Empowering Emerging Bilinguals:

Policy and Leadership Recommendations from a Community of Practice

Introduction

The Emerging Bilingual Collaborative (EBC), consisting of six foundations from across California (California Community Foundation, Heising-Simons Foundation, James B. McClatchy Foundation, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Silver Giving Foundation, and Sobrato Philanthropies), launched the **Implementing High-Quality Instructional Practices for Multilingual Learners Grant Opportunity and Community of Practice** (ML HQIP CoP) in 2021, a consortium of 11 education agencies from across California of various sizes and types that received funding, technical assistance and peer support. Simultaneously, the EBC supported Early Edge California, in partnership with stakeholders across the state, to develop the **Multilingual Learning Toolkit: Resources for Supporting PreK-3rd Multilingual Children** (ML Toolkit), which collects evidenced-based instructional strategies and practices that are critical for teachers and administrators to know

when supporting multilingual learners (MLs) PreK through 3rd grade. The ML HQIP CoP participants attended virtual meetings and in-person convenings to share effective ML instructional practices, professional learning resources (including the ML Toolkit), consider problems of practice and learn from each other. Education First, a national education consulting organization, coordinated ML HQIP CoP activities, facilitated meetings and documented learnings over the three-year project period. This report summarizes the overall effort, capturing the context within which the initiative was launched, the education agencies involved and what was learned from realizing successes as well as navigating challenges. Education First also offers recommendations for policymakers and education system leaders to address issues surfaced by this work and to support and sustain gains made by the ML HQIP CoP.

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Why Was the Emerging Bilingual Collaborative Launched?

California is home to the nation's largest population of Multilingual Learners (MLs), with over 1.8 million Dual Language Learners (DLLs, students who are learning two or more languages at the same time) and 1.1 million English Learners (ELs) in the TK-12 system.[1][2] For generations, language and culture have shaped various areas of MLs lives, including education. For these learners and their teachers, multilingualism and multiculturalism serve as valuable assets that enhance learning environments with the addition of diverse perspectives. Nevertheless, MLs remain a historically marginalized group, requiring additional support in the classroom, school and community. Despite this needed support, English-only policies have left many of California's PreK-3 educators without the necessary knowledge and capabilities to provide high-quality education to ML students. The COVID-19 pandemic, too, has disproportionately impacted the state's most vulnerable communities and student groups, including MLs. These factors have exacerbated existing inequities and widened educational outcome gaps between MLs and their English-only peers.

In 2016, Californians voted in favor of Proposition 58, the California Education for a Global Economy Initiative, which repealed state restrictions on bilingual education programs and gave districts greater flexibility to support multilingual learning. The following year, the State Board of Education adopted the [English Learner Roadmap (EL Roadmap)](#), setting a common vision for educating MLs in California from preschool through 12th grade. The EL Roadmap promotes four core goals: 1) assets-oriented and needs-responsive schools; 2) intellectual quality of instruction and meaningful access; 3) system conditions that support effectiveness; and 4) alignment and articulation within and across systems. Together, Proposition 58 and the EL Roadmap have helped to create a statewide context for identifying and addressing ML needs.

However, there is still work to be done to move from vision and planning to collaborating and implementing supports and services that make a difference for ML students and educators.

In addition to simultaneously learning a new language while learning academic content, MLs often struggle with the realities associated with experiencing poverty. However, California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)—intended to improve the state's funding system—has fallen short of providing the funding necessary to adequately support MLs. Per a February 2024 Brookings Institution report, "most English learners are low-income, and using 'unduplicated' pupil counts means districts receive no additional funding under LCFF if their low-income students are also English learners (despite the associated costs)."[3] The state, then, puts the burden of supporting these students' varied identities—"multilingual learner," "low-income student" and "student with disabilities" in some cases—squarely on the district without providing the requisite funding for the full complement of necessary services and supports.

In 2019, a group of funders came together to build upon the work that California has done to address policies and practices that have negatively impacted ML students.[4] Specifically, six foundations established the [Emerging Bilingual Collaborative (EBC)](), which conducted qualitative research, including interviews with stakeholder focus groups and education leaders, to determine how best to equip PreK-12 educators and systems to implement high-quality, ML-focused instructional practices. The research indicated that support for educators should focus more on the "how" to effectively serve ML students than the "why." Educators desired more support on the nuances of implementing best practices in their classrooms, given students' varying levels and capabilities.

Grant Recipients Represented a Variety of California's Education Agencies and Regions
Through the Implementing High-Quality Instructional Practices for Multilingual Learners Grant Opportunity and Community of Practice, nine local educational agencies (Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Franklin-McKinley School District, Fullerton School District, Oakland Unified School District, Orange County Department of Education, Salinas City Elementary School District, San Mateo County Office of Education, Semitropic School District and the Tehama County Department of Education) were awarded a competitive, three-year grant focused on the following four goals:

- Implement the instructional practices and corresponding resources found in the ML Toolkit through high-quality professional learning for PreK-3 educators
- Generate lessons learned from implementation efforts to support ongoing refinement of ML Toolkit tools and resources to support PreK-3 educators
- Share examples of effective instructional models and supports
- Build an understanding of the unique needs and assets of ML students, which are central to the work of being a California teacher

Two additional local education agencies (LEAs) (Merced County and Kern County Offices of Education[5]) were awarded grants in spring 2022. Grantees implemented efforts to redesign or enhance professional learning systems to build educators' capacity and meet ML students' unique needs. The names of the ML HQIP CoP member agencies, their types (charter, district, or county office of education) and student data (total served by the agency, number of TK-3 students and number of TK-3 MLs) are captured in Table 1 below.

Table 1. ML HQIP grantees, types of education agencies and student numbers, SY 2023-24

Grantee	Type	Number of Students Served by the Agency	Number of Students, TK-3 (2023-24)	Number of MLs, TK-3 (2023-24)
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy	Charter	2,983	1,068	736
Franklin-McKinley School District	District	7,892	3,472	1,786
Fullerton School District	District	11,439	5,100	1,149
Kern County Superintendent of Schools	County	198,315	61,394	13,933
Merced County Office of Education	County	59,563	17,970	5,750
Oakland Unified School District	District	45,086	14,890	5,924
Orange County Department of Education	County	437,276	125,611	34,459
Salinas City Elementary School District	District	8,206	4,802	2,569
San Mateo County Office of Education	County	84,180	25,226	7,217
Semitropic Elementary School District*	District	151	61	42
Tehama County Department of Education	County	10,749	3,488	776

*Did not continue in SY 2023-24, figures are for SY 2022-23
 Source: https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

The ML HQIP CoP Provided a Space for Learning About and Supporting Multilingual Learner-Focused Change Efforts

Goals of the ML HQIP CoP

The ML HQIP CoP was designed to offer grantees robust support through various structured activities and engagements as they worked to accomplish the following:

- Shift educators' and leaders' mindsets so that they view MLs as an asset and ML education as a priority
- Establish and foster buy-in for ML-focused work through communication and engagement with school, district and county leaders
- Develop shared solutions to address human capacity issues at multiple levels
- Implement the ML Toolkit and support practitioners to use it through partnership with Early Edge California
- Create sustainability plans for continued support and implementation of high-quality instructional practices for MLs beyond the lifecycle of the ML HQIP grant

During the first years of the ML HQIP CoP, monthly virtual meetings provided a platform for grantees to receive practical support and resources for high-quality instructional practices for MLs. Participants developed problems of practice and shared learnings and solutions. Bimonthly content webinars complemented these virtual meetings, focusing on emerging topics in PreK-3 multilingual learning. In these webinars, experts from organizations across California shared valuable insights and evidence on areas identified by the participants, such as the science of reading, family engagement and assessment strategies.

A variety of supports—including office hours, technical assistance and communication strategies and resources—were offered to grantees throughout the ML HQIP CoP. Individualized technical assistance sessions allowed grantees to work one-on-one with experts6 on specific challenges, such as planning sessions on braiding funding and services. Site visits fostered a cohort-based approach by encouraging grantees to visit other districts and schools and generating actionable feedback and strengthening organizational relationships. Finally, support in the development of communication materials aided in creating buy-in for ML practices within grantee communities.

Successes

The ML HQIP CoP Experienced Successes that Provide Models for the Field

Members of the ML HQIP CoP experienced significant successes throughout their participation in the three-year project. Peer-to-peer learning emerged as a powerful tool, allowing grantees to share insights and strategies that enhanced their implementation of high-quality instructional practices. Observing these practices in action deepened participants' content knowledge and skill-building, fostering a greater understanding of effective ML support. This, in turn, helped align stakeholders and system leaders around a shared vision for ML initiatives. These collective efforts not only helped sustain the work but also laid a foundation for continued success in improving learning outcomes for MLs.

Peer-to-peer learning enabled ML leaders to innovate and find efficiencies by working with, or borrowing from, peers to develop high quality materials[7]

The ML HQIP CoP regularly came together to learn from each other about highly effective ML instructional practices. The shift to in-person convenings in the latter half of the project period, as opposed to webinars and short virtual meetings, fully activated the ML HQIP CoP by creating flexible and dynamic

spaces that encouraged sharing lived experiences, expertise and mutual interests, and resulted in reciprocal, real-time learning. In-person breakout sessions focused on topics such as braided and blended funding, sustainability planning, GLAD® and SEAL strategies, family engagement, the science of reading and data use and collection. One grantee spoke of the power of convening and bringing like-minded ML leaders together. "It takes all of us to make our voices heard," they noted, "and the EBC is a powerful place to amplify grantee voices across the state. The power of convening with other grantees has inspired us and helped us to learn about what works in other settings, giving us new ideas and perspectives on this work." This grantee

was not alone in their expression of gratitude, as grantees consistently mentioned how thankful they were for the dedicated space and resources necessary to engage in collaborative work.

In addition to creating a forum to share and consider existing resources and practices, peer-to-peer learning spaces encouraged innovative thinking and the development of efficiencies to meet common needs.

Resources Created as a Result of Peer-to-Peer Learning
Peer-to-peer learning spaces led to the creation of products that were shared across the ML HQIP CoP, including:

- **A proprietary crosswalk of Personalized Oral Language Learning (POLL) strategies, Preschool Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD®) and Project GLAD® strategies, and the ML Toolkit**, allowed ML HQIP CoP members to see commonalities across instructional practices and efforts related to family engagement, classroom environment, oral language development and literacy and content development.
- **An adaptive action template**[8] that ML HQIP CoP members used to formalize an ML-focused problem of practice that could then be shared, first to orient others as part of a consultancy protocol and then to solicit possible solutions for deeply complex or intractable challenges.
- **A communication-support protocol** that ML HQIP CoP members and Education First used to determine specific communication needs and develop individualized communication products. Services and products included strategic advice on how to engage community members to determine local ML needs, a curated Google Workspace to share ML resources across a district and a literature review of how play can be used as an effective ML-education practice, to be included in one district's TK professional learning guidance.
- **A sustainability planning workbook**, which Education First used to help ML HQIP CoP members: Identify challenges in sustaining EBC-funded efforts beyond the project period; articulate sustainability goals; name the assets that would enable realizing those goals as well as the barriers to meeting them; and develop action plans for meeting goals keeping assets and barriers in mind.

Observing high-quality ML instructional practices helped system leaders recognize their value, positive impact and how they could be effectively implemented, supported and sustained

Grantees learned about and observed high-quality ML instructional practices through virtual and in-person presentations, participating in site visits and considering problems of practice.

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) site visits provided opportunities to observe ML education in an urban setting with a high number of newcomer students and to observe Personal Oral Language Learning (POLL) strategies implementation in K-3 classrooms. OUSD developed a shared observation template that facilitated site visits by naming look-fors and, to a degree, standardizing the experience across multiple sites. During the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) site visit, CNCA leaders shared an overview of the academy's Spanish-English DLL program, including grades served and the balance of Spanish- and English-language usage in each grade, highlighted features of their school model (e.g., teacher preparation and the curriculum) and facilitated observations of approximately 15 classrooms (with structured debriefs and reflections after each observation).

Participants also conducted classroom observations in Kern County, where they had the opportunity to see ML education in a small, rural setting. While the two Kern schools visited serve ML and migrant students almost exclusively, classes were conducted in English, were differentiated to meet student needs (with more intensive support for beginning MLs and students with disabilities), utilized technology to support instruction, incorporated the science of reading, and employed GLAD® strategies as evidenced by anchor materials and student work on the walls. This modeling, with protocols and intentional space to debrief across a range of settings, helped grantees identify specific takeaways to use and/or adapt in their context such as supporting oral language strategies, reflecting on practices to enable visual cues and trading notes on approaches to instructional coaching.

Coming out of the pandemic, it is also important to note the shift away from virtual meetings towards in-person meetings was widely praised by ML HQIP CoP members for not only disrupting virtual meeting fatigue but also providing the opportunity to learn in community and see high quality ML work in action. One grantee shared "creating the space to not only learn about ML work but to see it in action and be able to discuss and debrief it has been incredibly valuable." This sentiment was echoed by another participant who shared, "I never get dedicated time to actually watch and learn from others doing ML work." In-person meetings forced ML HQIP CoP members to prioritize their ML professional learning and allowed them the rare opportunity to dedicate substantial time to learn and watch from others.

Grantee Spotlight

Merced County Office of Education: At the March 2024 in-person CoP convening, the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) team shared that the EBC's funding was critical to initially implementing high-quality ML instructional practices and providing the support necessary to improve ML education in the county. The funding allowed MCOE to offer and pay for technical assistance such as professional learning (PL) and coaching and support, centered on Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) strategies and resources, to ML educators in a pilot cohort of districts. This no-risk approach generated interest and buy-in from district leaders and participation by classroom teachers and paraeducators. To sustain this work beyond the project period, MCOE gradually released funding responsibility to the districts while still tending to logistics and providing services, such as coordinating and delivering high-quality, effective PL. In the final year of the project (school year 2023-24), MCOE continued to pay for training from SEAL while districts covered coaching costs. Going forward, districts will pay for all services, both those provided by SEAL and those offered by MCOE.

Developing content knowledge and skill-building opportunities facilitated implementing high-quality instructional practices and effective ML supports

Another highlight of the ML HQIP CoP was the amount of content knowledge and skill-building gained through the various engagements. The ML HQIP CoP featured webinars with content experts and researchers in multilingual learning to supplement and provide additional learning opportunities for grantees. These webinars covered focus areas such as strategic communications, use of the ML Toolkit, capacity building and sustainability. The webinars supplemented the learning occurring at in-person meetings to provide grantees with interest-aligned content that was applicable to the contexts and capacity of each grantee. Each in-person meeting and webinar was designed in collaboration with grantees to ensure that the content was both relevant and aligned to the needs of grantees. ML HQIP CoP members mentioned how they often lacked the capacity or connections to speak to experts and were incredibly appreciative for the dedicated opportunity to have in-depth conversations with ML experts in small group settings. One grantee shared how appreciative they were for the level of access the ML HQIP CoP provided them to content experts, which allowed for in-depth conversations to consider problems of practice and receive actionable advice and support. Another grantee, who serves as the coordinator of early learning dual-language support for a county office of education, followed up one of these conversations with outreach to a featured expert, a lead faculty member at the University of Michigan Marshal Family School of Education. Their collaboration led to the development of a series of courses, complete with resources and coaching supports, focused on POLL strategies and offered in partnership with a local

community college. Overall, these webinars provided grantees with valuable insights and strategies to implement in their respective ecosystems, strengthening their capacity to support multilingual learners.

ML HQIP CoP members also acknowledged the value of increased training and support around the ML Toolkit as helpful in focusing and facilitating conversations pertaining to content knowledge and skill-building, not only across the ML HQIP CoP but within their respective agencies. One grantee noted that the Toolkit "has been really helpful" as a centerpiece for professional learning, coaching and support. Another grantee called the Toolkit "a godsend" in relation to professional learning, offering that "principals and teachers are using it" and it contained "lots of [easy-to-use] resources for teachers." Yet another grantee "used the [Toolkit's] guidance on family engagement to build a resource that has been well-received."

Throughout both virtual and in-person meetings, ML HQIP CoP grantees participated in multiple problems of practice consultancies. These consultancies allowed grantees to bring challenges from their own education agency and local context and seek input and advice from their ML HQIP CoP colleagues. Practice exercises covered content ranging from challenges integrating ML professional learning to family engagement strategies. Grantees shared that they deeply appreciated the opportunity to "bounce ideas" off of their colleagues and they leveraged learnings from the problems of practice into addressing the problems within their agency.

Grantee Spotlight

Orange County Department of Education: The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) is the owner of Project GLAD® (Guided Language Acquisition Design), a suite of strategies, instructional practices[9] and resources for educators serving ML children and students ages 2 years, 9 months, through grade 12. OCDE provides Project GLAD® training nationwide, and GLAD® strategies are found in the ML Toolkit and used by other community of practice members. Participation in the EBC ML HQIP CoP led OCDE to pursue and codify this content knowledge into a separate body of work, in partnership with Education First, to update its Project GLAD® training resources and practices. This work moved Project GLAD® from purely physical products, which require in-person training, to an innovative and dynamic online tool that will be more readily accessible to trainers and educators alike. This online tool can be updated regularly and easily in response to educator and student needs and changes in policy and practice. The tool is still under development but will be ready by the end of the 2024 calendar year.

ML HQIP CoP members reported emerging mindset shifts among educators, shifts that are critical to creating widespread buy-in to meet ML needs and sustain ML-focused efforts

Not all educators are bought-in to serving MLs. They may hold negative beliefs about MLs, be unfamiliar with how to effectively meet ML needs, or be unable to identify the MLs in their system. One ML HQIP CoP member wondered, "how do we get all of our teachers to love MLs? How do you actually make ML education important [to teachers]? We need asset-based modeling so that all teachers see MLs in a [positive] light." The emphasis on "all of our teachers" echoes a sentiment that other CoP members voiced: While things are improving, ML programs and the students they serve are still perceived—by some teachers, administrators and even community and family members—as separate from the larger education system. This perception can isolate MLs and the teachers who serve them, limiting access to the resources, services, supports and varied experiences that the system offers.

By the end of the project period, ML HQIP CoP members reported emerging mindset shifts in their respective ecosystems. This is a step in the right direction to creating the buy-in necessary to support and sustain ML-focused efforts systemwide. "Based on post-professional development surveys and focus groups," one ML HQIP CoP member noted, "we have seen that educators have increased their own understanding of how to support multilingual learners and are trying on new practices." Other members echoed this sentiment, suggesting an increased confidence in not only implementing established practices but innovating to better meet ML needs. Grantees also shared that with the support of the EBC grant, many were able to provide compensated, professional learning spaces to teachers outside of their school context. Participating in these professional learning spaces allowed teachers to become familiar with the effective practices found in the ML Toolkit, increase their capacity for implementation and develop stronger identities as language teachers.

Challenges

ML HQIP CoP grantees faced multiple challenges that system leaders and policymakers have opportunities to address

Over the three-year grant period, ML HQIP CoP members were challenged by a number of factors. Many grantees struggled to maintain a level of commitment to the project consistent with their initial goals. Staff turnover on grantee teams, which disrupted the continuity of project goals and necessitated ongoing orientation to EBC systems and structures for new team members, also complicated implementation efforts. Additionally, balancing competing priorities, garnering buy-in, and creating a shared vision for ML initiatives at the district and school levels sometimes made it difficult to sustain focus and momentum. These challenges and barriers faced by grantees present clear opportunities for policymakers and system leaders to address to enhance the learning conditions and outcomes for MLs.

ML leaders and educators lack the resources and capacity needed to deeply engage in ML professional learning and balance multiple priorities

Due to limited funding and staffing, grantees often lacked—and continue to struggle with—the capacity needed for deep engagement in professional learning opportunities like the ML HQIP CoP. Grantees were grateful that the EBC provided funding to cover travel expenses and time, allowing them to fully participate in ML HQIP CoP engagements. However, lack of resources and capacity still led grantees to prioritize the immediate needs of their district and county offices over attending CoP engagements. Many ML HQIP CoP grantees shared concerns about leaving their office for multiple days as their district/county faced staff shortages. Additionally, grantees often had to balance the importance of pressing district needs and priorities versus attending in-person ML HQIP CoP events. Several grantee teams chose to send fewer team members to ML HQIP CoP events, as a way to both engage in the valuable professional learning but also maintain staff in their office. Grantees also faced capacity issues in implementing and training staff within their own agencies. One grantee shared that they "were unable to fill the literacy coach position, which was central to our vision. As a result, we contracted with the county office of education to provide regular job-embedded coaching. The service is more expensive than hiring our own staff and results in less coaching for teachers."

Prioritizing ML professional learning and training can be constrained by tight district budgets. One grantee shared, "the impending budget crisis put into jeopardy the progress [on ML supports] that we have made here." Another grantee observed, "sustainable funding allows programs to have a lasting impact and provides stability for ongoing initiatives." Without consistent long-term funding from policymakers and funders, grantees worried about the sustainability of their ML work.

There is a need and desire for stronger professional development systems with embedded trainings on high-quality instructional materials and specific content focused on supporting MLs

The ML HQIP CoP was initially designed to support the use and implementation of the ML Toolkit. The ML Toolkit started making headway on capturing evidence-based practices—sorely needed in the field—but some grantees felt that there should be training on how to use it to make its contents more accessible. While some EBC grantees praised the ML Toolkit for helping to build content knowledge and skills, others found that, in its current version, there wa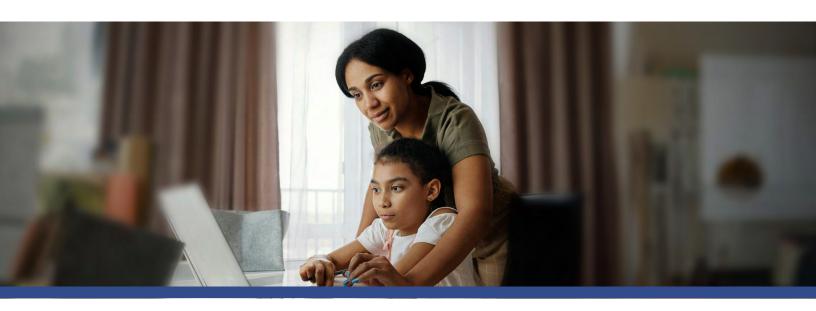s room for improvement, with the consensus being that it is a good resource but "difficult to navigate" and "very dense." While the Toolkit is addressing needed improvements to ML instruction, without intentional integration into professional learning and capacity-building efforts for improved ML education, the Toolkit may simply remain yet another underutilized resource.

Grantees also struggled with the lack of high quality training that specifically focused on ML needs, supports and best practices. One grantee shared that their agency is "constantly doing trainings" but lacks "implementation at a real meaningful level for MLs." Grantees widely shared that they often do not have the capacity or support structures to implement their ML HQIP CoP learnings on a districtwide or countywide scale. This is especially challenging for rural districts. One grantee offered, "small rural districts need considerable support for any sort of professional learning endeavor. There is simply not enough capacity to engage in professional learning experiences that are more traditional in medium to large districts." Without the prioritization of MLs and training on high quality instructional materials from system leaders and policymakers, grantees often do not have the clout to effectively engage their district or county in a way that will bring an increased prioritization of ML professional learning and supports.

Developing the buy-in and support needed to center ML students across district and county policies and initiatives is a challenge

ML HQIP CoP members shared that there is often a lack of support for ML initiatives across their respective education agencies, which has hindered the implementation and support of effective ML strategies. This lack of support underscores the importance of dedicating substantial time to shifting mindsets and creating buy-in within schools, districts and counties to cultivate a deeper understanding of and commitment to MLs, both within education agencies and by critical stakeholders like caregivers and community members. One grantee stressed the amount of time mindset shifting takes, saying, "this work requires a mindset shift as well as a practice shift, it takes time and therefore sustained investments." The mindset shifts and buy-in necessary to prioritize ML education at the same level as other efforts necessitates creating awareness, communicating clearly and developing and committing to a strategic approach to building internal and external support for sustainable ML initiatives.

Throughout the project period, grantee teams demonstrated dedication to the ML HQIP CoP, to MLs and to each other. They attended virtual and in-person events whenever possible and were quick to respond and contribute to calls for input and action. However, stakeholders in grantees' respective ecosystems beyond the immediate team also shaped how efforts unfolded and the degree to which they were effective. One grantee observed, "on a broader scale, our parent community would benefit from understanding the current ML/EL strategies used in classrooms so they can incorporate these techniques into social settings outside of school. Viewing home language as an asset can enrich the community at large." Lack of a systemwide vision and buy-in slowed and even siloed ML-focused work, leading to requests from grantees to Education First for help in crafting impact stories and providing guidance on how to support stakeholder engagement strategies. Continued support from system leaders and policymakers to foster narrative change among community members and educators will sustain and promote high-quality ML instructional practices.

Recommendations

Based on Education First's experience leading and facilitating the ML HQIP CoP, we offer the following recommendations for **_policymakers_** to support and enhance ML education in California.

> **Draft, refine and support policies that increase access to diverse funding streams for MLs.**

ML HQIP CoP grantees spoke of the need for increased funding that can be combined with current funding streams to continue, strengthen and scale strategies aimed at improving high-quality instructional practices for MLs. California's education funding system uses unduplicated student counts, meaning students are counted only once for funding purposes despite possible multiple classifications. This means that education agencies that serve MLs who are also low-income—which is often the case—receive monies under one classification and are left to provide services and support for the other classification from funding somewhere else in their budgets, which are often restricted. This increases the importance of additional funding streams for LEAs to tap into to provide important services to ML students. With additional funding streams, LEAs can develop braided and blended funding models, which allows them to maximize their impact by leveraging crucial financial resources and provide sustained support for ML educational programs.

> **Create policies that facilitate and support the development of consortia.**

By encouraging schools, districts and counties to form consortia (such as a community of practice or learning network), policymakers can promote resource sharing, collaborative problem-solving and innovative approaches to common challenges. Grantees often spoke of the power that collaboration can have to enhance the effectiveness of educational initiatives and ensure that all ML students, regardless of their school or district, receive a high-quality education. Dedicated space and time to connect and problem solve as a consortium can facilitate great strides in LEAs ability to support MLs.

> **Advance policymaking that provides high-quality resources and materials to districts and counties and creates pathways for ML student and educator thriving.**

Continue to promote the adoption of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) to ensure that all students have access to effective learning resources. Additionally, supporting policies

that promote multilingualism in schools is essential, as a multilingual education benefits both individual students and the broader community. Furthermore, policymakers should advocate for and develop policies that support bilingual educators, ensuring that schools have the skilled staff necessary to implement effective multilingual programs.

In addition to policymakers, we recommend the following for *leaders* in education systems across California:

Increase efforts to build educator and leader capacity to serve MLs and meet their needs.

To build capacity and avoid burnout among educators and system leaders, it is crucial to provide them with high-quality tools, curricula, assessments and ongoing professional development tailored to the needs of MLs. To equip educators and leaders with the resources they need to effectively support MLs, it is important to not only schedule but also protect time for regular ML-focused professional learning, coaching and support opportunities. Grantees expressed consistent excitement over the resources and experts they were provided access to through the ML HQIP CoP. Many grantees were clear that they would not have had the capacity or access to these resources otherwise. Other capacity-building efforts include expanding professional learning to include educators beyond teachers, such as paraeducators and specialists who provide push-in and pull-out small-group and individualized supports and services, as well as creating opportunities and structures for effective collaboration, like professional learning communities and information- and resource-sharing platforms (such as a dedicated Google Drive).

Identify and support ML needs and services to the same degree as other system-wide priorities, particularly through more effective data.

Grantees reported that addressing issues focused on MLs was frequently deprioritized, diverting resources like human capacity and funding away from providing services necessary to meet ML needs. There is a demand, then, for prioritizing ML needs and services at the same level as other efforts. This can be done by establishing data practices for ongoing determination of ML needs. Regular, frequent data collection and analysis will help ensure MLs are in the most appropriate educational setting, receiving necessary services and support. Grantees shared the importance of high-quality data in informing and supporting high-quality ML instructional practices. Although some districts do collect data, it is not often practical or used at the appropriate time or for the appropriate purpose, leaving those involved with a feeling of over-

collection. Including ML educators in broader conversations and planning helps support data collection and communicates that ML education is an integral component of the larger system and not a siloed program. System leaders set the agenda and have the authority to name ML education as a priority and explicitly commit to meeting MLs' needs and providing ML services.

> **Attend to each of the above recommendations as part of a strategy to increase buy-in and shift mindsets systemwide with regard to ML education.**

By taking full advantage of state policies and structures, building and maximizing educator and leader capacity, and prioritizing identifying and supporting ML needs and services, education leaders can set the conditions and create the context for effective ML education. However, these conditions and context alone will not ensure systemwide buy-in to the work and shift mindsets in ways that meet ML needs. Systems must develop an intentional strategy about shifting mindsets, from how you communicate to how you educate.

> **Take full advantage of state policies and structures to implement and support local ML-related efforts.**

Policies create the authorizing environment within which effective action can take place. Education leaders should leverage these policies to best serve MLs in their local context. Proposition 58 enables the use of the home language in education settings, which can be a driver for developing strategies and practices that center and use the home language. Consistently utilizing the EL Roadmap, which "speaks to standards, curriculum frameworks, instruction, access, assessment, accountability/school improvement, educator quality and capacity, early childhood/preschool, social and family support services, and parent/community involvement," creates a common touchpoint across a district and its schools, helping to bring coherence to the system. Promoting initiatives like the Seal of Biliteracy to recognize students' multilingual achievements can be a motivating force, adding value to the educational process and boosting morale among educators who see the tangible results of their efforts. Additionally, leaders can continue to leverage English Learner Advisory Councils (ELAC) and District English Learner Advisory Councils (DELAC) to encourage family and community engagement opportunities for authentic input into how best to meet ML needs and provide ML-related services.

Endnotes

1 First 5: Dual Language Learner Pilot Fact Sheet
2 The State of English Learners
3 Lessons learned from 10 years of California's Local Control Funding Formula
4 California English Learner Policy Field Scan - Executive Summary - May 2019.docx
5 EBC funders recognized more limited capacity within rural communities, particularly in the pandemic, to respond to RFPs and worked to identify, partner with and fund education agencies serving significant populations of MLs in rural communities.
6 Experts included representatives from: Adaptive Action Framework, Barksdale Reading Institute, Boston University, Californians Together, CORE Learning, English Learners Success Forum, Center for Equity for English Learners, Early Edge California, Parent Institute for Quality Education, SEAL, TNTP
7 The first in-person meeting was hosted by the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) in March 2023, the second by Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) of Los Angeles in September 2023, and the third by Kern County Office of Education of Bakersfield in March 2024.
8 https://www.hsdinstitute.org/resources/adaptive-action.html
9 Orange County Office of Education is the home for the Project GLAD® model, owners of the trademarks and developers of the suite of strategies and structures within the models' design.

About this Report:

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