

## Schools lose records; English learners pay

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Poor recordkeeping keeps California schools from getting all of the funding that they have coming, a failing that especially hurts English learners, according to research from the University of California, Davis, School of Education.

Findings from the ongoing, eight-year study of two California [school](#) districts will be presented today, April 8, at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association in New Orleans.

In the study, UC Davis doctoral [students](#) Irina Okhremtchouk and Shonte Stephenson found that at the high school level, more than 21 percent of student records are missing. Even more are incomplete or inaccurate.

Student records are the source of data that districts report to the state and [federal government](#); the data are used to determine the courses and services that students receive, how schools are rated – and how much money a school receives per student. The per-pupil allocation is higher for English learners, making an accurate count of these students especially important.

“Districts all across the state have been using the same paper-based record system for decades,” Okhremtchouk said. “They don’t communicate with other districts. And the best system out there can only store data for three years.”

As a result, records are frequently lost when students transfer from one

school or district to another – and English learners are often misclassified along the way.

“Everyone understands that it’s a problem,” Okhremtchouk said. “But starting a universal database would be a huge expense.”

According to Okhremtchouk, California authorized a universal database system in 2002 and 2008, but the money has been held up by the bad economy.

Provided by UC Davis

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