

Hispanic Immigrant Students: *Why Are They Underachieving in School?*



Eduardo Corona Gonzalez



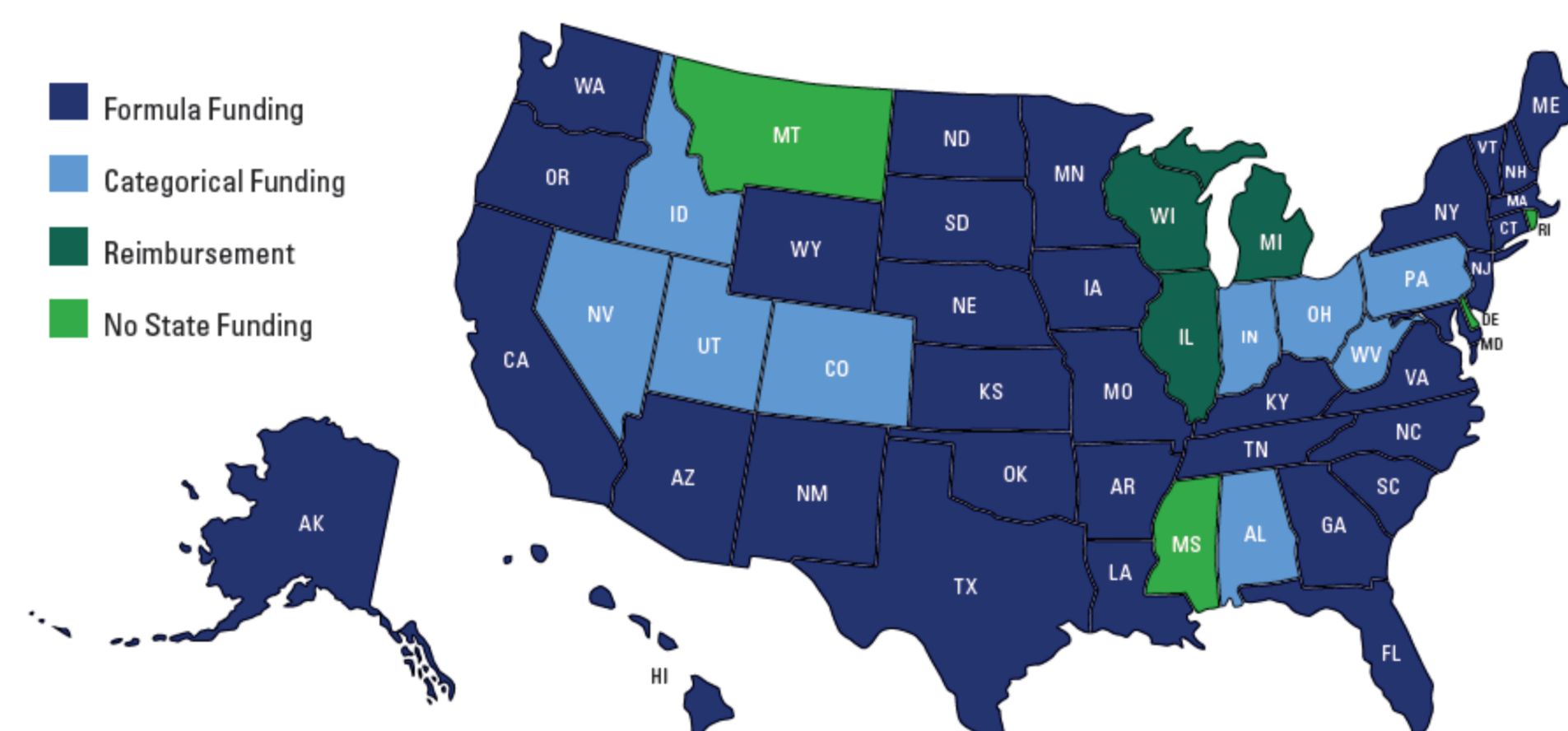
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The Facts:

- 17% of the total United States Population is Hispanic
- About 1 in 10 public school students in the United States is an English Language learner, that is 5 million students
- 3.8 of the 5 million students learning how to speak English speak Spanish
- The national high school graduation rate for Hispanics is 78% compared to the overall white student graduation rate of 88%
- Similarly, only 63% of English Language Learners graduate from high school
- Only 2% of English language Learners are enrolled in gifted programs, compared with 7.3% of English speaking, gifted students
- About 58% of Latino adults say limited English skills of Hispanic students is a major reason for Latino students underachieving in school
- Locally, In Harrisonburg, VA, 40% of the students in the public schools are Hispanic, English Language Learners

In this project, I aim to explore the relationship between Hispanic immigrant students and low educational achievement and explain why much of that achievement gap is due to the lack of English proficiency amongst many Hispanic students. Furthermore, I explain why inadequate funding for English Language Learner (ELL) programs is largely at fault for this lack of school achievement and how the underachievement of this significant portion of United States students can be detrimental to the United States economy.

State ELL Funding Mechanisms



No State Funding: As can be see above, there are four states who provide no additional state funding for English Language Learners (Delaware, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Montana).

ELL funding mechanisms

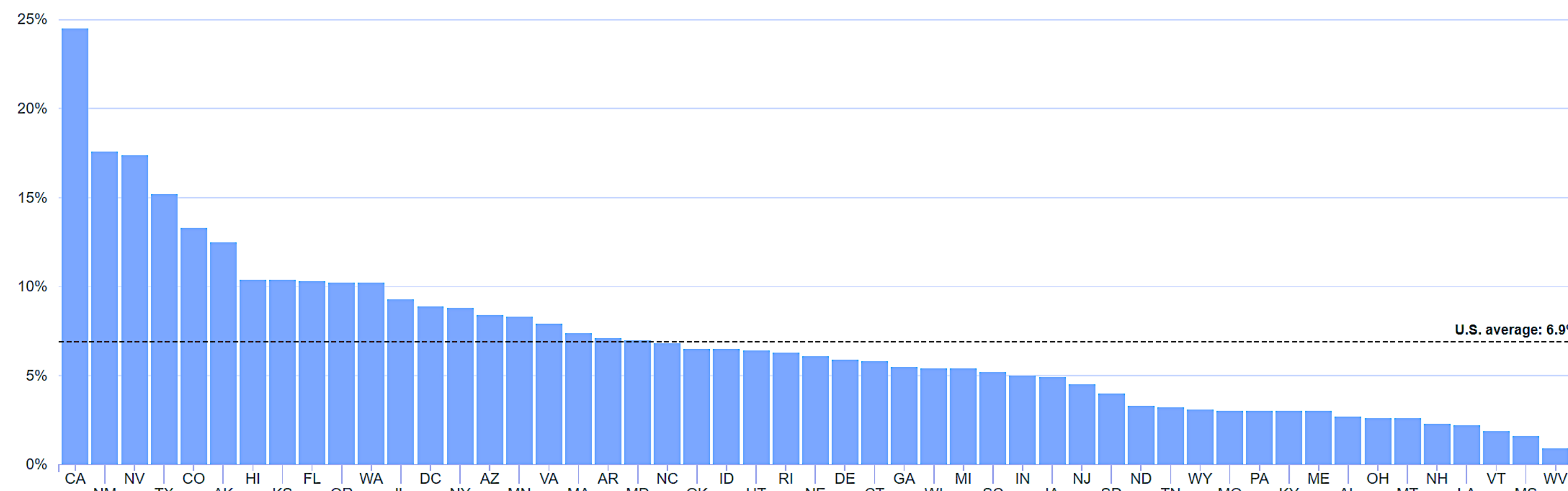
46 states provide some additional funding for ELLs in three primary ways:

- **Formula Funding:** 34 states fund ELL programs through their state's primary funding formula. Of the states that use student weights in their formula, weights range from 9.6 percent (Kentucky) to 99 percent (Maryland) per ELL student.
- **Categorical Funding:** Nine states fund ELL programs through a line in the budget that exists outside of the state's primary funding formula.
- **Reimbursements:** Three states reimburse districts upon submission of the costs of educating ELL students.

Funding Teachers: It is known that English Language Learners, most of which are Hispanic students, perform better in school when they have more adequately trained ESOL teachers. Like all supplemental services, hiring more teachers and training staff on better pedagogical practices is costly, so one way to close the achievement gap between Hispanic students and their white peers is to increase funding for training more teachers. As can be seen in the graph to the right, there is much work to be done in this field considering most states report a shortage on specialized teachers.

ELL Student Distribution: As can be seen by the chart to the left, some states have significantly more ELL and Hispanic students than others, but as seen in the map and funding mechanism summary above, each state has a unique way of funding the English Language Learners which causes problems for ELL students living in underfunded states. Certain states have seen rapid ELL growth with little change in funding such as Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee who each saw their ELL population grow by over 100% between 2000 and 2014.

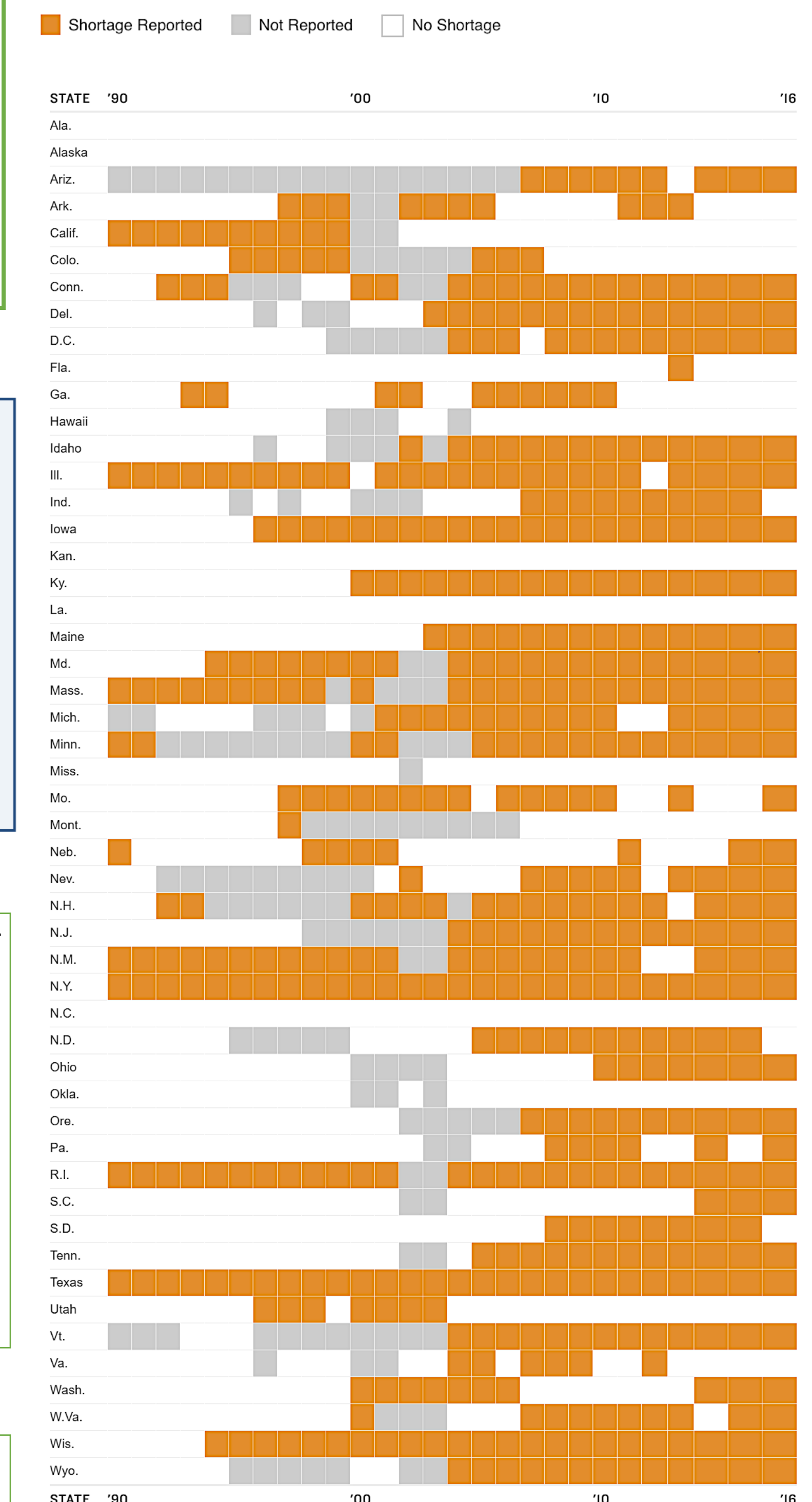
Share Of English Language Learners Per State
Share of students in each state (plus the District of Columbia) who are English language learners (SY 2013-14).



Source: Migration Policy Institute
Credit: Brittany Mayes/NPR

In 2016, 32 States Reported Not Having Enough Teachers For ELL Students

The years listed are the start of the school year. Teacher types include ESL, bilingual education and dual-language education.



Source: U.S. Department of Education

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