*Blueprint for Maryland's Future:*
English Learner (EL) Workgroup
Meeting #2: Early Childhood
August 31, 2021

How does Maryland identify, engage, and instruct multilingual learners in early childhood settings?

# Agenda

1. Welcome and Guiding Question – Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools

2. Spotlight on National Best Practices and Research – Lorena Mancilla, Director of WIDA Early Years

3. Existing Maryland Policy and Practices
   1. State Level – Julia Chavez, MSDE
   2. Local School System Practices – Laurel Williams, MSDE

4. Data Dive – Judy Walker, MSDE

5. Discussion and Recommendations – MSDE staff and EL Workgroup

## MSDE Needs Assessment & Reports

- Response to the growing English learner (EL) population and findings in reports on Maryland's Early Childhood Care and Education system regarding multilingual learners

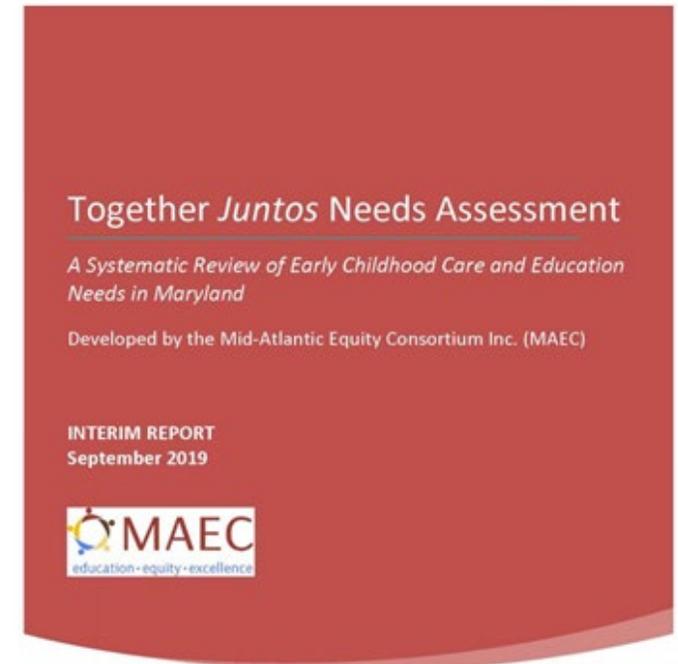- MD strategic plan, *Maryland Ready: A Path to School Readiness and Success* developed to address system needs

Together *Juntos* Needs Assessment: A Systematic Review of Early Childhood Care and Education Needs in Maryland, 2019

- Compiled through document review, town halls, stakeholder surveys, and focus group discussions

- Findings:
  - Families experience limited access to early childhood education (ECE) services; especially immigrants, ELs, low income, rural residents, and those with children with special needs.

  - Improving parent awareness of services addresses barriers to ECE service access.

  - Barriers to ECE teacher preparation and professional development programs leads to a shortage of qualified staff.

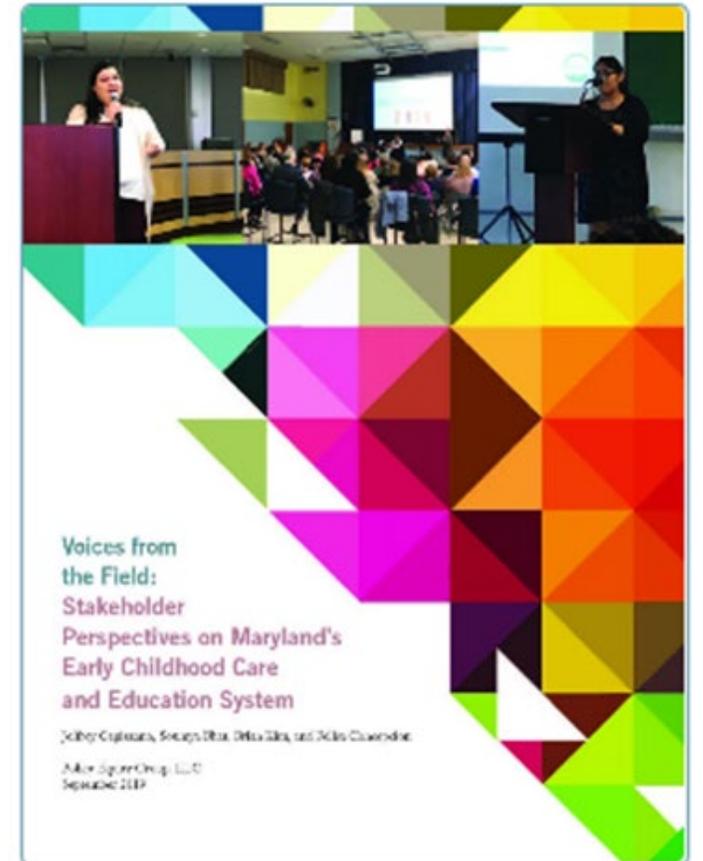  - There are gaps in coordinated data systems.

Together *Juntos* Needs Assessment

A Systematic Review of Early Childhood Care and Education Needs in Maryland

Developed by the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium Inc. (MAEC)

INTERIM REPORT
September 2019

**MAEC**
education · equity · excellence

**Disclaimer**
The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc. is committed to the sharing of information regarding issues of equity in education. The content of this report was developed with support from the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative, Grant Number 90TP0032-01-00, for the Maryland State Department of Education. However, this content does not necessarily represent the views of the Maryland State Department of Education.

- Voices from the Field: Stakeholder Perspectives on Maryland's Early Childhood Care and Education System, 2019

  - Compiled from town halls throughout the state

  - Findings:

    - Language is a barrier for families' access to early childhood (EC) services and resources must be provided in additional languages.

    - There is a need for two-generation, trauma-informed approach to address family and children's needs.

    - The population of ELs in EC programs is growing and their experiences impact school readiness.

    - There is a need for equity in analyzing data to avoid racial and income inequities and uneven access to, and participation in, EC programs.

## *Maryland Ready: A Path to School Readiness and Success*

5 Year Strategic Plan with 6 Specific Goals, 2020

- Strengthen availability and access to the full range of early childhood programs and services

- Improve and support program quality

- Deepen family engagement

- Ensure successful transition experiences between early childhood programs and as children enter kindergarten

- Expand and enhance early childhood workforce development

- Improve systems for infrastructure, data, and resource management across our early childhood system



Maryland Ready:
Maryland's Path
to School Readiness
and Success

Prenatal to Age 8

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

# Existing Maryland Policies and Practices: State Level
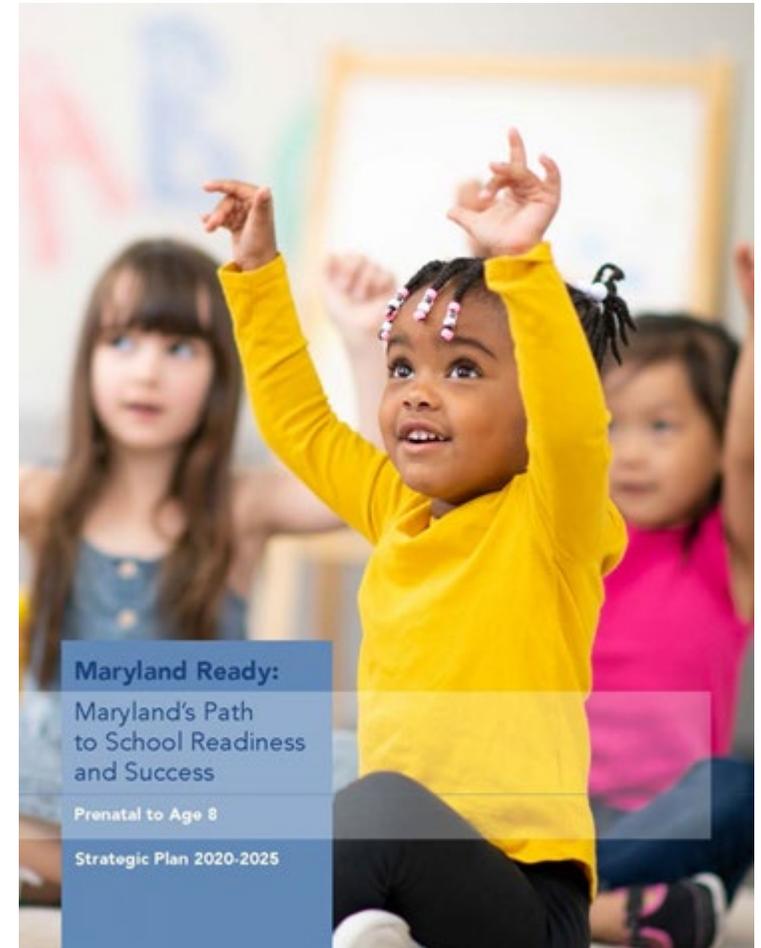
## Alignment of *MD Ready* with WIDA Early Years Partnership

- Focus on language development of multilingual children in EC settings

- Implementation of equitable access to EC services and resources

- Asset based approaches to language instruction

- Family engagement, two generational approach

- Connection to early learning and language standards

- Professional development

- Foster learning through play and social interactions

## WIDA Early Years and MSDE Partnership: Implementation

Years 1 and 2

- Steering committee established
  - Stakeholders representing all areas of the state
  - Purpose to guide implementation and assessment to target populations
- MSDE certified trainers
  - Completed professional learning cohort, delivering trainings beginning in Fall 2021
  - Training of trainers
  - Core of knowledge hours
- Online modules in use for professional development of early childhood providers
  - Early Head Start
  - Judy Centers
- Language building resources available to families
  - Available for printing or download from the MSDE Early Childhood Division website
  - Languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, and simplified Chinese
- Maryland specific resources
  - Young Multilingual Children in Maryland
  - Making Connections Maryland

## WIDA Early Years and MSDE Partnership: Addressing Need Moving Forward

- Focus on implementation to expand capacity and integrate support for ELs into curriculum and content

- Expansion of targeted trainings throughout the State
  - Build capacity in community based and school-based programs
  - Expand dissemination of provider tools
    - Embed equity, family engagement, and two generational approach within early learning environments.
    - Language survey, lesson planning, and scoring rubrics

- Participate in state Early Childhood Advisory Councils for collaboration:
  - Content briefing in district implementation
  - Collection of data in early learning environments

- Continue to develop training and coaching models to lessen gaps in professional development for current and future EC providers.

- Enhance MSDE partnerships
  - Early Learning, EL/Title III, Judy Centers, and Head Start
  - Bridge to literacy, family engagement, two generational approach, equity, and professional development
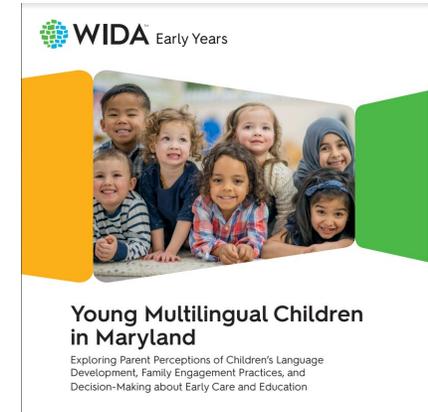
## WIDA Report: Methodology and Guiding Questions

Methodology

- Data collected July-August 2019

- Individual interviews, focus groups

- Participants - 27 mothers from three EC sites in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties

Guiding Questions

- What goals, aspirations, fears, and concerns do parents have for their children's language learning and development?

- What are parents' perceptions about family engagement practices used in early care and education programs and the extent to which these support children's language learning and development?

- What roles, if any, do their goals, aspirations, fears, and concerns about children's language learning and development play in their decision-making about early care and education?

## WIDA Report: Summary of Data Collection

| Site Number | INT or FG | Language Used | Number of participants | Countries of Origin Represented | Native and Home Languages Represented |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | INT | English | 1 | Senegal | Wolof, French, Creole, Susu |
| 2 | FG (2) | English/ Spanish | 9 | El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Puerto Rico | Amharic, Spanish, Twi |
| 3 | FG (2) | English/ Spanish | 17 | Afghanistan, Algeria, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Myanmar, Peru, Venezuela | Berber, Burmese, Dari, Pashto, Portuguese, Spanish |

## WIDA Report: Parent Voice

Another mother described how wonderful it was for her to see Amharic incorporated into a lesson and how she thinks it supports developing cultural identity through language. She also thought this exposure was good for the children in the class who do not speak Amharic:

"We recently read a story called 'Lala Salama' and we had one teacher who read it in Amharic, and it was wonderful. Like, children were all paying attention, listening quietly to what they were saying. So, I think even though we think they don't understand, if you come and speak in your language to them, sing to them in their language, it's a good way to incorporate your culture in your language."

"...if you come and speak in your language to them, sing to them in their language, it's a good way to incorporate your culture in your language."

# WIDA Report: Findings

- Parents hold strong beliefs and values about families' native language(s); they strengthen communication and connection with others, being bilingual/multilingual presents opportunities and benefits.

- All parents aspire for their children to be bilingual or multilingual. Fears and concerns included native language loss, experiencing difficulties understanding others, and the use of evaluation tools and methods not linguistically responsive to children.

- Regarding family engagement, findings indicate that access to ECE staff who speak families' native language(s) greatly enhances family engagement and communication between parents and staff.

- Language plays a role in decision-making around ECE options, parents seek language learning and child socialization opportunities that promote and support language development.

## WIDA Report: Recommendations

- Expand program options that support young children's bilingualism and multilingualism.

- Invest in professional learning around issues of equity related to language.

- Implement asset based, two generation programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.

- Create a communication campaign about ECE program options that taps into the power of word-of-mouth.

- Use linguistically responsive assessment and evaluation methods and data interpretation processes.

Six local school systems provide English language development (ELD) services to PreK ELs

- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Caroline County
- Carroll County
- Washington County
- Worcester County
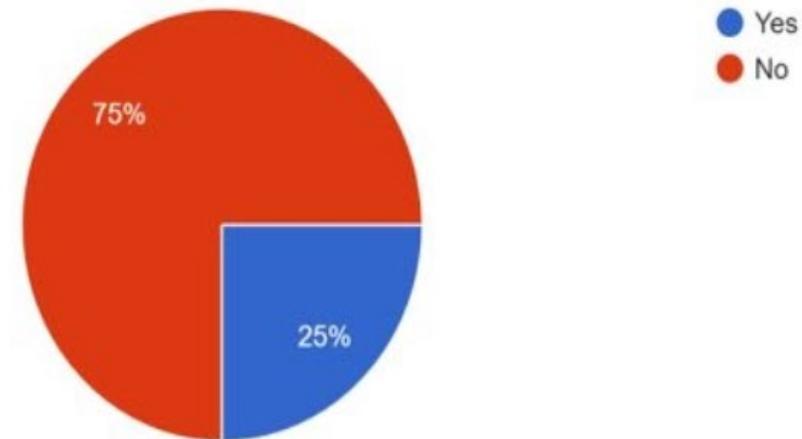
## How are PreK ELs identified in local school systems?

- There is no statewide identification policy or practice. Maryland formally screens students for English language development (ELD) services from Kindergarten – grade 12.

- Local school systems (LSSs) report using:
  - Home Language Survey (HLS)
    - Multilingual learners who have a language other than English for two or more questions are provided ELD service in PreK. They are not formally assessed for English proficiency until Kindergarten.
  - K-W-APT with altered entry criteria
  - PreLAS, English language proficiency assessment for early learners

## What are the PreK ELD service models?

- Co-teaching
  - An ESOL teacher is in the classroom with the PreK teacher and both teach. Ideally, they plan together to meet the needs of the ELs in the classroom.

- Pull-out ESOL
  - This is the most traditional model of ELD instruction. ELs are pulled out of their classroom to receive small group ELD instruction.

- Push-in ESOL
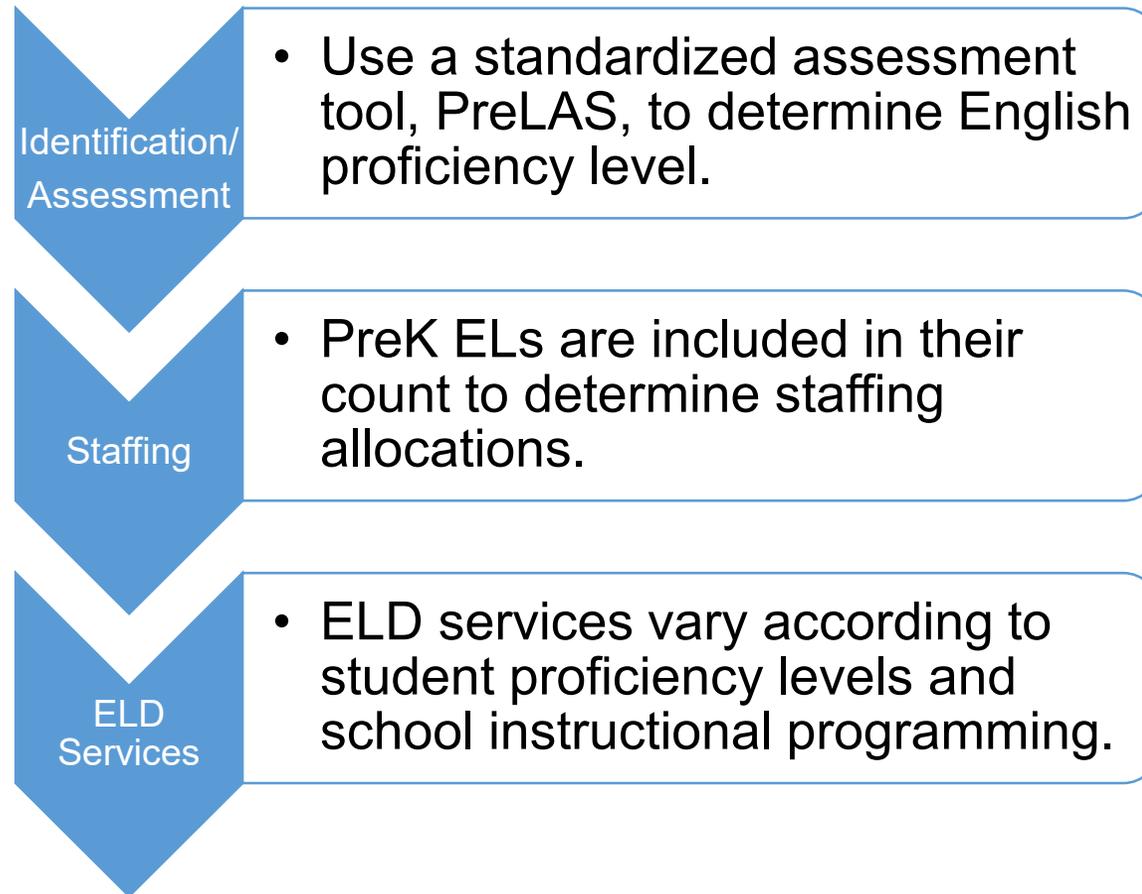  - ESOL teachers work in the PreK classroom space to support ELs.

What are the PreK ELD service models?

- Title 1 PreK ELs
  - In one LSS, ELD instruction is provided to ELs in Title 1 schools only. Title 1 funding is utilized to cover the costs of teachers and materials.

- Monitor academic progress and consult with ESOL teacher regarding transition to Kindergarten

- Professional development to PreK teachers
  - Most LSSs don't provide direct instruction to PreK ELs but support their English language development via professional learning for PreK classroom teachers.

# Existing Maryland Policy and Practices:
# Local School Systems

## What do PreK ELD services look like at the school level?

Baltimore City Public Schools

**Identification/ Assessment**
- Use a standardized assessment tool, PreLAS, to determine English proficiency level.

**Staffing**
- PreK ELs are included in their count to determine staffing allocations.

**ELD Services**
- ELD services vary according to student proficiency levels and school instructional programming.

## Assessments Matter
### READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

**Ready for Kindergarten (R4K)** is Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System.

**R4K has two components:**

- **The Early Learning Assessment (ELA)** measures the progress of learning in young children, from 3 to 6 years.

- **The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)** looks at the knowledge, skills, and behaviors at kindergarten entry.

**Kindergarteners are determined to be:**

- **DEMONSTRATING READINESS**
  - ➤ <u>Consistently demonstrate</u> the foundational skills and behaviors that enable a child to fully participate in the kindergarten curriculum.
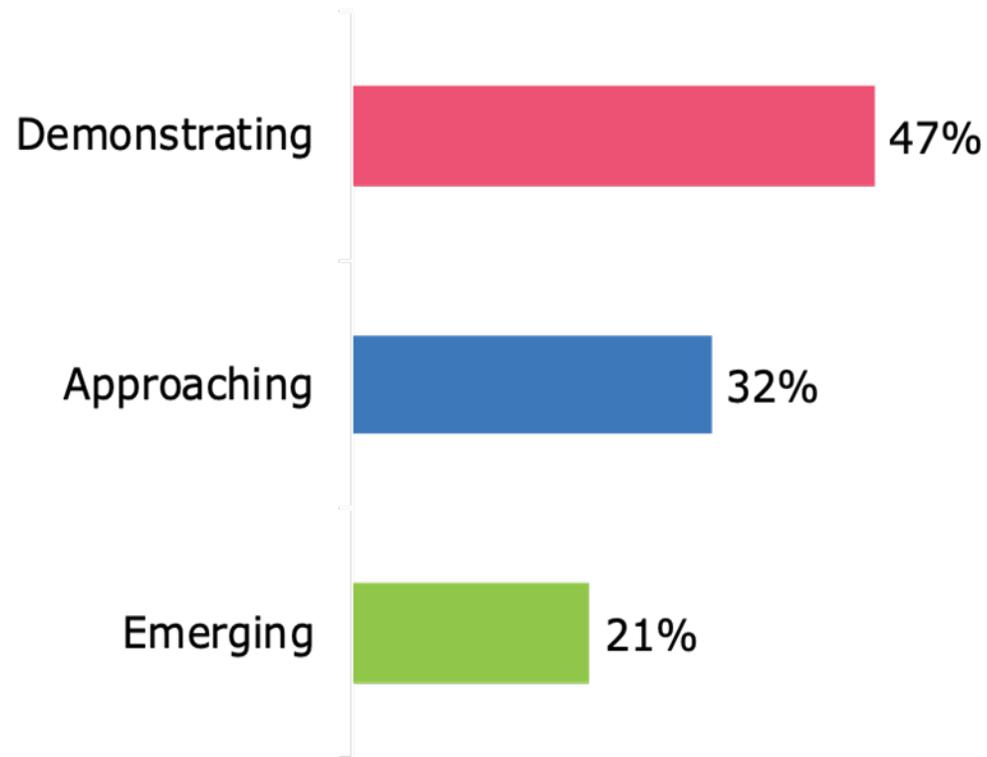
- **APPROACHING READINESS**
  - ➤ <u>Exhibit some</u> of the foundational skills and behaviors that are needed to participate in the kindergarten curriculum.
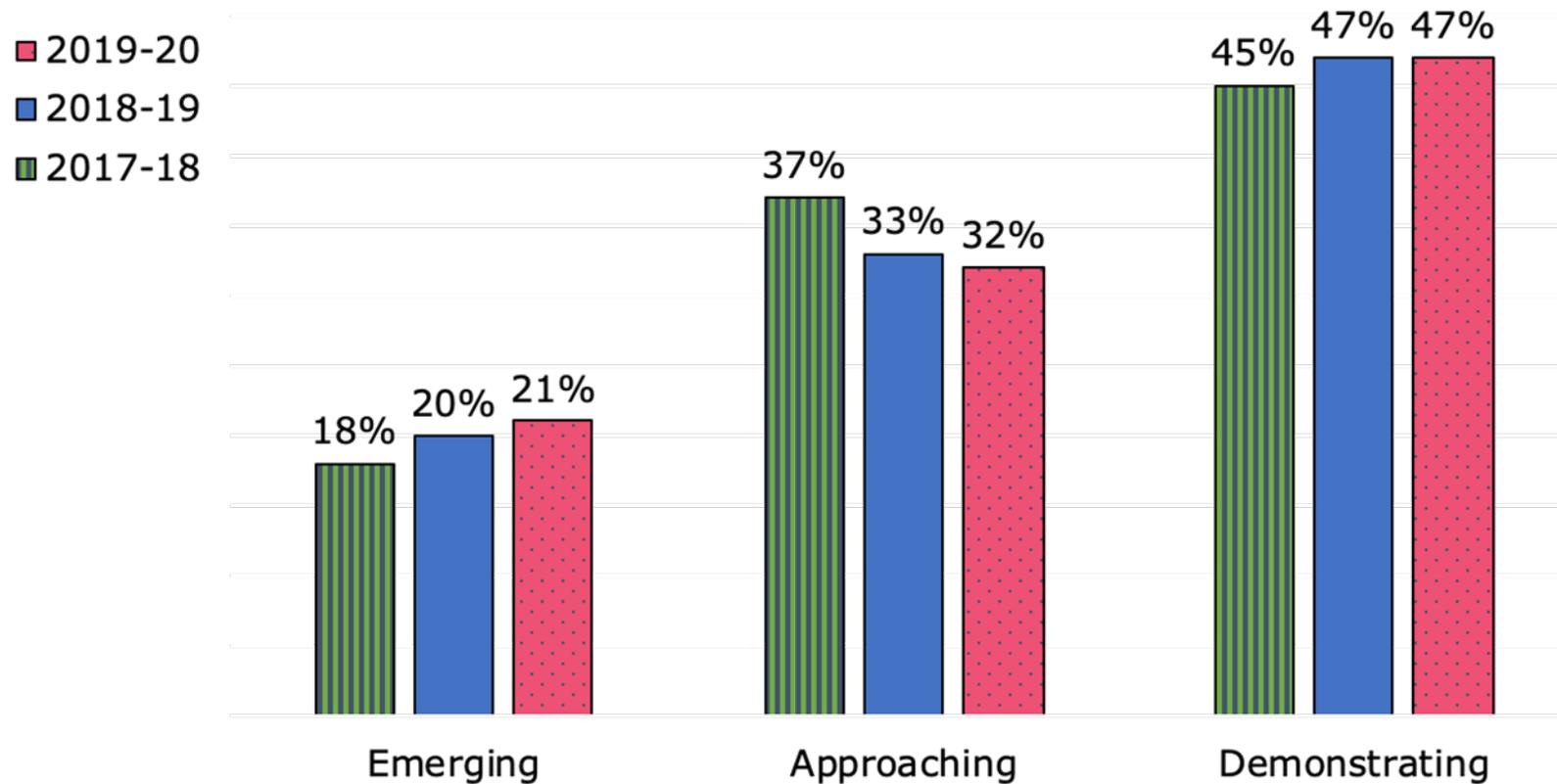
- **EMERGING READINESS**
  - ➤ <u>Show minimal</u> foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her to meet kindergarten expectations.
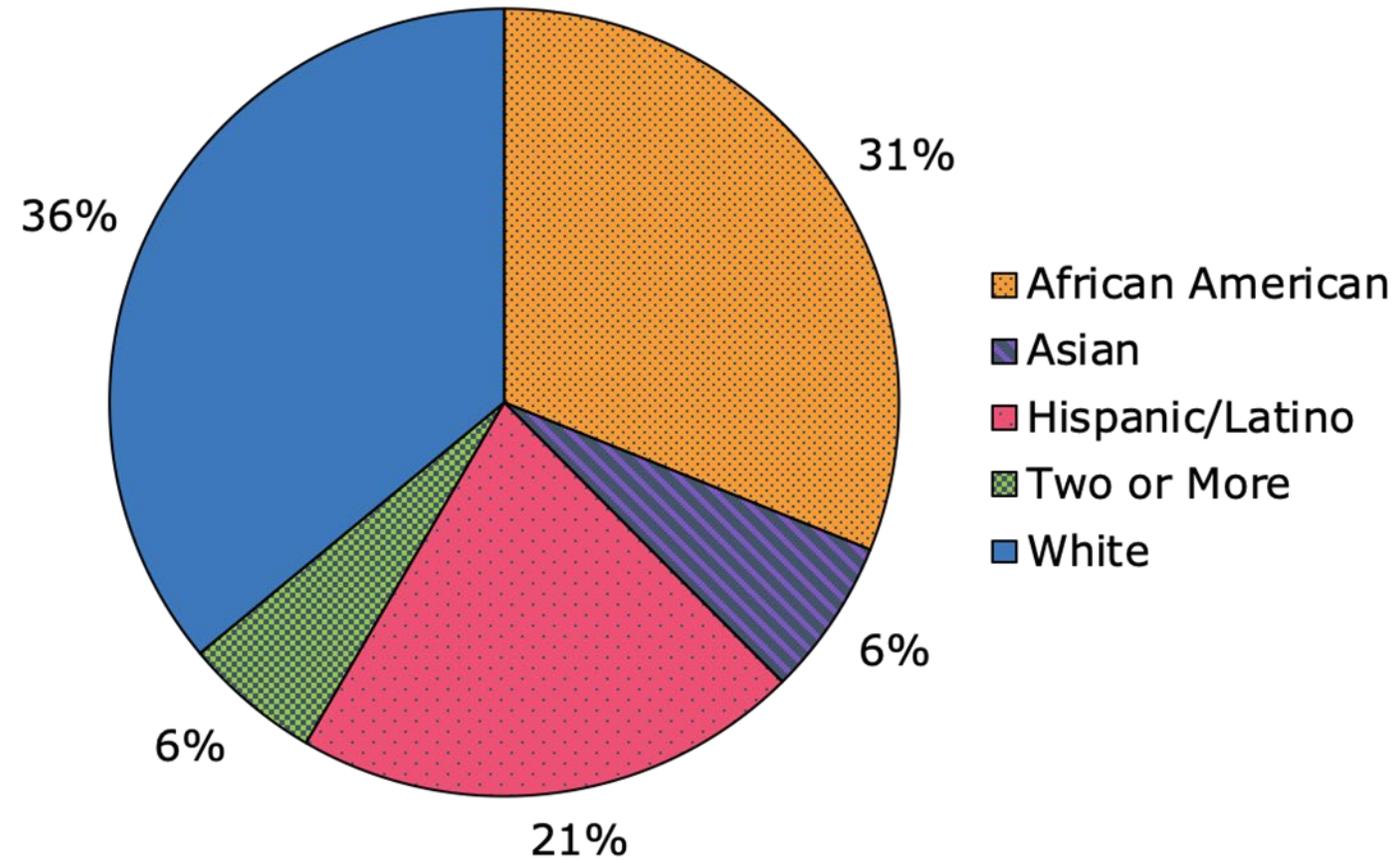
2019
**Statewide Readiness**

Demonstrating — 47%
Approaching — 32%
Emerging — 21%

Changes in Readiness Over Time

**2019**
**Race/Ethnicity**

- African American — 31%
- Asian — 6%
- Hispanic/Latino — 21%
- Two or More — 6%
- White — 36%

## % Demonstrating Readiness

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| American Indian | 41% |
| African American | 42% |
| Asian | 56% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 26% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 30% |
| Two or More | 53% |
| White | 60% |

## English Learners



15%

85%

☐ English Fluent  ☐ English Learners

## % of Children Demonstrating Readiness by Language Status



52%

18%

Percent Sub Group
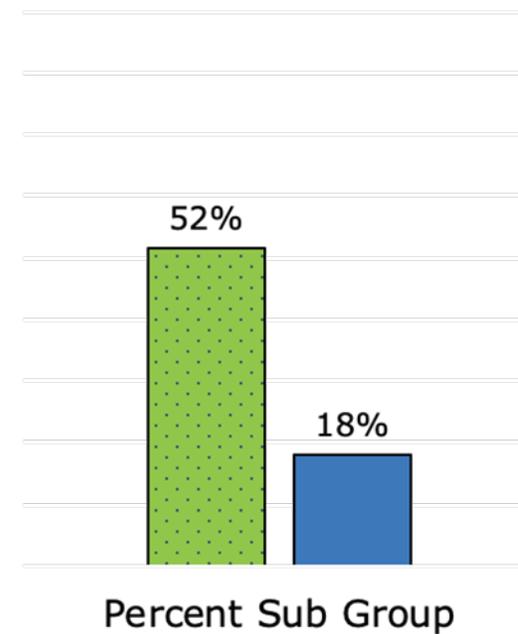
☐ English Fluent  ☐ English Learners

## Current Limitations:

- Assessment given in English only
- Local school systems timelines for determining English learner status varies

## Looking forward:

- Revisit developing the KRA in Spanish
- Provide more disaggregation of English learners at state level for public reports
- Consider adding KRA variable for English learners identified and served in pre-K

# Discussion and Recommendations

## Opportunities for Growth in Maryland

- Identification of pre-K English learners
- Standardized identification and screening tools
- Expand teacher knowledge of sound pedagogy

## Policy and Practice Recommendations from the Workgroup

- Reflecting upon the presentation today, what recommendations would you suggest regarding ELs and Early Childhood?

Please contribute ideas to our shared document or type in the chat.