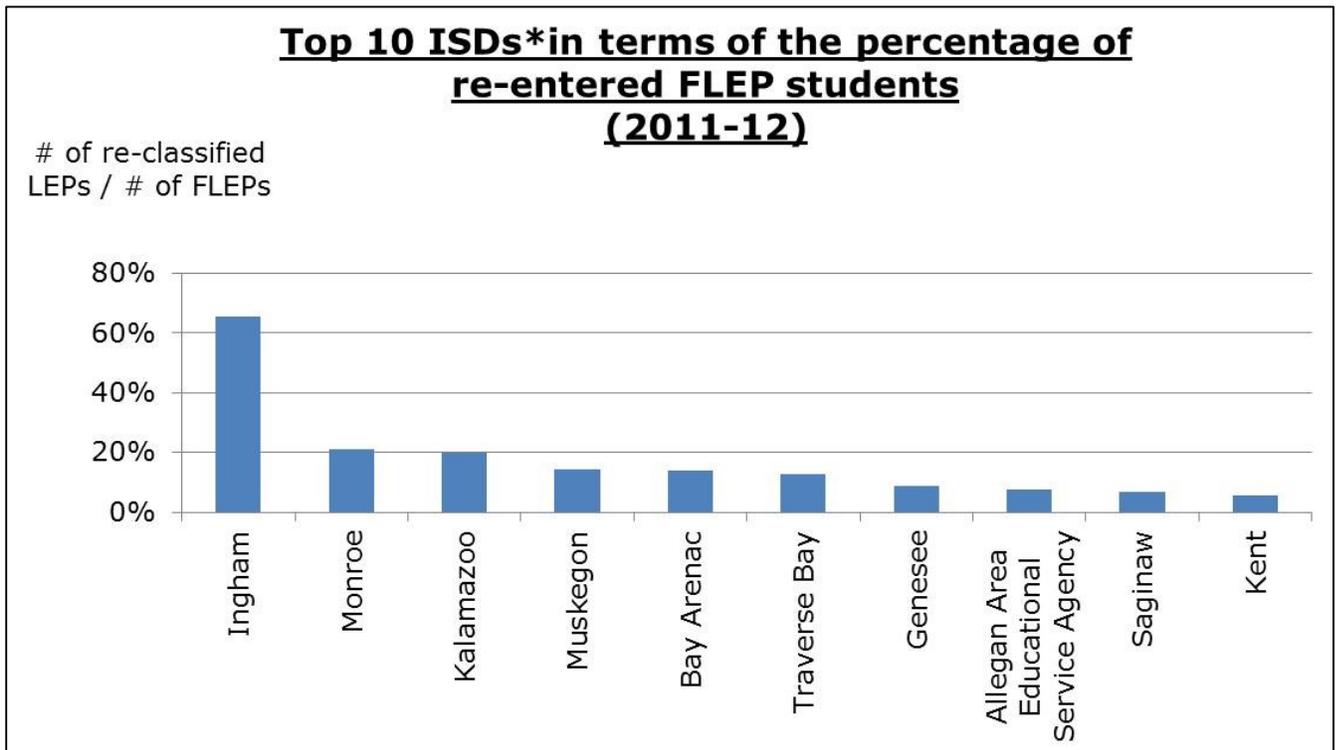


Figure 44

* ISDs with 10 or more FLEP population

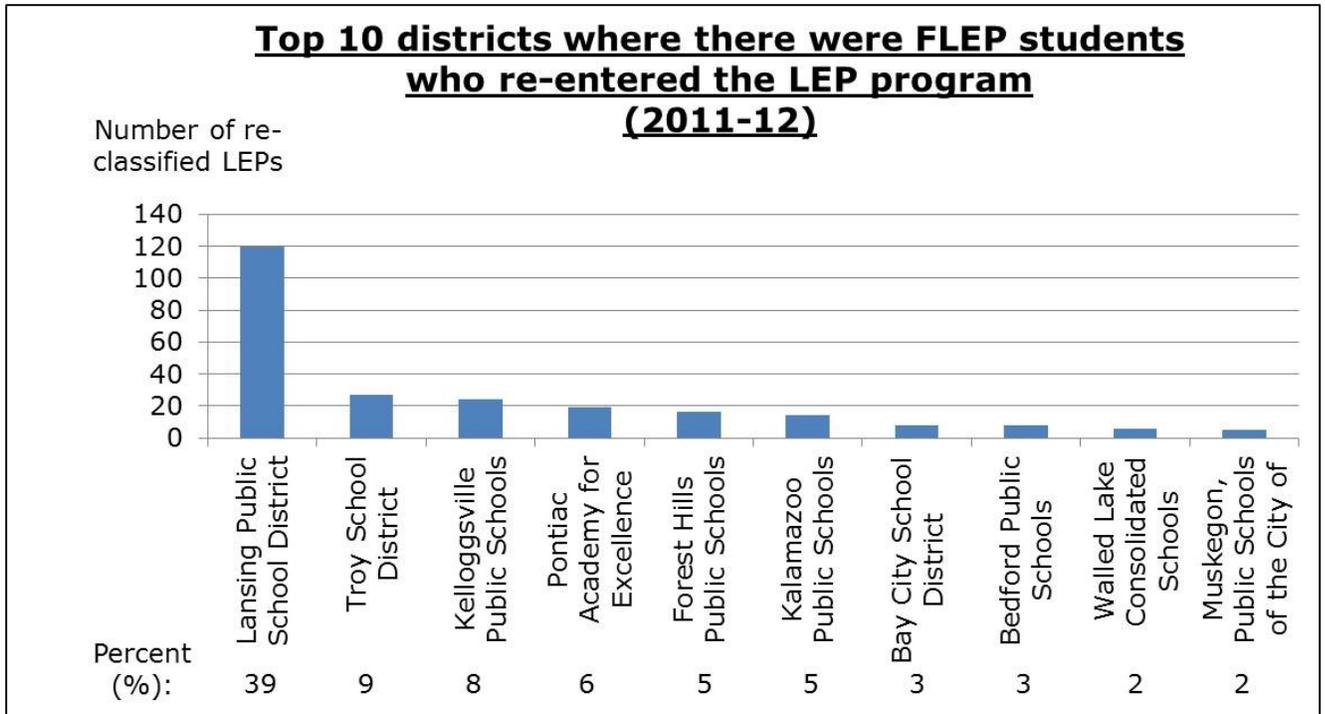


Figure 45

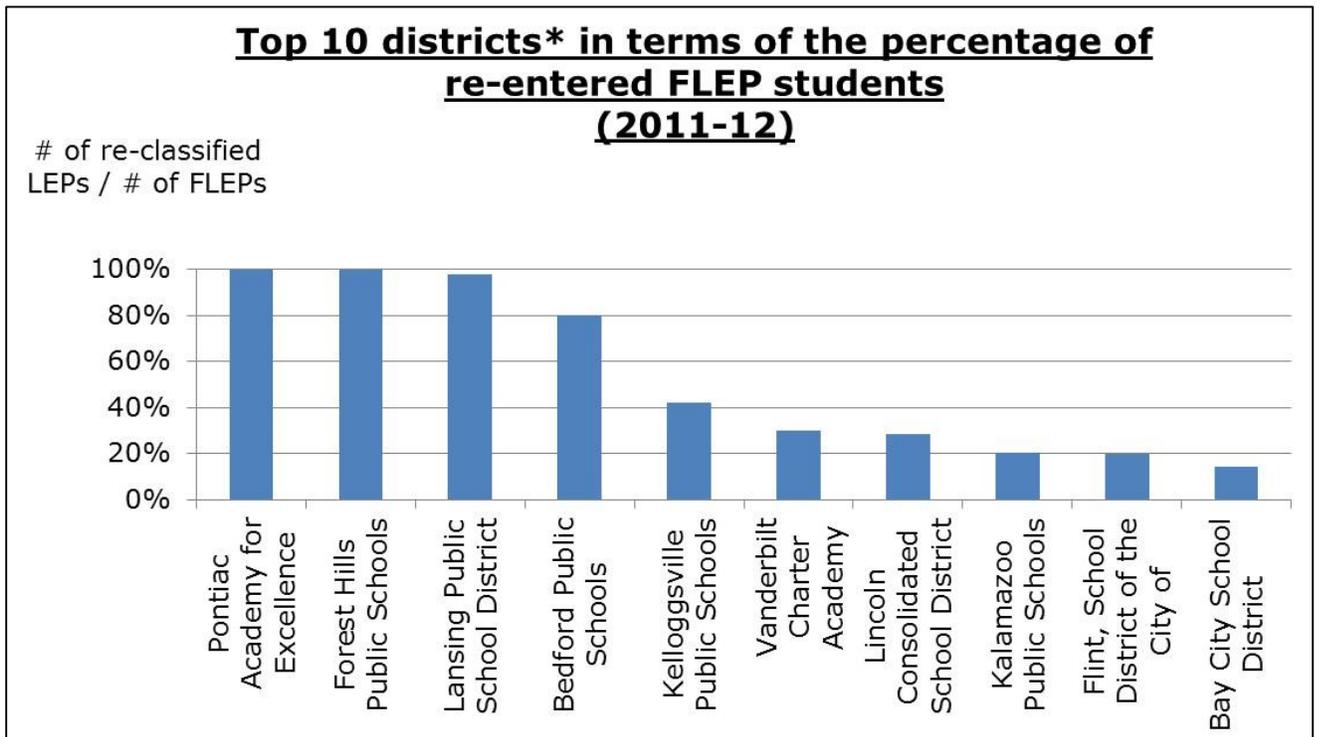


Figure 46

* Districts with 10 or more FLEP population

Nearly half of those who re-entered the LEP program spoke Spanish (Figure 47). Even after incorporating the fact that many FLEP students spoke Spanish by calculating the percentage of re-entered FLEP students by languages, Spanish still ranked high, only after Hmong (Figure 48).

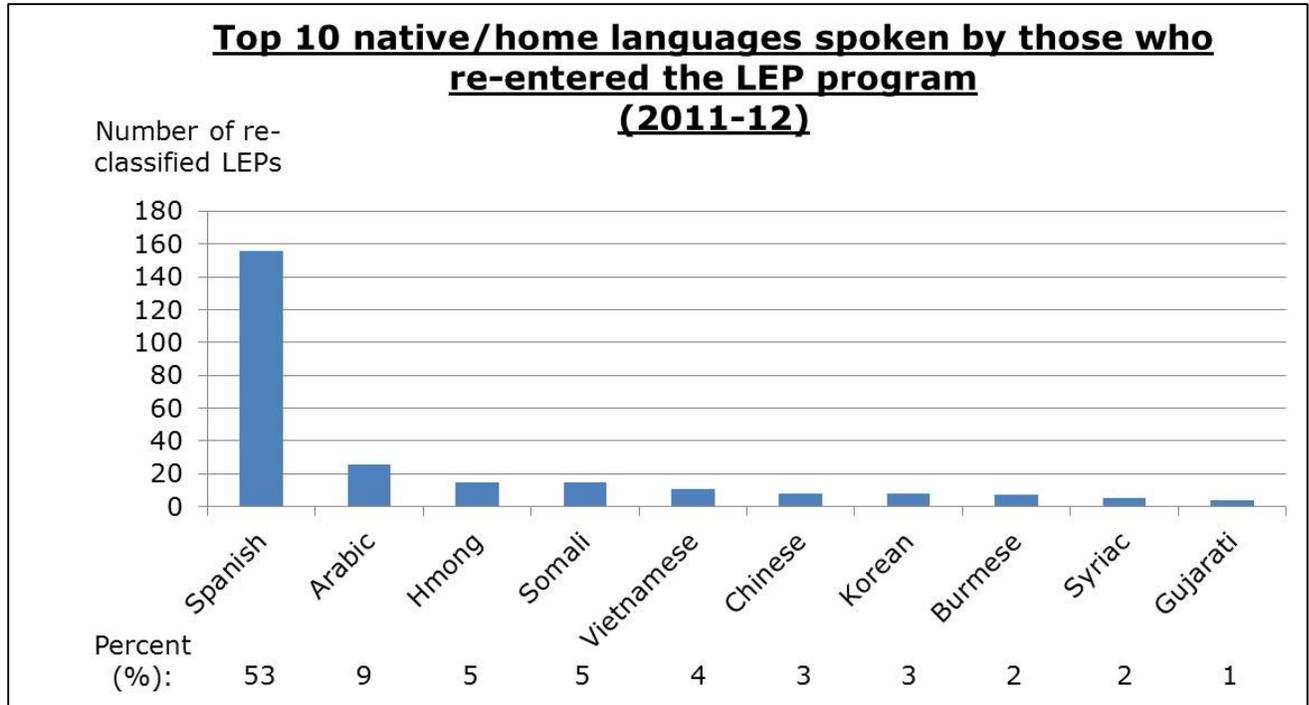


Figure 47

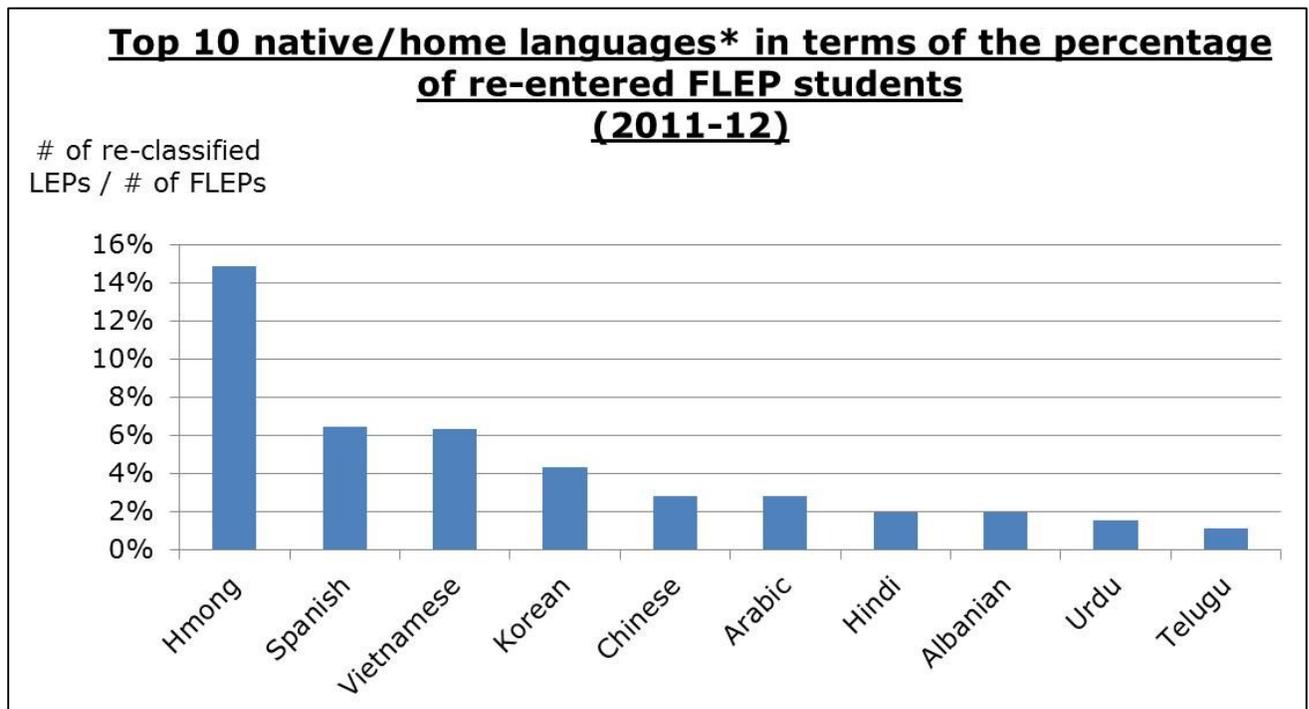


Figure 48

* Languages spoken by 100 or more FLEP population

Conclusion

There were 76,953 students who were identified as EL in 2011-2012. They represented diverse characteristics. More than 80 percent of them came from large ISDs and districts. Even within large ISDs and districts, the EL population was heavily concentrated in a few ISDs or districts, mainly in the metro-Detroit area. Most of EL students had economic disadvantage, as 74 percent of them were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Spanish and Arabic were the two main native and/or home languages spoken by EL students. Not surprisingly, the two languages were widely spoken by economically disadvantaged ELs. However, other languages such as Somali, Aramaic, and Bengali had high percentage of economically disadvantaged EL students. About 10 percent of the EL population received funding for immigrant services. Arabic speaking immigrants, in particular, received much immigrant services due to the recent and significant increase in their numbers. More than half of the EL population was born in the United States and most of them spoke Spanish or Arabic. About 11 percent of the EL population had primary disabilities, 3 percent of them had speech and language impairment, but there was no distinct geographical pattern.

There were 9,801 students who exited the LEP program in 2011-2012. Among them, 6,213 EL students exited due to English proficiency (FLEP). Since the majority of the EL population was from large ISDs and districts, many FLEP students also came from large regions. However, the percentage for EL students who became FLEP students was higher in medium ISDs and districts. 56 percent of the FLEP population was economically disadvantaged and were eligible for free or reduced lunch. This finding might suggest that there is a negative correlation between economic disadvantage and English proficiency achievement. Among FLEP students who were economically disadvantaged, 73 percent spoke Spanish and Arabic. However, the percentage of disadvantaged, but proficient ELs was higher for other languages such as Korean, Chinese, and Panjabi. About 6 percent of FLEP students received immigrant services, but there was no geographical pattern. Nearly 70 percent of the FLEP population was born in the United States, but the percentage of proficient EL students was higher for those who were born in other countries such as Canada, India, and the Philippines. 3 percent of FLEPs had disabilities and 1 percent had speech and language impairment. There was no distinct geographical pattern, as it was the case for EL students. About 5 percent of the FLEP population re-entered the LEP program in 2011-2012, possibly due to students' moving to other states or countries, or premature exit. Nearly half of those who re-entered the LEP program spoke Spanish, and Spanish also ranked high in terms of the percentage of re-entered FLEP students.