



Policy Memorandum: A Laser Focus on our Long-Term English Learners

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Who We Are

We are administrators in California schools with a high number of Latino and English Learner (EL) students. We represent high-poverty, high-need communities in Northern and Southern California. Evelia Villa is currently the Chief Operating Officer for the Amethod Public Schools, K-12 system. Villa previously served as a founding principal and Chief Academic Officer within the organization. Nereyda Gonzalez currently serves as Director of Secondary Education in a district in Riverside County, where she formerly served as a high school principal, counselor, and teacher. We are Fellows from the National Institute for Latino School Leaders-California (NILSL-CA), sponsored by a UnidosUS program that links practitioners to policy makers.

Summary

Currently, schools must notify parents of their child's language designation under Assembly Bill (AB) 81 (Gonzalez, 2017). Parents of Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) are not accounted for when we talk about any next steps or progress monitoring. Although parental notification is communicated via a written letter, support services and processes are not explicitly detailed. As administrators, we believe it is important to inform parents of this designation, as it affects the type of course access available to their children. Oftentimes, LTELs are overlooked and suffer academically from not being re-designated appropriately. Therefore, we seek to advance policy recommendations that will enhance school-parent communication and collaboration while providing support for students who have not reclassified.

The Need

In 2014, California became the first state in the nation to define and identify English Learners who, after many years, struggle continuously to succeed academically or progress in their language development. These LTEL students are too often overlooked by educators.

Reasons for this can vary from local educational agency (LEA) to LEA in California, leaving students stuck in a category that can have a negative impact on their future. There is a critical need to elevate this issue to bring about a uniform approach, one in which all school systems are held accountable to serve and assure that students are making academic progress and that language re-designation is appropriately assessed. We find the following areas to be problematic, as they hinder the performance of English learners:

- **Latino males are overrepresented in the LTEL student population.**

The state has identified nearly 350,000 students in grades 6 through 12 who have attended California schools for seven years or more and who are still not fluent in English. They make up three-fourths of all secondary school students still learning English.¹ Graduating from high school is a milestone on the road to being adequately prepared for college or career success. Female ELs are 11% less likely to become LTELs than their male peers. The largest difference in observed graduation rates, 36.1%, occurred between never English learner students (meaning those who were never classified) and long-term English learner students.²

- **LTEL students have lower rates of college attendance.**

Never-English learner students had the highest observed four-year graduation rate (85%), followed by long-term proficient former EL students (81%), recently proficient former EL students (67%), and new EL students (52%). Long-term English learner students had the lowest graduation rate (49%). Thus, LTEL students as a group tend to lag behind never-English speakers in academic outcomes, including rates of high school graduation. The earlier that English learner students achieved English proficiency, the higher the graduation rate.

- **LTEL students demonstrate lower academic performance.**

According to researchers, many schools assess the language skills of students and wrongly assume that they have no special needs because they are more fluent in English than in Spanish. In fact, these underachievers represent one of California's most serious educational challenges. LTELs are not new arrivals; rather, they have been in the United States for seven or more years, and many are in fact U.S.-born.³ As a result, they are usually orally proficient in English and often sound like native speakers.⁴ Despite their oral proficiency in English, these students are characterized by low levels of academic literacy in both English and their home language. As such, their reading and writing scores below grade level in both languages, and they often experience poor overall academic performance and high course failure rates due to their inability to meet the literacy demands across content areas.⁵

Although AB 81 mandates schools to notify families, it has failed to yield the results needed. Given that LTELs have significantly lower rates of graduation, college attendance, and career success, it is imperative that families know their student's EL status. Without basic information about a student's educational status, we cannot expect families to make informed decisions about their children's education.

Background

Assembly Bill (AB) 2193 (Lara, 2012)⁶ adopted recommendations from the report entitled "Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners," authored by Dr. Laurie Olson.⁷ AB 2193 was the first bill in the nation to define "long-term English learner" and "English-Learner at risk of becoming a long-term English learner." It also required the collection of data of "long-term English learner" and "English-Learner at risk of becoming a long-term English Learner."

The original version of AB 2193 included parent notification, intervention, and support. Unfortunately, as the bill moved through the legislative process, these same requirements of parent notification, intervention, and support were removed.⁸

However, AB 2193 did lead to the collection of data of LTELs. Currently, California's DataQuest database collects the number of LTELs. Specifically, it collects the number of students that are "At-Risk" of becoming LTELs and LTELs by grade by school within a district. The data allows the public to view the number of students who are LTELs or at risk of becoming LTELs according to gender, disability, or other disadvantaged student groups, such as Socially Economically Disadvantaged students (SED), foster, migrant, and homeless. Although this database provides several filters, the data cannot be cross-tabulated. In addition, the number of LTELs is not disaggregated in any part of the California Data Dashboard.

Five years after AB 2193 passed, AB 81 was enacted.⁹ This piece of legislation required the annual notice of assessment of a student's English proficiency to include specific additional information, including whether a student is at risk of becoming LTEL. The legislation mandated parent notification but stopped there.

In addition, Title III, as part of the Federal Monitoring Program, requires LEAs to report on the "most recent ELP level, standard instructional program (i.e. ELD, including designated and integrated instruction, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and A-G subject requirements), and academic assessment data." It also requires that LEAs "include all currently enrolled ELs and identify those who are long term English learners (LTELs) or ELs at risk of becoming LTELs."¹⁰

LEAs collect data on LTELs and the instruction they receive as part of their Title III program monitoring. Although this information is collected, it is unclear what is done with the data beyond collection.

Specifically, although California has started to collect data on LTELs, the growth of this student population has provided us with a heightened sense of urgency. According to one report, "in California, for instance, the number of LTELs in California secondary schools grew from 344,862 in 2008/09 to 380,995 in 2015/16; in other words, the percentage of LTEL students among the total EL population in secondary schools increased in seven years by 20 percentage points."¹¹

It is imperative to act on the needs of this growing population by collecting the necessary data that will enable systems and educators to better identify needs, communicate and collaborate with parents, and provide teachers with the professional development opportunities that will better position them to support and teach LTELs. We must move beyond collecting data on Long Term English Learners and turn swiftly to action.

Our Ask

- **Parent meetings:** In addition to the parent notification for LTELs, schools should be required to hold an annual meeting with parents to discuss reclassification and supports and to create an intervention plan.
- **DataQuest:** Additional fields should be added, to allow for cross-tabulation that provides more detailed and comprehensive information about EL students, including LTELs.
- **Funding:** Earmark and report the amount of Title I, II, Title III, supplemental, and concentrated Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funding for professional development opportunities for teachers, parents, and district staff, to dive in data equity analysis that considers the needs of ELs, and in particular, LTELs.

Impact

In California and within the EL population, the LTEL population continues to grow. These students are “at-risk” of low academic achievement and lower outcome data, such as graduation or college-going rates. What is predictable is preventable! The following refinements to the current system will lead to greater awareness and change the trajectory of this student population from “at-risk” to a path of greater opportunity.

1. **Parent meetings:** In addition to the parent notification for LTELs, the school would be required to hold an annual meeting with parents to discuss reclassification and supports and to create an intervention plan.

If we are able to inform parents of what it means to have their child identified as an LTEL and provide resources and supports, then parents would know how to advocate for their children. A major area of concern is that parents do not know what is available and what they need to know regarding an LTEL designation. If schools create plans that include supports and interventions, then more students will be reclassified.

2. **DataQuest:** Additional fields should be added to allow for cross-tabulation that provides more detailed and comprehensive information about EL students, including LTEL students.

If we have more specific data about LTELs, it will lead to increased transparency about the academic achievement of LTELs. We especially believe knowing important data such as graduation rates, A-G completion, and assessment will lead to greater understanding of the growth of our LTELs, or lack thereof. One of the key ideas is that what we measure is intentional and defines what we value. If we continue to spotlight the achievement of LTELs, then we will increase accountability for the outcomes of our LTELs.

3. **Funding:** Earmark and report the amount of Title I, II, Title III, supplemental, and concentrated LCFF funding for professional development opportunities for teachers, parents, and district staff to dive in data equity analysis that considers the needs of ELs, and in particular, LTELs.

If we increase the collective knowledge of the gaps and needs of LTELs, then we will understand the needs of parents, students, and staff. If we provide professional development to educators for research-based best programs and practices, then we can effectively implement the programs and practices that will have the greatest impact for our LTELs.

Endnotes

- 1 Teresa Watanabe, "California schools step up efforts to help 'long-term English learners,'" *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 2014, <https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-english-learners-20141218-story.html>.
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- 4 Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco, Michael E. Fix, and Beatriz Chu Clewell, "Overlooked and Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools," Urban Institute, December 1, 2000, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/overlooked-and-underserved-immigrant-students-us-secondary-schools>.
- 5 See Ruiz de Velasco, Fix, and Clewell, "Overlooked and Underserved." See also Kate Menken, Tatyana Kleyn, and Nabin Chae, "Spotlight on 'Long-Term English Language Learners': Characteristics and Prior Schooling Experiences of an Invisible Population," *International Multilingual Research Journal* 6 (2012): 121-142, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://katemenken.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/menken-kleyn-chae-2012-spotlight-on-e2809clong-term-english-language-learnerse2809d-imrj1.pdf>. See also Kate Menken and Tatyana Kleyn, "The Long-Term Impact of Subtractive Schooling in the Educational Experiences of Secondary English Language Learners," *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 13, no. 4 (July 2010): 399-417, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050903370143>.
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- 8 Senate Appropriations Committee Fiscal Summary http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_2151-2200/ab_2193_cfa_20120816_124320_sen_comm.html
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Policy Memorandum: From Crisis to Priority: Redesigning Policy to Maintain High-Quality Core Instruction for English Learners

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Who We Are

We are part of the 14% of Latinx school leaders serving Latinx students across California, with a combined 40 years of experience. Through our work, we serve TK-12 students from marginalized communities, including English learners (ELs) from low-income and under-resourced schools. We are Fellows with UnidosUS through the National Institute for Latino School Leaders-California (NILSL-CA), which seeks to bridge the divide between policy and practice and effectively train advocates for policy reform that lead to increased educational outcomes for Latinx students and families.

Summary

Paying close attention to the needs of ELs and other vulnerable students who have been most disadvantaged by the interrupted learning that took place in Spring 2020 will help California build more targeted policies that protect ELs' access to language development. We recommend developing a framework that outlines our state's direct protection of language development and acquisition during times of interrupted learning. Additionally, we request one-time funding for professional development to emphasize research-based approaches that best support ELs in distance learning. Lastly, we request that the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) include in the template a prompt to specify plans about how districts will incorporate English language development through both targeted and content-based instruction.

The Need

ELs faced significant setbacks in their English language development after five or more months without consistent opportunities to listen, speak, write, and read in English.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic shined a spotlight on how existing policies must be strengthened to protect ELs during interrupted education and to leverage the role of state education agencies to coordinate a systemic and equity-focused response.

- The current pandemic has highlighted the need to adequately build teacher capacity to support students' diverse needs.² Professional development needs to emphasize research-based approaches that best support English learners, such as integrated language and content.³
- Research shows that students learn best when teachers acknowledge and build from the linguistic and cultural assets the students bring to school.⁴ Utilizing the EL Roadmap to build capacity at the local education agency (LEA) level would have the most impact.
- In a survey conducted by Californians Together, over 650 educators were asked about their Distance Learning Plan, focusing on English learners. Only 17% reported that most of their ELs participated in distance learning each week, and more than half reported that ELs are not participating weekly.⁵

Background

The population of the United States continues to grow and become more culturally and linguistically diverse, and the public schools are reflecting those trends.⁶ There are approximately 1.148 million ELs in California public schools, which makes up about 19% of the total student enrollment in the state.⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the surface the educational inequalities that ELs and children from immigrant families experience in U.S. schools, particularly during interrupted education.

As a result, ELs faced significant setbacks in their English language development after five or more months without consistent opportunities to listen, speak, write, and read in English.⁸ Maintaining a fully robust curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic and future interrupted instruction is critical to ELs' continued language development and academic performance. Districts and school leaders must ensure ELs have access to instruction services for English language development, as required under state and federal laws. Integrated and designated English language development is outlined in the CA English Learner Roadmap Principal Two Element 2.A. Language development occurs in and through subject matter learning and is integrated across the curriculum, including integrated English language development (ELD) and designated ELD, per the English Language Arts and English Language Development Framework.⁹

Executive Order N-56-20, issued by California Governor Gavin Newsom on April 22, 2020, empowered schools to focus on responding to COVID-19 and to provide transparency to their communities.¹⁰ Although executive order N-56-20 empowered schools, it also demonstrated the rash planning efforts that California instituted in the spring semester, with COVID-19 and the Local Continuity and Attendance Plan to provide LEAs with guidelines. These hastily drafted plans have not materialized into support services or instruction tailored to ELs. Districts are not set up to implement these emergency plans. Therefore, an emergency framework can help mitigate these challenges, should the state face interrupted instruction due to a natural disaster such as wildfires or another pandemic.

Our Ask

We believe that for ELs to increase their English language development, more must be done to ensure ELs continue to have equitable access to education during interrupted instruction. Instructional practices supporting English learners during interrupted instruction must be in place. As educators grapple with the heavy lifting of delivering distance learning to ELs, the state and district leaders must provide extensive support and clear guidelines for educating our ELs. We are recommending the following:

- Create a framework through the Department of Education outlining an emergency plan in times of interrupted learning, i.e., natural disaster or global pandemic. These emergency plans, co-developed with key stakeholder groups, will outline steps to guide a county office and district during times of interrupted learning so that they remain operational. In particular, these steps will ensure that students, including the most vulnerable populations, receive the resources and support to access and engage in a robust learning experience across TK-12 content in times of interrupted learning.
- Provide \$800,000 in one-time funding to an English Learner Consortium or lead in the California System of Support that will support professional development and on-demand differentiated training modules focused on distance learning resources that emphasize research-based approaches for EL instruction (designated/integrated ELD) and support students from the most vulnerable populations—ELs, students with disabilities (SWD), and foster youth (FY)—within the general education classrooms. These resources will provide California County Offices of Education and school districts across California with ready-to-go professional development and training modules to support teachers of English learners. They will also complement the distance learning frameworks and instructional plans currently in development through the Sacramento County Office of Education.
- Provide LCAP template revisions, including prompts to specify plans to incorporate English language development through targeted and content-based instruction, as outlined in the CA English Learner Roadmap, Principal Two, Element 2.A.¹¹

Impact

The pandemic and the closures of schools in California have compromised access to a free and appropriate public education for the most vulnerable students. This vulnerable population includes students across the California TK-12 public education system who are English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth, and/or students experiencing homelessness. During the 2019-20 school year, California had 1,148,024 ELs enrolled in schools that were impacted by learning loss.¹² ELs continue to face many setbacks in their English language development due to inconsistent opportunities to access quality core instruction with designated and integrated content support.

- Creating a framework through the California Department of Education (CDE) outlining emergency plans during interrupted learning will ensure students from the most vulnerable populations continue to receive promised state and federal services. This will further ensure that ELs do not fall further behind academically under any interrupted learning or crisis, in addition to supporting County Offices of Education and Districts by saving time and attention that can be redirected to the instructional program provided to 1.148 million ELs in California public schools.
- Ensuring that one-time funding with specific guidelines from the CDE is utilized by the EL Consortium or CA System of Support lead will aid in decreasing an already widening achievement gap for English learners. Specifically, this funding will create professional

learning and training modules designed for building teacher capacity to address the needs of the most vulnerable students. This funding will also provide professional development and on-demand training modules (available free of cost) to educational leaders across county and school districts; the modules can complement the distance learning guidance provided by the Sacramento County Office of Education as mentioned in Senate Bill (SB) 86 (Committee on Budget, 2021), the bill for COVID-19 relief concerning school reopening, reporting, and public health requirements.¹³

- We strongly urge the highest considerations of the outlined recommendations to make the strongest impact on English learners' access to quality core instruction, inclusive of designated and integrated English language development during interrupted instruction.

Endnotes

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- 10 "Executive Order 56-20 of April 22, 2020," Executive Department, State of California, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/04/23/governor-newsom-issues-executive-order-empowering-schools-to-focus-on-covid-19-response-and-transparency/>.
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Policy Memorandum: Increase Supports for Increasing Student Achievement Through Building Sustainable Systems

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Who We Are

We are Latina/o leaders that bring our own story to current educational issues impacting our communities. Our team is grounded in *respeto*, in knowing that the respect needed for our own backgrounds is more important today than yesterday. Our collective experience in leading English learners spans close to 50 years of listening to the ongoing struggles of deciding between two cultures, languages, traditions, and friends. Though one can argue that “things are better than before,” frankly, they are not and will never be good enough. Our Spanish-speaking community deserves the same consistent effort of learning English and American history. The time is now to ensure that we foster, educate, and create leaders from the universities to our schools who, beyond being culturally relevant, are culturally and linguistically on the leading edge. Our international world needs it; moreover, our communities require it, and our students deserve it. We are Fellows with UnidosUS through the National Institute for Latino School Leaders,-California (NILSL-CA), which seeks to bridge the divide between policy and practice and effectively train advocates for policy reform that lead to increased educational outcomes for Latinx students and families.

Summary

We are recommending changes to the state’s allocation of Title III to ensure that English learners are provided with teachers and leaders who are well-trained in highly effective practices and are held accountable, to ensure students are meeting all competency goals across all schools in California through the County Offices of Education (COE). The forthcoming funding request is to increase the number of Title III COE Liaison Agency representatives by two per region with an allotment of a minimum of \$4 million in annual funding.

The Need

In 2018, Global California 2030 was developed by the Communications and English Learner Support Divisions of the California Department of Education (CDE).¹ The initiative includes notable and lofty goals such as the participation of half of all K-12 students in programs leading to proficiency in two or more languages, either through a class, a program, or an experience. However, in the same timeframe (2018-19), nearly 90% of English learner (EL) students across all grades in California did not meet English and math standards.² If California does not address this crisis, it will lose the linguistic, cultural, social, and economic assets of Dual Language Learners that are needed to develop a global, diverse, and multilingual state and economy.³

The Migration Policy Institute (2018) indicates that in California:⁴

- Immigrants comprise a large portion of the population; therefore, it follows that the share of school-age children with one or more foreign-born parents is larger in California (52%) than in the United States overall (26%).
- In low-income families, 60% of children had one or more foreign-born parent(s), compared to 32% of children nationally.
- Among California school districts with enrollments of more than 10,000 English learners (ELs), four of the five districts with the largest number of ELs were concentrated in Southern California during the 2017-2018 school year.

Background

Title III provides federal monies to the states for the education of English learners. Specifically, California is required to demonstrate that English learner students are proficient and competent in state achievement standards in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science, as well as making progress in their English language development.

English learners represent a significant portion of California public school students:⁵

- The state's 1,148,024 English learners constitute 18.6% of the total enrollment in public schools.
- The majority of English learners (68.6%) are enrolled in elementary grades kindergarten through six. The rest (31.4%) are enrolled in the secondary grades seven through twelve and in the ungraded category.
- A total of 2,555,951 students (both ELs and Fluent English-Proficient) come from homes with a language other than English. This number represents about 41.5% of the state's public-school enrollment.

An English learner is identified by asking families to complete a Home Language Survey when the student first enrolls in a public school in California. If the family indicates a primary language other than English is spoken at home, or there is reason to believe that the student can benefit from English language support, then the student is administered the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) screener assessment and may begin to receive English language support services, if the assessment results merit such supports. During the student's English language development, they must meet reclassification criteria to exit the program. The criteria continue to vary in three of the four criteria as well as district to district and are grounded in assessments, teacher recommendations, and grades.

For over 20 years, the challenge has been the lack of standardization of professional development across districts for how to reclassify students effectively and provide support after they have reclassified for a minimum of four years.

One example from Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) shows this challenge:

Under earlier reclassification procedures (from 2003 to 2006), some high school students in LAUSD may have been reclassified too soon, which lowered their chance of graduating from high school on time. They also found that, between 2007 and 2012, former ELs in LAUSD scored worse on math and literacy assessments than peers who weren't reclassified at the same time, but that negative effect only lasted for one year.

These and similar challenges will be further curtailed by increasing the number of Title III County Office of Education Liaisons to continue to communicate information between 11 service regions and other entities participating in the California Statewide System of Support. The Title III Liaisons also known as Regional EL Specialists are to participate in the California Statewide System of Support and communicate regularly with the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Collaborative for Education Excellence (CCEE), and the lead agencies. The new system expects all California Statewide System of Support providers to work collaboratively with one another to provide coordinated support to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) identified for technical assistance under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) or the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

Then, from the team of 11, one Title III COE Liaison Agency is selected by the CDE to represent this group to function as follows:⁷

- Provide updates to and collaborate with the advisory bodies of the system of support.
- Attend geographic leads meetings and act as a liaison between the geographic leads and the Regional EL Specialists.
- Present acquired information at the regional level to all Regional EL Specialists using available modes of communication (i.e. online and face-to-face meetings, online sharing platforms, etc.).
- Support Regional EL Specialists to disseminate the information to all COEs and LEAs within their regions.
- Fund activities with existing Title III budget.

Through the state system of support, Title III COE Liaison Agency representatives have been divided into 11 regions; however, the division of these representatives is unequal due to the needs of particular districts with a high density of English learners (e.g. Los Angeles) compared to other rural areas that do not have the distinct demands for services. Differentiation is highly needed, including constant supports to make meaning of the English Learner Roadmap. One example is a comparison between Region 8, which services Kern, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura, and Region 11, which services Los Angeles. These two regions each have one representative. Kern County has 85,000 English learners, but Los Angeles County has 257,000.^{7,8}

Our Ask

- The CDE should join advocacy efforts by civil rights and equity organizations to demand a \$2 billion increase to Title III funding starting with FY 2022. Once funding is secured, a minimum of \$4 million (a \$2 million increase from current funding levels) should be allotted to build capacity at the COE level to provide support and services for English learners.

This includes:

- An increase of the Title III COE Liaison Agency representative by two per region offering alignment to the Current Geographical Lead Agencies
- A redesign of the system of support structured to ensure oversight and accountability of LEAs as related to support, services, and outcomes of English learners. Currently, federal funding is used to enhance the capacity of the COE Liaison Agency representatives. However, the current system of collaboration with the System of Support will be leveraged with the additional support to enhance implementation, services, and outcomes.
- A cohesive and uniform approach to professional development and implementation of support and services to English learners as part of the System of Support. The 11 COE Liaison Agency representatives provide technical assistance to their region by offering capacity-building opportunities and disseminating timely, accurate, and reliable information on English learner policy, legislation, and accountability to make meaning for the local level so that it impacts student achievement.

Impact

Close the Funding Gap

Ensure equitable and adequate allocation of resources to improve the academic, personal, and social as well as college and career needs of English learners.

Share COE Liaison Accountability with LEAs

Encourage COE Liaisons to directly work with LEAs to increase consistent accountability and outcomes when equity dashboard percentages of English language or content attainment for English learners' subgroups (e.g. English learners and Reclassified) decreases or stalls, by cohesively pairing the Regional Lead and Geographical Lead structures within the System of Support. This will be evidenced in the development of alignment system structures at the county level to impact the structures at the LEA level.

Common Instructional Practices

Streamline professional development opportunities through the additional COE Liaisons, afforded across California for educators serving English learners, to include a strong understanding of successful outcomes with English learners based on typologies and reflective of local diversity and contexts. Moreover, the additional COE Liaisons will work to develop cohesive system structures within the System of Support at the local and county level to further support positive performance outcomes for English learners and implement the California English Learner Roadmap, which is the policy adopted in 2017.

Current COE Liaisons are limited in their impact to ensure efficient and effective professional development, which further ensures that "English learner (EL) students, including immigrant children and youth, attain English language proficiency (ELP) and meet the same challenging state academic standards that other students are expected

to meet,” as described by the Language Instruction for English learner and Immigrant Students Act, Section 3102.

Encourage LEAs to ensure that families and guardian communities are being provided with bicultural and bilingual learning as outlined in the English Learner Roadmap unanimously adopted by the State Board of Education in 2017.

Moreover, by supporting our English learners and boosting County of Education resources, we can continue to address the low academic performance of English learners through professional development for teachers and administrators, which will serve students as they acquire language proficiency and simultaneously enhance their academic performance.

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Policy Memorandum: Leveling the FIELD: Funding, Intervention, and English Language Development in Elementary Schools

Alma-Delia Renteria, Principal, Rivera Elementary School

*Jonathan Tiongco, Founding Principal & Executive Director, Alliance
Marine - Innovation & Technology 6-12 Complex*

Who We Are

We are local leaders and principals of effective public schools spanning kindergarten through 12th grade, representing both the traditional and public charter school system, with the vast majority of students served being from predominantly low-income Latino communities and families. Alma-Delia Renteria is a principal in El Rancho Unified School District. Jonathan Tiongco is the Founding Principal and Executive Director for the Alliance Marine - Innovation & Technology 6-12 Complex and an educational consultant. We are also part of the National Institute for Latino School Leaders-California (NILSL-CA) Fellowship with UnidosUS, which seeks to bridge the divide between policy and practice and train effective advocates for policies and reform efforts to strengthen educational outcomes for Latino students.

Summary

As educators who understand the detrimental effects experienced by English Learners (ELs) who do not reclassify and who are denied access to higher-education and career-bound academic opportunities, we request the California Legislature to join national advocacy efforts in asking for an additional \$2 billion in Title III funding starting with fiscal year 2022 and for an increase to the supplemental and concentration funding allotment for elementary schools under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). A boost in funding for English Language Development (ELD) in general and specific funding at the elementary level would provide additional, proactive EL support services and early interventions to prevent students from becoming Long-Term English Learners (LTELs). LTELs are students who have not been able to demonstrate proficiency in English to participate in mainstream English coursework in middle and high school settings. The reclassification of students earlier in students' academic trajectories will prepare them for long-term success.

The Need

Looking at the academic achievement levels of ELs in 2018-2019, the last year California had the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessment results, only 12% of ELs met or exceeded the standards in English-Language Arts and Mathematics, compared to 51% in English-Language Arts (ELA) and 40% in Mathematics for all students, demonstrating a clear and profound performance gap.¹

While reclassification rates play a role in this statistic, EL performance over time on the CAASPP declines steadily from 3rd grade to 11th grade in both English-Language Arts and Mathematics. In 3rd grade, approximately 18% of students met or exceeded standards in ELA and 15% met or exceeded standards in Math. In 5th and 6th grade, when most students will be transitioning to secondary settings, ELs met or exceeded standards in ELA at 13% and 10%, respectively, and met or exceeded standards in Math at 10% and 8% in those same grades.²

According to 2019 data from the State Dashboard, only 48.3% of ELs are making progress towards English Language Proficiency (ELP).³ Not only does this signify that only half of our EL population is making progress towards ELP, our college- and career-readiness indicators highlight a more tragic reality. While 72.7% of ELs graduated in 2019, only 16.8% of those graduates reached the “Prepared” level on the College and Career Indicator.⁴ EL students are further at a disadvantage when seeking higher education opportunities that, in the long run, translate into access to higher paid jobs and improved quality of life, etc.

Background

In 2018-2019, approximately 1.2 million ELs were enrolled in California public schools, **meaning that 1 out of every 5 students in the state is an English Learner.** California has the largest Latino student population in the United States and its student population has increased by almost 8% over the past decade. An estimated 55% of K-12 students in California are Latino, and 82% of ELs in California identify Spanish as their home language.⁵

The majority of ELs (70.2%) are enrolled in the elementary grades (K-6),⁶ meaning that through increased funding, earlier intervention supports at the elementary level can increase and improve ELP and meet our California Department of Education goals for ELs. At the secondary level, 59% of the EL population in California has been identified as LTELs.⁷ In U.S. schools, a “Long-Term English Learner” means an English Learner who is enrolled in any grade from 6 to 12, has been enrolled in schools in the United States for more than six years, and who has remained at the same English-language proficiency level for two or more consecutive years as determined by the English language development test and underperformance on the state summative assessment.⁸ LTELs have higher dropout rates and lower college-going rates than their peers. **In order to meet the needs of our EL populations, increased funding, particularly in the earlier grade levels, is absolutely critical.**

For the current 2020-21 academic year, the average base grant per Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for grades K-6 (elementary) is \$7,760. Meanwhile, the base grant per ADA for grades 9-12 is \$9,329. Due to two grade-span adjustments (one for Grades K-3 to factor the increase for smaller average class sizes, and one for Grades 9-12 in recognition of the costs for career technical education), base grants for grades K-3 were adjusted from \$7,702 to \$8,503, and for grades 9-12, base grants were adjusted from \$9,329 to \$9,572. Even with this adjustment to support smaller class sizes in the primary grades, the average K-6 base grant is only \$8,160.50 per ADA in comparison to the

\$9,572 base grant per ADA provided to grades 9-12, which represents a significant gap in funding for elementary students compared to their secondary-school-setting peers.⁹

A recent report released by the Manhattan Institute entitled “The Earning Curve” further highlights the importance of college and career readiness for our ELs as it relates to our economy.¹⁰ If ELs are only graduating from high school, their earnings are capped earlier than those of their college-graduate counterparts.

Our Ask

We request the California Department of Education (CDE) join national advocacy efforts asking for an additional \$2 billion in Title III funding starting with fiscal year 2022,¹¹ to ensure earlier and more proactive approaches in educating ELs. In addition, we request that the California Legislature increase the supplemental grant funding allotted to elementary schools to provide additional EL support and early interventions to prevent students from becoming LTELs and ensuring ELs have strong pathways to post-secondary education and career success.

We ask that the legislature increase funding from the LCFF formula to:

- Provide funds to hire additional staffing support (i.e. full-time equivalency positions such as EL teachers, EL instructional coaches, etc.) for elementary schools that have a student population of at least 20% EL students.
- Adopt staffing guidelines that are dictated by student population needs to better gauge the staffing needs of communities. Currently, elementary school principals carry too many buckets of work, thus taking away from their ability to truly serve the needs of English Learners and particularly in returning from the Covid pandemic crisis.

Impact

Our long-term goal is to provide resources and services for students to receive early intervention, reclassify, and have greater access and opportunities. By increasing funding to ensure that all local educational agencies provide all elementary schools with a 20% EL population with at least one dedicated EL-specific position to provide direct service to students and provide personalized professional development to meet the needs of our students, we will be able to:

- more proactively support students in preparation for secondary and post-secondary success
- improve reclassification rates
- minimize the numbers of LTELs who transition into our secondary school system
- increase EL graduation rates over time
- improve college acceptance rates

Thus, investment early-on will drastically improve ELs’ career and life prospects, stimulate the economy, and help us to create a more educated and equitable democracy.

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Policy Memorandum: Increasing Math Achievement for English Learners Through Family and Teacher Collaboration

*Maria Villa, Director of Parent and Family Engagement, California
Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)*

*Frances Baez, Local District Central Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified
School District (LAUSD)*

Who We Are

We are educational leaders with a wealth of experience in serving English Learners and families across the state of California. Frances Baez serves as the Local District Central Superintendent serving 78,000 students, 46,875 of which are English Learners in a subset of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest school district in the country. This local district serves the highest concentration of English Learners in LAUSD. Maria Villa serves as the Director of Parent and Family Engagement for the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), an organization committed to empowering diverse students, families, teachers, and administrators across the state of California. Both of us strive to intersect student and family needs and statewide leadership to open doors to achievement and self-actualization. We are privileged to be a part of the 2020 National Institute for Latino School Leaders-California (NILSL-CA), a California Fellowship with UnidosUS, that seeks to bridge the divide between policy and practice and effectively train advocates for policies and reform efforts to strengthen outcomes for Latinos.

Summary

Local, state, and national student achievement data demonstrate a persistent gap between English Learners and Non-English Learners (Non-ELs) in math. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), and Fall 2020 grades show that English Learners (EL) are disproportionately performing below proficiency level. In California, there is a new Math Framework adoption on the horizon as well as the creation of a distance learning framework that includes standards for English language development, English language arts, and math. This landscape makes a strong case for establishing funding recommendations for increased engagement and professional development for teachers to close the achievement gap and address EL needs in 2021 and beyond.

The Need

English Learners in California have performed below proficiency in the 4th and 8th grade math section of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), with an average of a 26 point percentile difference between ELs and Non-ELs from 1990 to 2019.¹ There is also an 11% difference among ELs and Non-ELs in the 3rd grade Math portion of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).² In a subset of the Los Angeles Unified student population, 48% (or 22,500) of secondary ELs in 6th -12th grade were issued midterm grades of D or F in math in the Fall of 2020. This data analysis supports the need to advance advocacy for intentional supports for English Learners in the upcoming decade.

Research shows that students need specifically designed approaches to acquire math skills. A variety of teaching methods, like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), will offer multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression.³ These are the traits ELs need to process and show their learning. Foundational skills in math will address unfinished learning in the early grades to access advanced math in the higher-level grades.⁴ Persistence in math in K-12 will lead to persistence in college and career readiness.

However, the COVID 19 pandemic and distance learning have had a significant impact on the achievement of ELs. At the same time, a new California Math Framework is being revised and published in 2021.⁵ This is a pivotal moment to address unfinished learning, hone in on specific UDL strategies for ELs and prepare teachers for new math initiatives that meaningfully engage all students in tasks that are relevant to their interests. Professional development and planning time will allow for intentional support of math learning while simultaneously acquiring language.⁶ During distance learning, families have been an integral part of their children's education. This era highlights the powerful connection between student achievement and family engagement. Proven approaches to engagement emerge during these unprecedented times.

The California Association of Bilingual Education (CABE) Family, School, and Community Engagement Program is the result of a five-year research project (2006-2011) funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Based on their research, CABE Project 2INSPIRE increases partnerships in schools to increase student academic achievement and, build and establish critical relationships with them. These types of partnerships are essential in supporting the design for workshops and capacity building. In addition, this collaborative process has demonstrated that trainings funded by Title I can propel ELs' achievement by strengthening the instructional practices of teachers working with this student population and their families.

Background

The review of the literature provides an analysis of the achievement gap in math among ELs and Non-ELs at the national, state, and local school levels.⁷ A UDL and Funds of Knowledge approach will develop a better understanding of student assets to enhance classroom practices based on students' strengths. At the same time, culturally and linguistically relevant learning materials offer an igniting entry point for students to engage in learning. Student assets, curricula, and teacher practices will be instrumental in closing the achievement gap for ELs. UDL encompasses three ways for students to acquire and express their learning: engagement, representation, and action with expression. For example, students need to see, hear, and touch what they are learning as a way to stay interested and engaged. Students succeed when they show their learning in multiple fashions, such as presentations, videos, poetry, art, etc. Culturally relevant

learning further establishes the context for learning. Students stay interested and persist when they are learning content that matters most to them.

Currently, students are offered 180-240 state minimum daily synchronous instructional minutes in learning; however, teachers are delivering direct instruction, instead of engaging students in discussion based on math concepts.

At this moment, a review of the California Math Framework is slated for adoption in 2021. Conversations around the adoption provide the context for specifically designed strategies for ELs⁸ and offer multiple pathways for students to achieve deeper learning. Entry points for accelerated and advanced math courses are possible for students through the Framework. This is the time to support early numeracy⁹ and address Master Scheduling in middle and high school to offer English Learners K-12 math opportunities.

The demonstrated need to enhance equity and afford access for K-12, EL's¹⁰ forms the foundation for our recommendations: increase Title I funds from 1% to 3% to provide robust professional development and opportunities for us to support students academically, in particular in math.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) supports family engagement by requiring school districts to use at least 1% of their Title I funds for parent and family engagement activities. The funds can be used to support professional development for educators on family engagement, home visiting programs, and other consistent activities to support family engagement. Currently, California receives 1.98% of Title I funds. A 1% allocation of Title I funds is \$19 million; therefore, 3% would be \$57 million, an increase of \$38 million.¹¹

We also recommend that the State of California set up a competitive, one-time grant to encourage start-up partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEA's) and community organizations to advance implementation of the Math Framework with ELs and their families, creating webinars, small group interactive virtual sessions, or other similar activities. The discretionary state funds from the American Recovery Act may be able to grant \$1 million toward these start-up partnerships.

These recommendations will prepare students and families for the new requirements of the California Math Framework and the policies that will impact students.

Our Ask

English Learners in California have historically underachieved in math at the local, state, and national levels. As we await the adoption of a new Math Framework, we need to prepare teachers and families to engage students in deeper learning and real-world application of math concepts. Based on the research and the dire needs students are facing today, we recommend:

1. Increase the Title I family engagement set-aside from 1% to 3% to support evidence-based family engagement programming geared at math support for English Learners and their families. The increased funding allocation can help train teachers and school partners to work with parents/guardians of English Learners to help support the implementation of the new Math Framework while simultaneously focusing on English language development.
2. Fund a competitive, one-time state grant to encourage start-up partnerships between LEA's and community organizations to advance implementation of the Math Framework with ELs and their families at schools with 20% or more English Learners. The recommended funding source is the discretionary state allocation from the American Recovery Act, currently \$450 million.

Impact

- Family engagement increases overall student academic success. Several studies have found this to be true. For example, teacher outreach to families was related to strong and consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math. The most effective outreach practices included meeting face-to-face, sending materials home, and keeping in touch about progress. Workshops for families on helping their children at home were linked to higher reading and math scores. Schools with highly rated partnership programs made greater gains on state tests than schools with lower-rated programs.¹²
- Now more than ever, families/guardians are their children's support system and side-by-side teacher at home. Supporting families to help their children is an essential element as students face the challenges of online learning. Families need learning strategies and best practices to support at-home learning. Regular, detailed, and native language communication between families, teachers, and the school is a fundamental element of a successful online learning strategy.
- Professional learning and planning time will allow for intentional support of math learning while language is acquired.¹³ Proven approaches to engagement emerge during these unprecedented times. This is when we need to build capacity in UDL and engagement techniques in distance learning to acquire grade level math skills.
- Planning will also be needed to prepare for after-school tutoring and small group instruction to address unfinished learning experienced during remote learning. This preparation will propel acceleration efforts forward when they can resume.

Endnotes

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