

## English Language Learners in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

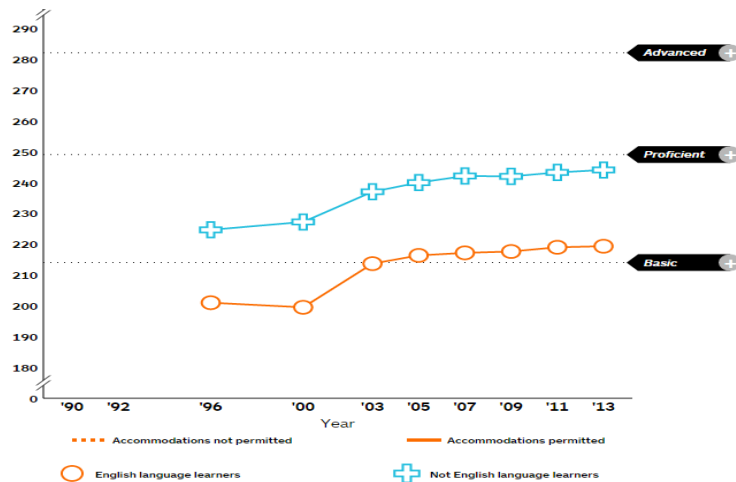
### Background

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act has provided services for English Language Learners (ELLs) since 1968. In 2010 nearly 4.6 million students were classified as ELLs and of those nearly 80% were from a Spanish speaking background. To ignore their education is to neglect preparing a large portion of our nation's future workforce. Given their importance to the success of our school system, it is critical these students have access to the necessary supports that will ensure their success in school. This includes programs that help students master a new language while meeting the same high standards that apply to all students for learning content.

### What Worked in No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 demonstrated that a strong accountability system is necessary in meeting the academic needs of ELLs. The figure below shows the progress of ELLs on the NAEP math exam. The data show a steady uptick in ELL progress over the past 13 years.

Trend in fourth-grade NAEP mathematics average scores, by English language learner status



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1990–2013 Mathematics and Reading Assessments.

### Recommendations:

Any reauthorization of ESEA should consider the following to adequately prepare ELLs:

- Maintain a robust accountability system that includes targets to account for time in program and progress toward English language proficiency for ELLs.
- Increase authorization levels to account for the growth in the ELL population.
- Limit the exemption of ELLs in the accountability system to one year.
- Preserve programs that assist districts with unexpected increases in their ELL population such as the Emergency Immigrant Education Program (Title III, Part B).