

# Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Training for School Psychologists

Iryna Kasi, Ph.D.\*; Ricardo Mogo, B.S.; Sofia Cabal, B.A.; Daniella Maglione, Psy.D.; Sarah Valley-Gray, Psy.D., and Ralph E. Cash, Ph.D.

Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL

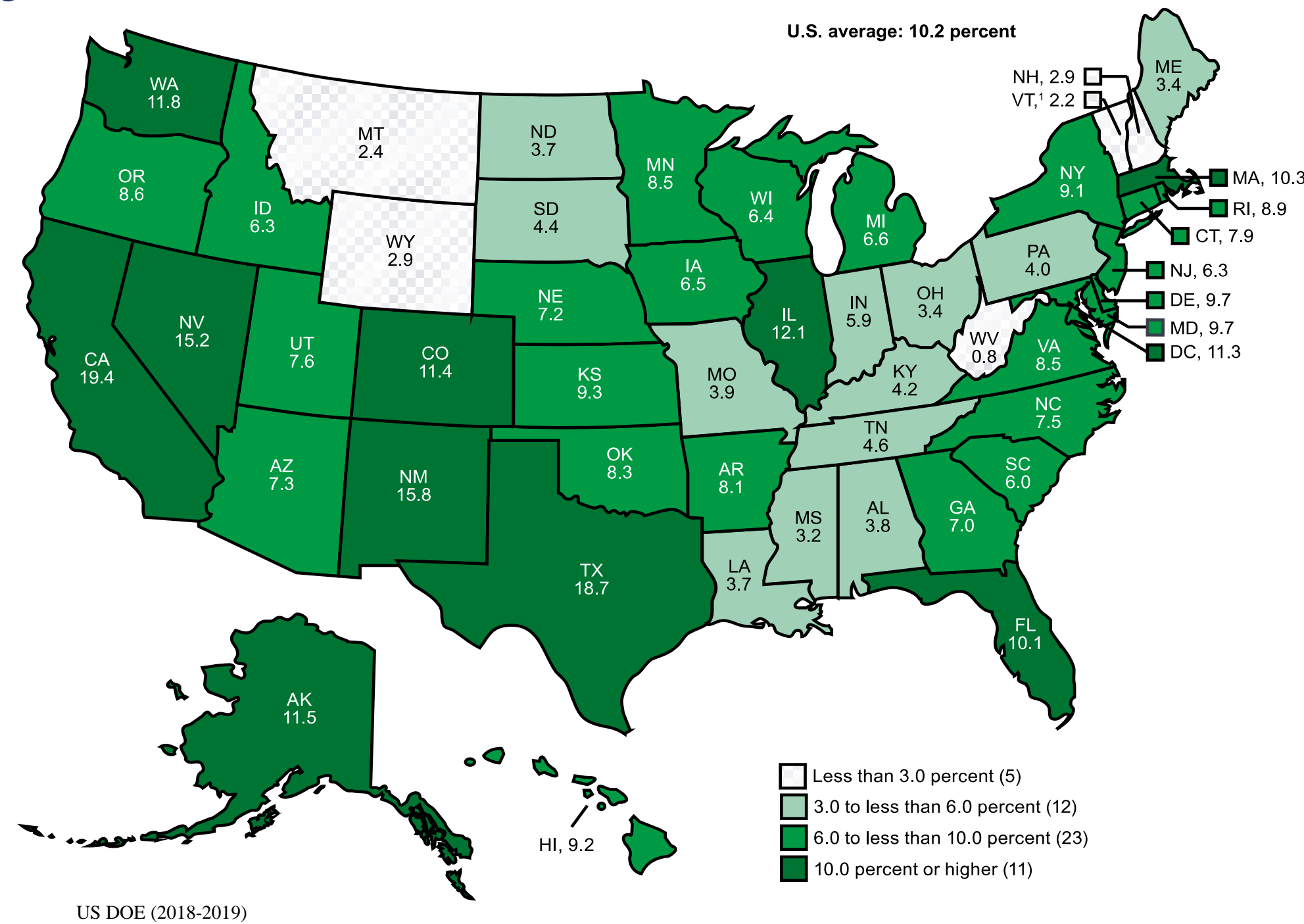
\* If you have questions, please contact the first author, Iryna Kasi, Ph.D. at [ikasi@nova.edu](mailto:ikasi@nova.edu)

## INTRODUCTION

Educational challenges are common among culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Although there is significant variability in the academic performance of children of immigrants (Sullivan et al., 2016), students classified as CLD often demonstrate academic performance deficits, underrepresentation in gifted programs, and increased risk of special education identification in some disability categories and in the higher grades (Samson & Lesaux, 2009; Sullivan, 2011).

Additionally, CLD students are retained at a significantly higher rate and have lower graduation rates when compared to all students. Specifically, the United States (US) Department of Education (DOE) Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) reported that during the 2015-2016 year, approximately 14.3% of CLD students were retained, although they only accounted for 10% of the student population in US schools (OELA, 2020a). This is in stark contrast to data obtained for all students, as the Office reported that only 2.1% of all students enrolled in US schools for the 2015-2016 were retained (OELA, 2020a). The OELA additionally reported that the graduation rate during the 2017-2018 academic year for CLD students was 68%, in contrast to the graduation rate for all students of 85% (OELA, 2020b).

While the numbers above are significant, they continue to rise, given the increase in the number of CLD students enrolled in US schools. The percentage of public school students in the United States who were CLD was higher in fall 2017 (10.1 percent, or 5.0 million students) than in fall 2000 (8.1 percent, or 3.8 million students) as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2019). This indicates that the CLD population in US schools increased significantly, and it continues to grow.



School psychologists play a vital role in promoting the academic and social-emotional development of students and are uniquely qualified to not only provide direct support services to improve educational outcomes for students, but also to help coordinate the provision of the crucial services to improve students' academic success and social-emotional growth.

It is critical that school psychologists are adequately prepared to understand the diverse needs of this "high risk" group so that they can more effectively assess the needs of CLD students and implement interventions designed to target some of their very specific concerns.

Project Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Planning, Response and Efficiency Program (CLD PREP) was designed to address the need for professional development of school psychologists and to improve the quality of educational and psychological services for CLD students.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

- Participants will be approximately 130 practicing school psychologists employed in a school district in Southeastern United States. The demographic information regarding participants' race, ethnic and cultural background, education, professional certification/licensure, years of experience, and language proficiency will be gathered prior to the beginning of the project.
- Each participant will complete a survey regarding their preparation for and confidence in working with CLD students prior to and after the completion of the series of training sessions. In addition, there will be a test including items constructed by each presenter and completed by all participants prior to and after the training sessions to assess knowledge related to the content taught during the specific training session.
- The training will be comprised of a minimum of 45 hours of didactic presentations designed and delivered by experts in the field of culturally and linguistically competent assessment of CLD students as well as in translating assessment results into evidence-based and individualized recommendations. No session will be longer than eight hours in a single day or shorter than two hours in a day.
- The expectation is that on the average, participants will rate themselves as better prepared for and will demonstrate enhanced knowledge of competent assessment of and recommendations for CLD students at post-test compared with pre-test.

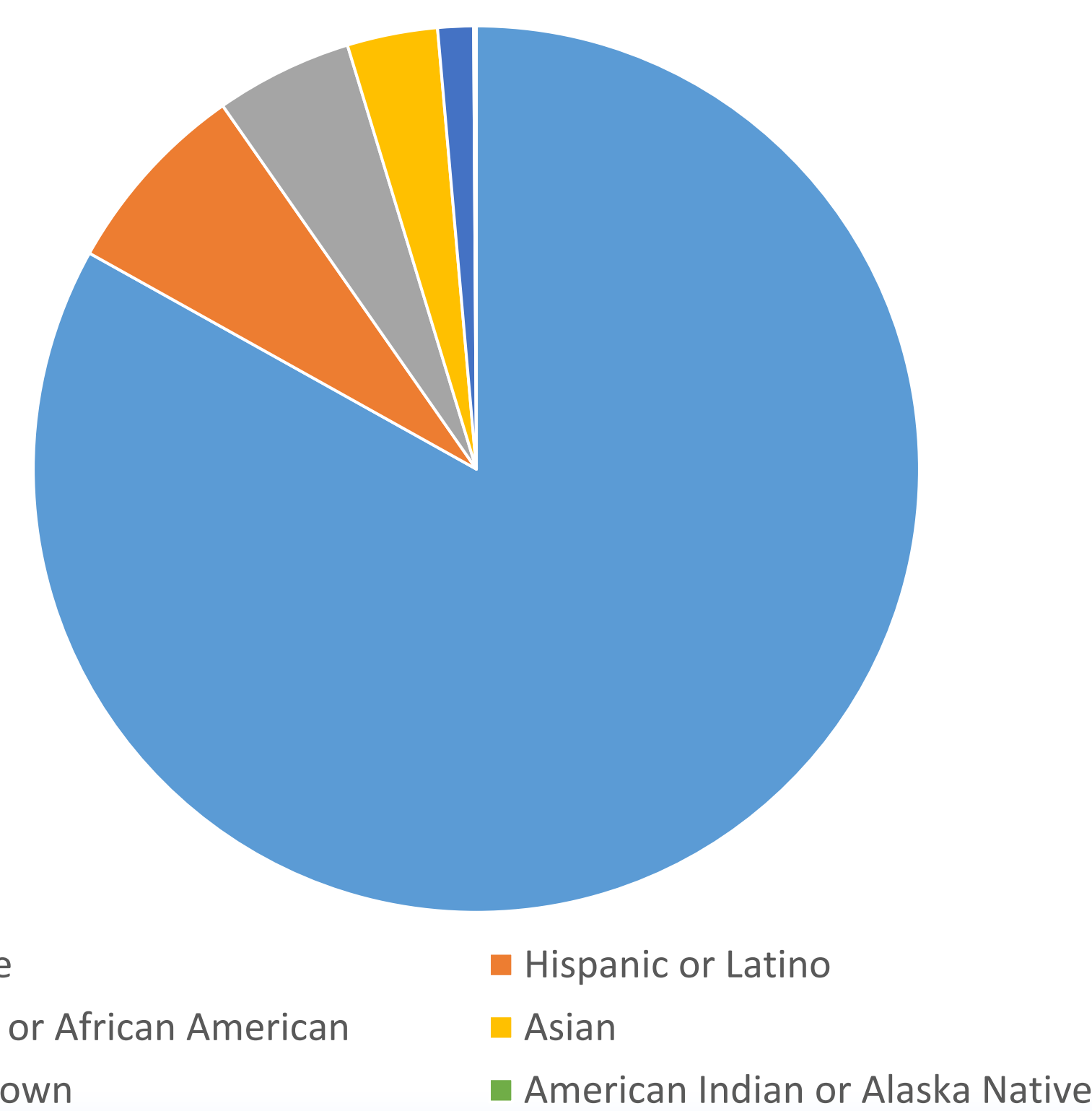
## TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES



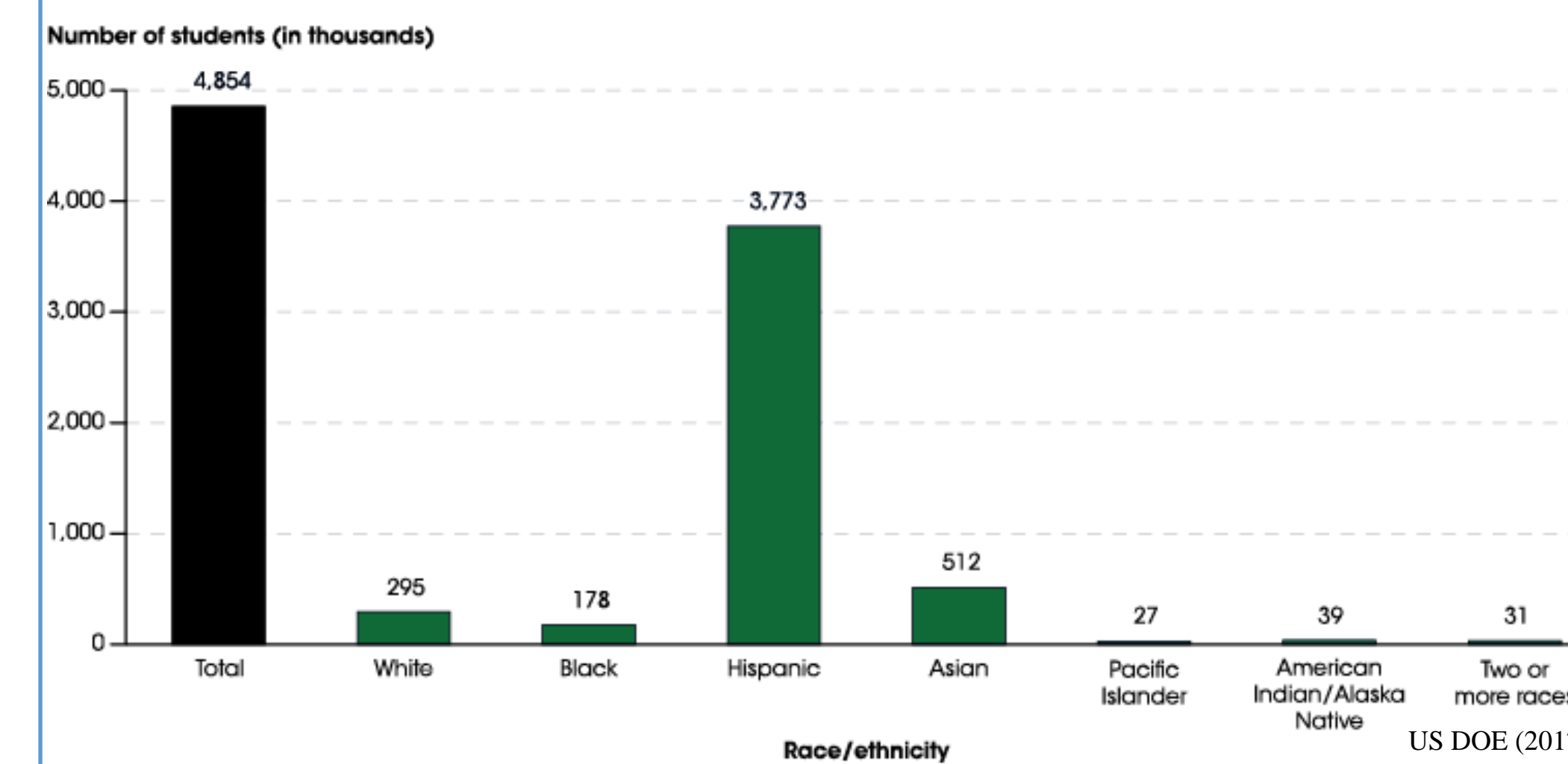
## IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

- Culturally and linguistically diverse students are at significant risk for evidencing academic and social-emotional challenges if they are not provided with educational programming that meets their unique needs.
- As mentioned previously, school psychologists play an integral role in not only providing direct support services to improve educational outcomes for students but also help coordinate the provision of crucial services to improve students' academic success and social-emotional growth.
- This project will support the development and utilization of culturally and linguistically competent assessment and intervention skills among school psychologists to enhance the effectiveness of their work with CLD students.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS STATISTIC BY RACE



## ELL STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As part of CLD PREP, professional development presentations will:

- review the demographics of CLD students at the national, state, and local level. In addition, it will discuss pertinent issues and trends for CLD students that school psychologists should be aware of, to best plan and advocate for this group of students.
- provide participants with current research on the relationship between language, cognitive, and academic development and how it may be used to guide instructional practices and the activities of pre-referral teams.
- provide participants with practical instruction and training in the use and application of rigorous theoretical and psychometric assessment principles within a practical, systematic framework for conducting valid and defensible evaluations of culturally and linguistically diverse children, particularly English learners.
- give participants instructions covering the implementation of evaluation procedures in a step-by-step manner that will address all necessary aspects of equitable evaluation including comprehensive measurement of various abilities, guidelines for evaluating the validity of test scores, rules governing the selection and use of scores generated via testing in English vs. the native language.
- familiarize participants with the characteristics exhibited by CLD students who are Gifted/Talented.
- discuss challenges and barriers to the identification of intellectual disability in CLD students.
- examine the prevalence rate for autism in the US and how it differs by racial/ethnic group.
- list the areas that need to be assessed for a comprehensive autism psychological evaluation
- examine variables that may impede or hinder the evaluation process in the identification of CLD students with autism and discuss suggestions for improvements in the assessment practice.
- review cultural issues (migration, acculturation, discrimination, etc.) as well as barriers that may impact therapeutic work with CLD children and adolescents.
- discuss a variety of intervention strategies including Evidence Based Practices and adaptations and culturally specific interventions to address cultural issues (i.e. acculturation, generational differences, religion/spirituality) when working with CLD children and adolescents
- introduce participants to Deaf culture and examine different Deaf identities and the role of Deaf culture as a factor in development, assessment, and interventions.
- provide the tools for school psychologists to examine how schools and school leaders are supporting the social and emotional development of its diverse populations of students.

## REFERENCES

Balagna, R. M., Young, E. L., & Smith, T. B. (2013). School experiences of early adolescent Latinos/as at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 28(2), 101-121. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq000018>

ED Data Express (n.d.). Adjusted-cohort graduation rate (SY 2017-2018) [Data set]. U. S. Department of Education. <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>

ED Data Express (n.d.). Title III former EL students (SY 2017-18) [Data set]. U. S. Department of Education. <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>

Migration Policy Institute (n.d.). State immigration data profiles: Demographics & social. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/FL/US/>

Migration Policy Institute (2015). ELL Information Center: Fact Sheet Series. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ELL-FactSheet-No5.pdf>

National Center for Educational Statistics (2019). Digest of Educational Statistics. English language learner (ELL) students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2017. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19\\_204.20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_204.20.asp)

Office for Civil Rights (2018). Civil rights data collection, 2015-16 [Data set]. U. S. Department of Education. <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>

Office of English Language Acquisition (2020a). English Language Learners: Absenteeism, Retention and Suspension Fact Sheet. Retrieved from [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/fast\\_facts/20200813-FactSheet-ELAbsenteeism-508.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/fast_facts/20200813-FactSheet-ELAbsenteeism-508.pdf)

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2020b). High school graduation rates for English learners. Retrieved from [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/fast\\_facts/20200916-ELGraduationRatesFactSheet-508.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/fast_facts/20200916-ELGraduationRatesFactSheet-508.pdf)

Samson, J. F., & Lesaux, N. K. (2009). Language-minority learners in special education rates and predictors of identification for services. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42(2), 148–162.

Sullivan, A. L. (2011). Disproportionality in special education identification and placement of English language learners. *Exceptional Children*, 77, 317–334.

Sullivan, A. L., Hour, A., & Sadeh, S. (2016). Demography and early academic skills of students from immigrant families: The kindergarten class of 2011. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 31, 149–162.

U. S. Department of Education (2015). IDEA section 618 data products: State level data files: Child count and educational environments, 2014 [Data set]. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bccee>

U. S. Department of Education (2016). IDEA section 618 data products: State level data files: Child count and educational environments, 2015 [Data set]. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bccee>

U. S. Department of Education (2017). IDEA section 618 data products: State level data files: Child count and educational environments, 2016 [Data set]. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bccee>

U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, EDData file 141, Data Group 678, extracted July 21, 2017, from the EDData Warehouse (internal U.S. Department of Education source); and Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education," 2015–16. See Digest of Education Statistics 2017, table 204.27.

U. S. Department of Education (2018). IDEA section 618 data products: State level data files: Child count and educational environments, 2017 [Data set]. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bccee>

U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2018–19. See Digest of Education Statistics 2020, table 204.20.

U. S. Department of Education (2019). IDEA section 618 data products: State level data files: Child count and educational environments, 2018 [Data set]. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bccee>