



Toward Inclusivity: Advancing Social and Emotional Learning for Multilingual Learners



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Executive Summary



Across America, students represent a linguistically diverse population, with English language learners constituting the fastest-growing demographic in U.S. public schools. Currently, public schools enroll over five million English Learners, accounting for over ten percent of the total K12 population.¹ Urban areas consistently show higher percentages of multilingual learner (MLs) students compared to rural regions, and elementary schools (grades K-5) have a majority of MLs with many students gaining English proficiency in later grades.² The growing linguistic diversity in American public schools underscores the importance of inclusive and culturally responsive education practices to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students, including MLs.

For generations, students have connected their unique linguistic and cultural heritages across multiple facets of their lives, from the dinner table at *abuela's* house to a desk in the mathematics classroom. Spanish, Mandarin, Armenian and Cantonese are just a few of the more than 400 languages spoken by multilingual learners nationwide.³ For these MLs and those who learn with and teach them, multilingualism and multiculturalism are assets that can add richness and diverse perspectives to their learning environments. At the same time, our education system has historically marginalized this student group, resulting in the need for additional support for ML students in the classroom, school and community in order to thrive.

In addition to tailored support to nurture academic learning for multilingual learners, social and emotional learning for multilingual learners is equally important to provide learning conditions that allow ML students to thrive. **In this paper, we examine the research, systems and practices that support education leaders to better understand, design and implement effective approaches to social and emotional learning (SEL) for multilingual learners.**

1 NCES, "English Learners in Public Schools," May 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20public%20school,%2C%20or%204.5%20million%20students>.


2 Ibid.


3 NCES, "Our Nation's English Learners," n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-characteristics/index.html#:~:text=ELs%20speak%20a%20wide%20variety,speak%20over%20400%20different%20languages>.


This updated paper builds upon the original publication, ["Community, Culture, Voice: Supporting Social Emotional Learning for Multilingual Learners in Los Angeles County,"](#) which focused on the distinct experiences of MLs in Los Angeles County. Through additional research and interviews, Education First provides a comprehensive overview of national ML student data, focusing on the experiences of ML students in states with a high percentage of ML student enrollment.


FINDINGS


Building on the initial paper focused on Los Angeles County, we have updated the findings with additional research and interviews with students.


 **FINDING 1:** A key strategy for developing multilingual students' social and emotional and academic skills is asset-based pedagogy.

 **FINDING 2:** Using culturally relevant SEL instructional materials can support multilingual learners' social and emotional development by affirming and integrating their lived experiences and voices.

 **FINDING 3:** Teachers who mirror the racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of multilingual learners can boost students' social and emotional outcomes, particularly for students of color; yet the education workforce has yet to reflect the diversity of the multilingual students it serves.

 **FINDING 4:** Professional development for practicing educators around multilingual learners' SEL needs is limited, despite the desire of many educators to provide high-quality SEL instruction to MLs.

 **FINDING 5:** Multilingual learners' SEL is best supported when families, districts, schools and community partners work together. Collaborative efforts across education and community systems enhance MLs' SEL and promote a more inclusive and supportive education environment for all students.

 **FINDING 6:** Research on evidence-based strategies to support social and emotional learning specifically for multilingual learners is nascent. Investing in additional research to develop specific strategies to support MLs' social and emotional learning can support their access to resources that address their unique needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Supporting multilingual learners' social and emotional learning will take dedicated time and effort from actors across all levels of the education system (e.g., state policymakers, district and school leaders, school-based and out-of-school time educators and families). These recommendations provide a place for stakeholders to start to support multilingual students in their social and emotional learning in order to thrive in school and life.

Recommendation 1: Invest in the teaching and learning of asset-based pedagogy.

- Use communication channels to champion the assets of multilingual learners.
- Expand practicing educators' access to high-quality professional development opportunities related to asset-based pedagogy by building revenue streams and cultivating partnerships with professional development providers, county/regional offices of education and/or institutes of higher education.
- Increase SEL and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) departments' capacity to co-create SEL programming with educators and staff.

Recommendation 2: Implement school, family and community partnerships to support multilingual students' social and emotional learning.

- Consider adopting elements of community schools models, particularly those that see family and community partnerships as integral and that ensure that wraparound services are woven into the fabric of the school.⁴
- Uplift statewide frameworks that address multilingual learners' holistic needs through integrated systems of support.⁵
- Build or strengthen partnerships with community organizations that bridge in-school and out-of-school social and emotional learning for multilingual learners.
- Design and implement strategies that foster positive, open communication streams between families, districts, community organizations and schools.
- Multilingual students are not a monolith. Ensure community partners, early warning systems and data reporting communicate multilingual learners' needs through disaggregated data reflective of the diverse demographics of multilingual learners.

4 National Education Association (NEA), "What are community schools?", n.d., <https://www.nea.org/student-success/great-public-schools/community-schools/what-are-they>

5 State of Rhode Island Department of Education, "Multilingual Learners (MLLs) / English Learners (ELs)," n.d., <https://ride.ri.gov/students-families/multilingual-learners-mls>

Recommendation 3: Diversify the educator workforce.

- Expand and diversify educator preparation pathways.
- Tap into middle and high school multilingual students' interest in the teaching profession.
- Use monetary incentives to attract potential teachers of color to enter the workforce.
- To retain educators of color, improve educators' working environments and compensation.

Recommendation 4: Adopt high-quality SEL instructional materials for multilingual learners.

- Provide funding and guidance for designing and adopting high-quality SEL instructional materials.
- Establish structures for multilingual students to support co-design of SEL programming.
- Partner with and support practitioners and institutes of higher education to continue the research and creation of measures, tools and materials grounded in the social and emotional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse youth.
- Integrate family voice in SEL and instructional materials.

From their homes to their classrooms to their communities, multilingual learners enrich the diverse tapestry of our country. Culturally-affirming, asset-based approaches to social and emotional learning for multilingual learners can highlight this richness and help to address the impacts of this group's historical marginalization and the learning conditions for all multilingual learners to thrive.



Introduction

Students in public schools nationally represent a linguistically and culturally diverse population. For generations, students in regions across the country have connected their unique linguistic and cultural heritages across multiple facets of their lives from the dinner table at *abuela's* house to a desk in the mathematics classroom. Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic and Cantonese are just a few of the more than 400 languages spoken by multilingual learners across the country.⁶⁷ For these multilingual learners and those who learn with and teach them, multilingualism and multiculturalism are assets that can add richness and diverse perspectives to their learning environments. At the same time, this student group has been historically marginalized in our education system and needs additional support in the classroom, school and community in order to thrive.

While it is widely understood that multilingual learners often require additional, tailored support for academic learning, social and emotional learning for multilingual learners is an equally important but under-researched area. In this paper, we examine the research, systems and practices that support education leaders to better understand, design and implement effective approaches to social and emotional learning for multilingual learners. Our findings draw from published sources, interviews with field and education experts and practitioners, as well as insights from focus groups conducted with multilingual students and the educators who support them.

What is social and emotional learning? Integral to education and human development, social and emotional learning (SEL) is defined as the set of processes to support students to develop a healthy identity, build and show empathy for others and maintain supportive relationships while making responsible decisions.^{8 9 10} While social and emotional learning is sometimes taught in the form of dedicated SEL instructional materials in the classroom,

6 U.S. Department of Education, "Our Nation's English Learners," n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-characteristics/index.html>

7 Throughout this paper, the terms "english learner (EL)," "english language learner (ELL)" "multilingual language learners (ML)" and "multilingual students (MLs)" are used interchangeably to refer to students who speak and understand, to varying degrees, one or more languages in addition to English. Although the U.S. Department of Education's [glossary](#) does not incorporate "ML" or "MLs," we have chosen to incorporate these terms to reflect the [evolving language](#) used within the field to describe the diverse experiences of students.

8 CASEL, "Fundamentals of SEL," n.d., <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>.

9 California Department of Education, "Social and Emotional Learning," n.d., <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/se/>.

10 To align with a centralized definition of social and emotional learning, terminology will align closely with the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning's (CASEL) definition of social and emotional learning.

this learning happens across all facets of a student's life, from academic instruction to the school environment, community and home. SEL occurs when students form relationships with their educators,¹¹ when they play and navigate conflict at lunchtime and recess, when they experience academic challenges and successes, when they seek comfort from their caretakers at home and when they interact with community members in their neighborhoods, community centers and places of worship. Social and emotional learning is also deeply intertwined with academic achievement: research in human development recognizes that social, emotional and cognitive development are all interconnected with academic learning and success.¹²

In the United States, approximately 10 percent of public school students grades K12—or about 5 million students—speak a language other than English at home.¹³ For this vast number of multilingual students who interact daily with multiple languages, cultures and norms, social and emotional skills can be an important tool through which to develop and affirm identities, understand and express emotions and empathy across multiple cultures and build strong relationships with peers, educators and community members of diverse cultures.

When students experience quality SEL, they may feel a greater sense of belonging, feel more emotionally supported and experience more positive engagement with adults, which supports their social wellness and academic engagement.^{14 15 16} Research shows a positive correlation between sense of belonging in school and academic engagement for multilingual students who are new to the country, while a lack of safety or belonging in school for newcomer students—a student population of which MLs are also a part—can lead to anxiety that builds an affective filter and limits English language acquisition.^{17 18}

11 Our definition of educators includes classroom teachers and administrators who play a role in multilingual learners' academic and social and emotional outcomes.

12 ASPEN Institute, National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, "The Evidence Base for How We Learn Supporting Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development," 2018, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FINAL_CDS-Evidence-Base.pdf.

13 NCES, May 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf/english-learners>.

14 U.S. Department of Education, Newcomer Tool Kit, Chapter 4, "CHAPTER 4: How Do We Support Newcomers' Social Emotional Needs?," n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/Newcomers-toolkit/chap4.pdf>.

15 Ibid.

16 Joseph A Durlak, et. al, "The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: a meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions," 2011, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21291449/>.

17 U.S. Department of Education, Newcomer Tool Kit, Chapter 4, "CHAPTER 4: How Do We Support Newcomers' Social Emotional Needs?," n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/Newcomers-toolkit/chap4.pdf>.

18 Reimagining Migration, "Social-Emotional Learning for Immigrant Students," n.d., <https://reimaginingmigration.org/social-emotional-learning-for-immigrant-students/>.

Unfortunately, COVID-related disruptions to schooling negatively impacted students' academic and social and emotional learning, particularly for students of color.¹⁹ The pandemic limited students' access to peer-to-peer interactions through extracurricular and school-based social activities, which may have negatively impacted MLs' motivation to acquire a new language during this time.^{20 21} The pandemic also limited MLs' access to designated academic supports they are mandated to receive in school.²²

While all students felt the repercussions of school shutdowns and social isolation, students in homes with limited English were more likely to experience challenges in accessing education, healthcare and social services.²³ As educators across the country emerge from the pandemic, they can actively support MLs by accelerating academics and addressing MLs' linguistic and wellness needs. Effective and tailored approaches to SEL for multilingual students are more important now than ever. A tailored approach to SEL can support MLs' unique learning acquisition and that approach may differ from that of their peers.²⁴ To ensure MLs' success in their personal and academic lives, educators can use the academic and social emotional tools at their disposal to create the conditions for that success.

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- 19 Great Public Schools Now, "Educational Recovery Now: LA's Children and Schools Need a Comprehensive Plan," 2021, https://gpsnla.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EdRecoveryNow_Final_3-29-21.pdf.
- 20 Gonser, Sarah, "The Enduring Importance of Extracurriculars," EduTopia, 2021, <https://www.edutopia.org/article/enduring-importance-extracurriculars>.
- 21 Albayrak, Husna, et al, "The Relationship Between Participation in Extracurricular Activities and Motivation of Foreign Language Learning," International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies, 2021, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1300029.pdf>
- 22 Reed, Sherrie et al., "Serving English Learners During the COVID-19 Pandemic," Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), 2022, <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=%e2%80%9cServing+English+Learners+During+the+COVID-19+Pandemic%2c%e2%80%9d&id=ED624614>
- 23 Neighborhood Data for Social Change, "In Los Angeles, Linguistic Isolation is Still a Challenge," KCET, 2019, <https://www.kcet.org/neighborhood-data-for-social-change/in-los-angeles-linguistic-isolation-is-still-a-challenge>.
- 24 EdTrust, "Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens," 2020, <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Social-Emotional-and-Academic-Development-Through-an-Equity-Lens-August-6-2020.pdf>.

Background: Who are the multilingual learners in the U.S.?

**“Mi familia me asegura todo el tiempo: los que son multilingües tienen mejores oportunidades profesionales. Yo me siento preparado. Yo sé dos idiomas.”
—Multilingual learner in California**

**“My family assures me all the time: those who are multilingual have greater career opportunities. I feel prepared. I know two languages.”
—Multilingual learners in California**

In the fall of 2020, U.S. schools enrolled over 4.9 million MLs, with 97 percent participating in language instruction programs.^{25 26} The percentage of MLs in public schools increased from 9.2 percent (4.5 million students) in the fall of 2010 to 10.3 percent (5.0 million students) in the fall of 2020.²⁷ Multilingual learners predominantly speak Spanish, with 3.7 million students reporting they speak Spanish at home, accounting for 77 percent of MLs nationwide.²⁸ The majority of MLs are concentrated in elementary school (grades K-5), with many gaining English proficiency in later grades.²⁹ Geographically, urban areas consistently have higher percentages of ML students compared to rural regions.

The highest concentration of ML students is found in California, with 1,062,300 ML students representing just over one fifth of all ML students in the country.³⁰ Texas closely follows

25 Migration Policy Institute, “English Learners in K-12 Education by State,” n.d., <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/english-learners-k-12-education-state>

26 NCES, “Our Nation’s English Learners,” n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-characteristics/index.html#:~:text=ELs%20speak%20a%20wide%20variety.speak%20over%20400%20different%20languages.>

27 NCES, “English Learners in Public Schools,” May 2023, [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20public%20school,%2C%20or%204.5%20million%20students\).](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20public%20school,%2C%20or%204.5%20million%20students).)

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Migration Policy Institute, “English Learners in K-12 Education by State,” n.d., <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/english-learners-k-12-education-state>

with 1,034,500 students, while Florida and New York reported 265,500 and 240,000 ML students, respectively.^{31 32 33} With this concentration in mind, we focus our analysis on these states with the highest concentration of ML enrollment. Where appropriate, we highlight significant ML nationwide student data.

California

Of California's 6.14 million public school students in K12, close to 40 percent (2.3 million) speak a language other than English at home, with 19 percent (1.1 million) classified as English Learners (ELs).³⁴ In California, 65.8 percent of ML students are enrolled in grades K6, while 34.2 percent are enrolled in grades 7-12.³⁵ During the 2021-2022 school year, Spanish was the most commonly spoken language of multilingual learners in California at 81.9 percent followed by Vietnamese (1.9 percent), Mandarin (1.8 percent), Arabic (1.4 percent) and other non-English languages.³⁶ The California Department of Education provides all MLs with designated and integrated English language development instruction that is targeted to their English proficiency level and appropriate academic instruction in language acquisition programs.³⁷

Texas

In the 2018-2019 school year, 1.5 million students, approximately one in five students in Texas, were multilingual students.³⁸ The most common languages spoken by MLs in Texas are Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, and Urdu.³⁹ Texas schools are required to provide MLs with language assistance programs to help them develop their English skills and achieve academic success, including bilingual education, English as a second language (ESL) instruction, or sheltered instruction (where teachers use physical activities, visual aids and the environment to make academic instruction in English accessible to MLs).⁴⁰

Florida

In Florida, over 300,000 students are MLs, with approximately 80 percent speaking Spanish as their first language, and the state has the third largest Latine student population in the

31 Texas Education Agency, "Generation 26 Application Information Session: Serving English Learners," n.d., <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/texas-schools-charter-schools/generation26-englishlearneroverview.pdf>

32 Colorin Colorado, "Florida: ELL Resources," n.d., <https://www.colorincolorado.org/ell-basics/ell-resources-state/florida-ell-resources>

33 Colorin Colorado, "New York: ELL Resources," n.d., <https://www.colorincolorado.org/new-york-ell-resources>

34 California Department of Education, "Facts about English Learners in California," n.d., <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/cefelfacts.asp>

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Texas Education Agency, "Generation 26 Application Information Session: Serving English Learners," n.d., <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/texas-schools-charter-schools/generation26-englishlearneroverview.pdf>

39 Sugarman, Julie & Geary, Courtney, "English Learners in Texas: Demographics, Outcomes, and State Accountability Practices," Migration Policy Institute Issue Brief, 2018, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/EL-Data-Guide_Final.pdf

40 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, "Developing Programs for English Language Learners: Glossary," n.d., https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/glossary.html#sheltered_english

country.⁴¹ Florida's MLs collectively represent over 300 different languages.⁴² In an effort to design and implement high-quality standards and equitable educational opportunities for MLs, Florida—a member of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium—offers instructional programming and assessment support to educators seeking to develop MLs' language development.⁴³

New York

ML students in New York make up a significant portion of the student population, with 21.9 percent of public school students identified as English learners in the 2022-2023 school year.⁴⁴ The most common languages spoken by MLs in New York are Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, and Russian.⁴⁵ New York also has a large population of newcomers, making up 60 percent of the total ML population.⁴⁶ The assets, needs and experiences of newcomers often mirror those of MLs, who in some cases, are also newcomers to the country. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) ensures that all MLs' academic paths and SEL needs are supported in multiple languages while also enhancing their college and career readiness.⁴⁷ And in an effort to ensure teachers are proficient when instructing MLs, NYSED provides asset-based guidance, resources and support to New York districts, schools and educators.⁴⁸

Multilingual learners have many unique assets, and also face a distinct set of challenges compared to monolingual students. The ability to communicate across two or more languages can provide tangible advantages for K12 students:

- Multilingual students have greater control over cognitive processes of the brain—such as executive function and increased intellectual flexibility—compared to students with one language.⁴⁹
- Multilingual students are more likely to develop strong metalinguistic awareness as

41 Unidos US, "Florida's Latino Students & English Learners Fast Facts 2023," 2023, <https://unidosus.org/publications/floridas-latino-students-english-learners-fast-facts-2023/>

42 Florida Department of Education, "Student Achievement Through Language Acquisition," n.d., 2023, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/eng-language-learners/#:~:text=Florida's%20diversity%20of%20ELLs%20surpasses,more%20than%20300%20different%20languages.>

43 Colorin Colorado, "Florida: ELL Resources," n.d., <https://www.colorincolorado.org/ell-basics/ell-resources-state/florida-ell-resources>

44 Citizens Committee for Children of New York, "Multilingual Learners In NYC Schools", 2020, <https://cccnewyork.org/blog-march-11-2020-multilingual-learners-in-nyc-schools-poor-outcomes-with-unlimited-potential/>

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 NYSED, "Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success," n.d., <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/nys-blueprint-for-ell-success.pdf>

48 Ibid.

49 Jessner-Schmid, Ulrike, "Multilingualism," International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Science (Second Edition), 2015, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/multilingualism>

compared to their monolingual peers.⁵⁰ Metalinguistic awareness—an individual's ability to evaluate language as a process or system—supports students' translational abilities, as well as metacognitive, literacy and information-processing abilities.⁵¹

- Bilingual and biliterate individuals are more likely to report higher earnings and greater job security.⁵²
- Bilingual and biliterate Latine students are more likely to attend four-year colleges than individuals who do not develop their home language.⁵³
- Evidence points to significant labor market benefits for multilingual individuals. In a study of multinational businesses and businesses, 66 percent of employers reported a preference for contracting with multilingual professionals.⁵⁴ Additionally, multilingual professionals have greater access to rapid promotion tracks, higher commission earnings and job security.⁵⁵
- Beyond the potential cognitive, academic and labor market advantages many multilingual students benefit from, they are also able to reap sociocultural benefits given their ability to make connections across multiple heritages, enriching the fabric of diverse communities.⁵⁶

Multilingual learners' identities extend beyond the richness of their home languages: they hold many intersectional identities, with many multilingual students holding international identities, identifying as multi-racial and multi-ethnic, LGBTQ+, disabled, first-generation college aspiring and more.⁵⁷ The evidence is clear: students' fluency in multiple languages can lead to soaring achievement. As U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona recently shared, "My bilingualism and biculturalism would someday be my superpower."⁵⁸

Yet, multilingual learners across the country still face persistent achievement gaps and adverse outcomes which have been present for decades and have been further exacerbated by the pandemic:

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 California Department of Education, "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducation.pdf>

53 Ibid.

54 Porras, Diana et al., "Employer Preferences: Do Bilingual Applicants and Employees Experience an Advantage?" 2014, https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=education_fac

55 Ibid.

56 California Department of Education, "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

57 California Department of Education, "Facts about English Learners in California," n.d., <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/cefelfacts.asp>

58 Stavely, Zaidee, "Four California universities receive \$3 million awards for training teachers of English learners," EdSource, 2022, <https://edsources.org/updates/four-california-universities-receive-3-million-awards-for-training-teachers-of-english-learners>.

- Nationwide, students' standardized test scores between 2019-2022 reflected learning loss as a result of the pandemic. Despite the additional challenges that MLs faced, however, they did not experience significantly more learning loss than their peers, though overall their standardized test scores remain lower.⁵⁹
- Nationally, states reported significant setbacks in English Language development of ML students. ML students' proficiency in English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments fell six overall composite scale points in grades 1-5 and four composite scale points in grade 6 between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. This drop in proficiency was larger than in previous years.⁶⁰
- Typically, ML students do not experience chronic absenteeism more than their peers yet many school districts nationwide reported lower attendance rates for MLs.
 - In Ohio, between 2018-2021, chronic absenteeism for ML students increased by 16 percentage points, surpassing the 7 percentage point increase observed in non-MLs.
 - Similar patterns were observed in Connecticut and DC Public Schools.⁶¹ This may be attributed, in part, to the challenges of the digital divide, leading to reduced engagement and connection with school for ML students during the pandemic.
- MLs generally begin middle school with lower self-efficacy than their non-ML peers. This lower self-efficacy can impede MLs' academic attainment and growth in math and reading throughout middle school and beyond.⁶²

Multilingual students are more than their adversities. They are resilient individuals with demonstrated ability to leverage their unique capacities to obtain academic, linguistic, social and emotional achievement that extends beyond the classroom to enrich the communities they navigate. But their enormous potential requires intentional investment across our public education system from all those they interact with and from those who design the education systems that serve them.

In many ways, policymakers are already heeding the call for increased investments in supporting multilingual learners. In the fall of 2022, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced an investment of 120 millions dollars over the next five years in the National

59 Barnum, Matt, "Nation's report card: Massive drop in math scores, slide in reading linked to COVID disruption," Chalkbeat, 2022, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/10/24/23417139/naep-test-scores-pandemic-school-reopening/>.

60 Pena, Jazmin Flores, "A Snapshot of English Learner Student Performance During the Pandemic," 2022, <https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/a-snapshot-of-english-learner-student-performance-during-the-pandemic/>

61 Lazarin, Melissa, "English Learner Testing During the Pandemic," Migration Policy Institute, 2022, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_el-testing-pandemic_final.pdf

62 NWEA, "English Language Learners, Self-efficacy, and the Achievement Gap", 2019, <https://www.nwea.org/uploads/2020/03/researchbrief-collaborative-for-student-growth-english-language-learners-self-efficacy-and-the-achievement-gap-2019.pdf>

Professional Development Program to support educators teaching MLs.⁶³ This investment will bolster instruction for multilingual learner students nationwide. The U.S. Department of Education also launched “Being Bilingual is a Superpower,” part of the Raise the Bar: Create Pathways for Global Engagement program that will promote ML education and strengthen high-quality language programs and ML educator diversity.⁶⁴ The initiative supports ML students through several grant programs offered to multilingual Native American, Alaskan and Hawaiian students as well as their families.

Beyond the federal level, statewide recognitions of achievement extend to MLs, embracing the families and educators dedicated to their success. In California, for example, the state’s Seal of Biliteracy recognizes high school graduates who attain high proficiency in one or more languages. Since its inception, California has served as an example to other states also seeking to celebrate multilingual diversity: 49 states and the District of Columbia have now adopted a statewide Seal of Biliteracy.⁶⁵

These policy measures are critical to improving education and outcomes for multilingual learners, yet there is more to be done. Policies that focus specifically on social and emotional learning for multilingual learners are few, likely due to limited, nascent research on SEL approaches and impacts for these students.⁶⁶ A limited body of research on social and emotional learning for multilingual learners could limit policymakers’ and stakeholders’ ability to assess and implement informed policies in this area.

The following findings explore current research, systems and practices in place to support multilingual learners’ social and emotional learning across the country and focus on specific efforts enacted by states with high ML student enrollment. To inform state education departments’ approach to SEL in service of MLs’ SEL and academic outcomes, our report shares findings and recommendations that can help state and local education agencies build systems supportive of student outcomes for this unique student population.

63 U.S. Department of Education, “U.S. DOE Awards Nearly \$120 Million Over Five Years to Support Educators of English Learner Students”, 2023, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-awards-nearly-120-million-over-five-years-support-educators-english-learner-students>

64 U.S. Department of Education, “Biden-Harris Administration Launches “Being Bilingual is a Superpower” to Promote Multilingual Education for a Diverse Workforce,” 2023, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-launches-%E2%80%9Cbeing-bilingual-superpower%E2%80%9D-promote-multilingual-education-diverse-workforce>

65 “What is the Seal of Biliteracy?”, n.d., <https://sealofbiliteracy.org/faq>

66 Beyer, Nicole, “Social and Emotional Learning and Traditionally Underserved Populations, Policy Brief,” American Youth Policy Forum, 2017, https://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SEL-Special-Populations_Final.pdf

FINDINGS

Finding 1: A key strategy for developing multilingual students' social and emotional and academic skills is asset-based pedagogy.

Language, culture and identity are key components of academic and social and emotional learning. Yet some approaches to teaching social and emotional learning are not inclusive of the range of emotions, behaviors and relationships that students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds have. Often, and despite many schools' best efforts, the teaching of SEL places value on student traits and behaviors consistent with white dominant cultural

"Mi escuela celebró el Día de los Muertos donde tuve la oportunidad de recordar a mis seres queridos fue algo tan significativo. Hacía tiempo que no recordaba las costumbres de mi país, México. Me sentí orgulloso al poder celebrar mis raíces."

—Multilingual learner in California

"I grew up speaking Spanish at home and thrived as an English learner in school thanks to great teachers who helped my realize that my bilingualism and my biculturalism would someday be my superpower."

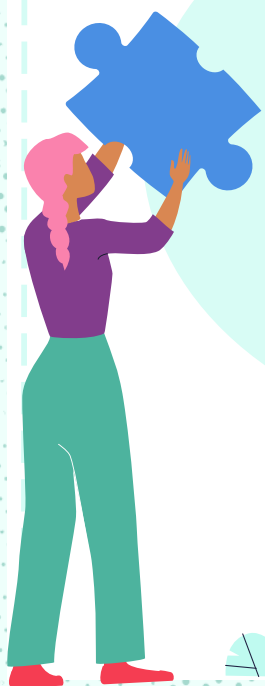
**—Miguel Cardona,
Secretary of Education**

"At school, we celebrated Day of the Dead where I had the opportunity to commemorate my loved ones—it was so significant. It had been a while since I had remembered—or celebrated—customs from Mexico, my home country. I felt proud celebrating my roots."

—Multilingual learner in California

"If you're curious about students and believe they can teach you something then you might want to investigate more about their background and the world they've experienced and then you can weave that into your curriculum activities— this would greatly benefit ML students."

—Teacher of multilingual learner students, New York



norms, treating social and emotional expression that diverges from those norms as odd, uncomfortable or even problematic.⁶⁷ For example, some Asian, Latine and African cultures consider direct eye contact a form of disrespect; yet many students are taught in their SEL education that eye contact is a key way to connect and show attention to peers and adults, signaling that what some culturally diverse students have learned in their own cultures and communities is incorrect.⁶⁸ In this way, through SEL teaching, educators may problematize ways of thinking and feeling that are divergent from white dominant cultural norms, rather than approaching SEL in a way that frames this divergence as an asset.

Educators' inclination toward deficit approaches to teaching SEL can stem from lack of training, opportunities to critically reflect on their own mindsets, lack of exposure to cultures and backgrounds different than their own or lack of knowledge of systemic and historic inequities that impact students from cultural, linguistic and historically marginalized backgrounds.⁶⁹ Educators' implicit and explicit biases rooted in white-dominant culture can cause them to have low expectations of marginalized youth and even lead to disproportionate punishments of students of color and other marginalized youth;⁷⁰ in contrast, when educators disrupt their biases, students of color see increased opportunities to access advanced courses and are held to higher academic expectations.^{71 72 73} A deficit-based, white-centric approach to social and emotional teaching and learning for students of color, which many multilingual students identify as, can disadvantage these students in school and life, widening equity gaps.⁷⁴

Asset-based pedagogy affirms a more inclusive, diverse range of emotions, behaviors and relationships in the context of cultural and societal influences. Recognized by various names (e.g., culturally sustaining pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, etc.), asset-based pedagogy refers to pedagogy that builds on the strengths that diverse youth bring to the classroom.⁷⁵ For example, elevating classroom practices that celebrate and integrate cultural

67 Simmons, Dena, "Is Social-Emotional Learning Really Going to Work for Students of Color," EdWeek, June 2017, <https://www.edweek.org/education/opinion-is-social-emotional-learning-really-going-to-work-for-students-of-color/2017/06>

68 Ibid.

69 California Department of Education, "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducation.pdf>.

70 The Pennsylvania State University, "Applying an Equity Lens to Social, Emotional, and Academic Development," June 2018, <https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/2018/06/applying-an-equity-lens-to-social-emotional-and-academic-development.html>

71 EdTrust, "Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens," August 2020, <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Social-Emotional-and-Academic-Development-Through-an-Equity-Lens-August-6-2020.pdf>.

72 Ibid.

73 California Department of Education, "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

74 EdTrust, "Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens," August 2020, <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Social-Emotional-and-Academic-Development-Through-an-Equity-Lens-August-6-2020.pdf>.

75 California Department of Education, "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

and linguistic knowledge of students to make learning relevant and effective for diverse youth.⁷⁶ Research demonstrates that educators who are highly effective with historically marginalized students—like multilingual students—practice instructional methods that use asset-based, culturally relevant pedagogy.⁷⁷ Building educators’ awareness of how different cultures value and express distinct social and emotional behaviors and feelings, and their ability to design and implement asset-based, culturally relevant pedagogy, can prevent them from reinforcing white, Westernized social and emotional norms that harm their multilingual and multicultural students’ SEL development.^{78 79} When asset-based pedagogy is used in the classroom, it fosters multilingual students’ academic and social and emotional learning and increases self-awareness, agency, identity, safety and sense of belonging among multilingual learners⁸⁰—all integral tenets that align to the widely used CASEL Framework that outlines the fundamentals of SEL.⁸¹

But what exactly does asset-based pedagogy look like in schools?

A welcoming and affirming environment: ^{82 83}

- Classrooms include materials representative and affirming of student identities.
- Students have ample opportunities to learn about various cultures and communities.
- Adults and students alike participate in inclusive social and emotional learning practices.
- Educators incorporate students’ perspectives and lived experiences within classroom and schoolwide culture which fosters students’ sense of belonging and positive identity affirmation.
- Educators intentionally build trusting relationships with students.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Dee, Thomas and Penner, Emily, “The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum,” National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2026, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w21865/w21865.pdf.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Simmons, Dena, “Is Social-Emotional Learning Really Going to Work for Students of Color,” EdWeek, June 2017, <https://www.edweek.org/education/opinion-is-social-emotional-learning-really-going-to-work-for-students-of-color/2017/06>

⁸⁰ Buckley, Katie and Ward, Angela, “Integrating Social and Emotional Learning Throughout the School System,” WestEd, September 2020, <https://www.wested.org/resources/sel-resources-for-district-leaders/>.

⁸¹ CASEL, “What is the CASEL Framework?” CASEL, n.d., <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

⁸² New York State Department of Education, “Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework,” n.d., <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>.

⁸³ Valenzuela, Angela, “Subtractive Schooling: U.S. - Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring,” March 2010, https://books.google.com/books/about/Subtractive_Schooling.html?id=haOuu_tcc3kC

Inclusive curriculum and assessment:⁸⁴

- Instructional practices embed current events.
- Students are co-designers of curriculum, and curriculum reflects students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Materials and resources include racially, culturally and linguistically diverse perspectives
- Instructional strategies adapt to students' diverse learning styles and needs.
- Curriculum and assessment heavily feature “translanguaging”, or encouraging students to use all their linguistic resources to learn academic content to move fluently between two or more languages.⁸⁵

High expectations and rigorous instruction:⁸⁶

- All adults—regardless of racial, cultural or linguistic background—have opportunities to critically examine power structures within school and classroom environments.
- Students have equal opportunities to learn within a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. UDL develops learning through representation of information in three ways: diverse content (e.g. audio, video, hands-on learning), action and expression (e.g. oral presentations, group projects, etc.) and engagement via assignments relevant to students' lives.⁸⁷
- Students use multiple ways to learn (e.g., project-based learning).
- Students participate—and lead—within their learning environment through student leadership or civic engagement activities.

What will it take for school communities to implement asset-based pedagogy?

If asset-based pedagogy is to be implemented in schools across the country, educators must first develop their critical consciousness; that is, knowledge of systemic and historic inequities that impact multilingual students and other students from historically marginalized backgrounds, and an understanding of one's own mindsets and biases in relationship to these inequities.^{88 89} Critical consciousness can help educators understand the societal and cultural conditions in which students are learning and practicing academic,

84 New York State Department of Education, “Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework,” n.d., <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>.

85 Edutopia, “Making Space for Native Languages in Newcomer Classrooms,” June 2023, <https://www.edutopia.org/video/english-learners-practice-home-languages-classroom/>

86 “Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework,” New York State Department of Education.

87 Morin, Amanda, “Universal Design for Learning (UDL): What You Need to Know,” Reading Rockets, n.d., <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/universal-design-learning-udl-what-you-need-know>

88 California Department of Education, “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students,” 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleleducationch1.pdf>.

89 Ibid.

social and emotional skills and broaden educators' views on how to inclusively teach these skills to diverse students.⁹⁰ It can help educators see students' academic and social and emotional expressions through a more sophisticated, culturally-informed lens, shifting their mindsets from 'This student is just not engaged' to 'Content that reflects this student's culture might better pique their interest in this lesson'.⁹¹

In addition to changing educator mindsets and practices, involving students' families can be key to implementing asset-based SEL teaching. Some SEL concepts do not always transfer across cultures, and families can provide insight into cultural differences around these SEL concepts. For example, some Latine and Asian cultures emphasize collectivism over individualism, and students from collectivist cultures may use 'we' statements when talking about the SEL concept of "self-efficacy" instead of 'I' statements.^{92 93} Additionally, when families care for their children outside of school, they can use the information they learn about their child's social and emotional needs and experiences to help schools implement asset-based, culturally relevant SEL approaches. A family- and community-involved approach to developing and implementing asset-based, culturally relevant SEL can help schools better understand students' cultural differences and social and emotional life outside of school, creating more consistent SEL messaging across a student's school and home life. Building asset-based pedagogy into the SEL education of multilingual learners requires school leaders, educators and families to work together. Teachers alone cannot do this work, and often report feeling stuck between doing what is right for learners—applying their knowledge of their students to support their academic learning—and adhering to the prescribed boundaries of instruction.⁹⁴

An asset-based approach can be applied even more broadly, to a perspective that holds that bilingualism is an asset in and of itself. Florida has a long history of celebrating and nurturing bilingualism. A 2021 survey found that out of 3,000 dual language immersion programs across the country, 107 of those programs are in Florida.⁹⁵ Dual language immersion (DLI) programs allow students to learn academic subjects in two languages, affording students the opportunity to acquire two languages throughout the school day.⁹⁶ One-way DLI programs refer to programs where ML students who share a common home language, for example,

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Najarro, Ileana, "Want to Support English-Learners? Prioritize SEL, New Study Finds," EducationWeek, July 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/want-to-support-english-learners-prioritize-sel-new-study-finds/2022/07>.

93 Newman, Kira, "How Cultural Differences Shape Your Happiness," Greater Good Magazine, May 2019, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_cultural_differences_shape_your_happiness.

94 De Jong, Ester and Herrera, Socorro, "English Literacy for Multilingual Learners: Voices from the Field," Language Magazine, May 2023, <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2023/05/22/english-literacy-for-multilingual-learners-voices-from-the-field/>

95 WUSF NPR, "How Miami Dade College teaches students to learn, live in a bilingual world", January 2023, <https://www.wusf.org/education/2023-01-29/how-miami-dade-college-teaches-students-to-learn-live-in-a-bilingual-world>

96 Elliott, Joseph, "Does Dual Language Bilingual Education Promote Equity?", November, 2023, <https://www.elmhurst.edu/blog/does-dual-language-bilingual-education-promote-equity/>

Spanish, learn through their home language while also acquiring grade-level expectations in English. Florida's Coral Way School—founded in 1963—pioneered the nation's first official two-way language immersion program.⁹⁷ It exemplified a language approach that supported students in acquiring a new language while maintaining their home language.⁹⁸ Two-way immersion programs bring together MLs and monolingual English-speaking students: MLs continue to learn using their home language while also learning English, and monolingual English speakers acquire a second language that they may not have otherwise learned.⁹⁹ While research shows academic and SEL benefits for all DLI programs, two-way immersion programs in particular are associated with higher academic achievement, greater English proficiency and more cultural understanding from students and staff.¹⁰⁰

Multilingualism is lauded across higher education as well. Miami Dade College is one of only a few higher education institutions to have a dual language program with Spanish. Almost all students in the bilingual program go on to transfer and graduate from four-year schools. The program is in part so successful because the program leadership consists of academic advisors and coaches, not just college administrators.¹⁰¹ Students—many of them newcomers—attend the program and report feeling supported, comfortable and safe.¹⁰²

One of the few other U.S. higher education institutions offering a bilingual curriculum is the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, which offers more than 45 dual language classes. Marking a significant shift in policy and practice, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley now collaborates with faculty to bring in culturally relevant, culturally sustaining pedagogies for its diverse ML student population.¹⁰³ ¹⁰⁴ Asset-based pedagogy also requires high-quality social and emotional instructional materials for educators to use with multilingual learners in the classroom. We explore the need for culturally relevant SEL instructional materials to meet the needs of multilingual learners in the next section.

97 Reichard, Rachel, "How Miami's Coral Way School Paved the Way For Bilingual Education in the US," Remezcla, January 2019, <https://remezcla.com/features/culture/coral-way-school-bilingual-education-us/>

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Weeks, Caroline, "Three Ways English Language Learners Benefit from Dual Language Programs," September, 2022, <https://www.participatelearning.com/blog/three-ways-english-language-learners-benefit-from-dual-language-programs/>

101 WUSF NPR, "How Miami Dade College teaches students to learn, live in a bilingual world", January 2023, <https://www.wusf.org/education/2023-01-29/how-miami-dade-college-teaches-students-to-learn-live-in-a-bilingual-world>

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Tyx, Daniel Blue, "Inside the Nation's First Bilingual University," Texas Observer, February 2017, <https://www.texasobserver.org/first-bilingual-university/>



Finding 2: Using culturally relevant SEL instructional materials can support multilingual learners' social and emotional development by affirming and integrating their lived experiences and voices.

In order to provide strong SEL instruction for multilingual students, educators need high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), closely aligned to rigorous standards and To deliver robust SEL instruction for multilingual students, educators require high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) aligned to rigorous standards and evidence-based best practices.¹⁰⁵ HQIM include curricula, supplementary materials and professional development resources that support teachers' classroom instruction.^{106 107} HQIM used across subjects in schools have been shown to be an effective tool for improving outcomes among diverse groups of students, particularly those who are academically at-risk, including multilingual learners.¹⁰⁸

Unfortunately, many states and districts struggle to provide culturally relevant HQIM, which research demonstrates can be a way for supporting MLs' sense of belonging. For example, more than half of teachers in California report that district-provided instructional materials do not adequately support multilingual learners' academic or language acquisition objectives.¹⁰⁹ This dearth of culturally relevant instructional materials for multilingual learners reinforces their need to seek supplementary materials through non-district-affiliated venues, which can pose problems for maintaining alignment to rigorous standards and evidence-based practices.¹¹⁰

Even with available SEL instructional materials or resources, schools may lack the necessary structures to support the implementation of these materials. For instance, an ML educator from New York pointed out that despite implementing a weekly SEL curriculum, ML students face challenges fully engaging because it is not offered in their home language.¹¹¹ And this educator is not alone: nationally, teachers often lack access to high-quality instructional materials.¹¹² English learners, in particular, typically have limited access to rich and grade-level appropriate instructional materials that aren't overly simplified or merely supplementary to the original content.¹¹³

105 Ohio Department of Education, "Frequently Asked Questions about High-Quality Instructional Materials," n.d., <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Resources/High-Quality-Instructional-Material/High-Quality-Instructional-Materials-FAQ>.

106 Ibid.

107 Amplify, "Why high-quality instructional materials?" n.d., <https://amplify.com/why-high-quality-instructional-materials/>.

108 Dee, Thomas and Penner, Emily, "The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum," National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2026, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w21865/w21865.pdf.

109 Skarin, Renae, "We're not giving teachers what they need to support their English learners," August 2022, <https://edsources.org/2022/were-not-giving-teachers-what-they-need-to-support-their-english-learners/676279>.

110 Zahner, William, "Early insights: What teachers say about materials for Multilingual learners," English Learners Success Forum, January 2022, <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/blog/early-insights-what-teachers-say-about-materials-for-multilingual-learners>.

111 Interview with Education First (2023).

112 Kaufman et al., "Are U.S. Teachers Using High-Quality Instructional Materials?" 2020, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2575z11-1.html

113 Opfer et al., "Implementation of K-12 State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy," 2016, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1529-1.html

“We need to make sure social and emotional learning lessons focus on students’ assets and not their deficiencies. We must also customize the stories and examples in lessons so students can see themselves.”

—Teacher of multilingual learner students, California

“Students are also interested in reading when they feel connected to reading. Developing curricula that really embrace the cultural traditions that students come from and that introduces them to their own history, the history of their ancestors and their perspective on historical development—this is more like a way of humanizing content in terms of SEL.”

—LEA Stakeholder, New York

What are some of the characteristics of high-quality SEL instructional materials for multilingual learners?

In the context of SEL for multilingual learners, high-quality instructional materials should be culturally relevant to students and support educators’ asset-based pedagogies (see Finding 1 above on asset-based pedagogy).^{114 115} High-quality SEL instructional materials for multilingual learners may have the following characteristics:

- Students have opportunities to study their own culture—and other cultures—to learn while developing understanding of sociopolitical contexts, inequities and global challenges.¹¹⁶
- Students make personal connections to the material based on their own cultural experience, for example, by free-writing on a given topic of discussion.¹¹⁷

114 UNESCO, International Bureau of Education, <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/c/culturally-responsive-curriculum#:~:text=A%20curriculum%20that%20respects%20learners,society%2C%20and%20encourages%20intercultural%20understanding>.

115 California Department of Education, “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students,” 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

116 Achieve the Core, “Planning and Reflecting with Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” n.d., <https://achievethecore.org/collection/20/planning-and-reflecting-with-culturally-relevant-pedagogy>

117 Ferlazzo, Larry, “Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Learning: How to Get There,” EducationWeek, November 2021, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-culturally-responsive-social-emotional-learning-how-to-get-there/2021/11>.

- Students feel agency over their own learning trajectory, believing that their participation in their own social, emotional and academic development matters.¹¹⁸
- Instructional materials incorporate student voice and partnership, including students' cultural, linguistic and other intersectional identities into classroom learning. Lifting up student voice not only affirms students' identities and supports their development of self-efficacy, but it can also provide an avenue for multilingual students to advocate for their unique needs, which supports schools' ability to make informed decisions supportive of multilingual learners, creating a virtuous cycle.¹¹⁹
- Instructional materials support multiple modalities of student learning, including writing, reading, drawing, listening and speaking. Using multiple modalities within instructional materials has been shown to improve all students' learning—especially learning for multilingual students.¹²⁰
- The materials use scaffolding to support learning. Scaffolding involves breaking up instruction into accessible pieces that progressively build toward an overall learning objective.¹²¹ Scaffolding is essential for all learners, but for multilingual learners it is particularly important.¹²²

The instructional materials that multilingual students interact with in the classroom are a key input into their social and emotional learning. Another input is the identity and diversity of the teachers. The following section will delve into the educator workforce and how educator race, culture and linguistic experience can impact multilingual learners' social, emotional and academic progress.



118 CASEL, “Elevate Student Voice,” n.d., <https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-3/school/elevate-student-voice/>.

119 Ibid.

120 Kaplan, Emily, “6 Essential Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners,” Edutopia, April 2019, <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-essential-strategies-teaching-english-language-learners>.

121 Alber, Rebecca, “6 Scaffolding Strategies to Use With Your Students,” Edutopia, January 2014, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/scaffolding-lessons-six-strategies-rebecca-alber>.

122 ColorinColorado, “What is ‘scaffolding’ and how does it help ELLs?” n.d., <https://www.colorincolorado.org/faq/what-scaffolding-and-how-does-it-help-ells#:~:text=Scaffolds%20help%20students%20build%20on,regulating%20learner%20and%20problem%20solver>.

Finding 3: Teachers who mirror the racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of multilingual learners can boost students' social and emotional outcomes, particularly for students of color; yet the education workforce has yet to reflect the diversity of the multilingual students it serves.

“Tengo el apoyo de mis maestros, consejeros y compañeros—todos son multilingües, por esa razón, mi experiencia ha sido una buena.”

—Multilingual learner in California

“I have the support of my teachers, counselors and peers—they are all multilingual and, because of this, my experience has been a good one.”

—Multilingual learner in California

“I am multilingual, so that helps. Being able to speak Spanish eases my ability to involve my students’ families and inform them of their child’s academic development.”

—Teacher of multilingual learner students, California

California, New York, Texas and Florida—as well as many other states across the nation—are home to a racially and ethnically diverse ML population. Yet in many of these places, this diversity is not reflected in the teacher workforce.¹²³ While not all educators of color are multilingual, their racial connection to multilingual students (who are overwhelmingly students of color) is important given evidence that students of color succeed academically, emotionally and socially when taught by educators of color.¹²⁴ ¹²⁵ In the 2021-22 school year, 95 percent of California’s ML population are students of color, yet current data on educator diversity for

¹²³ The term “students of color” and “teachers of color” refers to the California Education Department’s designated non-white race/ethnic groups including Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Filipino, African American, Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and two or more races.

¹²⁴ Gershenson, Seth et al., “Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student-Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations,” IZA, Discussion Paper Series, July 2015, <https://docs.iza.org/dp9202.pdf>

¹²⁵ Will, Madeline, “Teachers of Color Are Linked to Social-Emotional, Academic Gains for All Students,” EducationWeek, February 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teachers-of-color-are-linked-to-social-emotional-academic-gains-for-all-students/2022/02>

the state (2018-2019) indicate only 34.1 percent of teachers are teachers of color.^{126 127} In 2018-2019 in Texas, 72.5 percent of students were students of color, but only 41.4 percent of teachers were teachers of color.¹²⁸ This is reflected nationally, too. In 2018-2019, fewer than one in ten teachers were Black, Latine, Asian American, American Indian, Alaska Native or Pacific Islander, but over 50 percent of all public K12 students in the U.S. were students of color.¹²⁹

There are also too few bilingual educators who mirror the linguistic identities and backgrounds of their students. For example, the ratio of ML students to English language instructors in San Diego Unified School District is approximately 4:1, in Houston Independent School District it is 9:1 and in Baltimore City Public Schools it is 30:1.¹³⁰ This reflects a general shortage of teachers equipped to support MLs and a need for states and districts to consider the impact that class size has on educators as well as students.¹³¹ Presently, only 42 of 80 educator preparation programs in California offer bilingual authorizations for instruction, and despite an increase in the number of educators receiving these authorizations, districts struggle to source and staff bilingual educators.^{132 133} Teachers in New York report a lack of teachers equipped to teach MLs, and a lack of awareness about the experience of MLs.¹³⁴ Teachers who may not represent the diversity of their students may not fully understand students' unique experiences; thereby, educators run the risk of perceiving students, and their challenges, through a deficit lens.

Research demonstrates that multilingual students who receive instruction from credentialed teachers outperform multilingual students of emergency-permitted teachers, but multilingual students are more likely to be taught by teachers with emergency credentials because of

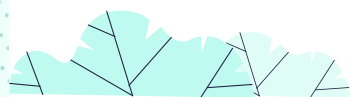
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- 126 DataQuest, "2021-22 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade," <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=00&aggllevel=state&year=2021-22>
 - 127 Bristol, Travis, "How to diversify California's educator workforce," EdSource, March 2022, <https://edsource.org/2022/how-to-diversify-californias-educator-workforce/669615>.
 - 128 EdTrust, "Educator Diversity State Profile: Texas," June 2022, <https://edtrust.org/resource/educator-diversity-state-profile-texas/>
 - 129 SSchaeffer, Katherine, "America's public school teachers are far less racially and ethnically diverse than their students," December 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/12/10/americas-public-school-teachers-are-far-less-racially-and-ethnically-diverse-than-their-students/>
 - 130 Napolitano, Jo, "As Schools Brace for More English Learners, How Well Are They Being Served Now," The 74 Million, April 2023, <https://www.the74million.org/article/as-schools-brace-for-more-english-learners-how-well-are-they-being-served-now/>
 - 131 Ibid.
 - 132 Stavely, Zaidee, "To find more bilingual teachers, California needs to cast a wider net," EdSource, April 2022, <https://edsource.org/2022/to-find-more-bilingual-teachers-california-needs-to-cast-a-wider-net/670595>.
 - 133 Commission on Teacher Credentialing, California, "Other Teacher Supply: Bilingual Authorizations," n.d., <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/reports/data/other-teacher-supply-bilingual-authorizations>.
 - 134 Interviews with Education First (2023).

limited availability of certified multilingual educators.¹³⁵ In Texas, when districts are unable to secure a teacher with a bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) certification, they must apply for a waiver from the state. The number of these waivers increased by 30 percent between 2015 and 2021.¹³⁶ The limited availability of multilingual educators extends beyond just classroom teachers. Educators across the country also report that bilingual wellness staff are in short supply.¹³⁷ Bilingual wellness educators in schools—including administrators, counselors and community liaisons—can translate language and culture within the context of student mental health and wellness; they provide essential wellness services to MLs and their families. The shortage of these bilingual wellness educators may negatively impact ML students and their social and emotional wellbeing.¹³⁸

What impact can educators of color have on students of color, including multilingual students?

Foster trusting relationships and safe learning environments: Educators of color are more likely to cultivate trusting relationships with students and their families and serve as role models for diverse youth.¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ They often foster inviting and inclusive classrooms and school environments, and can be a welcoming beacon to students who feel marginalized.¹⁴¹ In a society with increasing rates of violence and hateful rhetoric toward people and communities of color, an educator who shares race, ethnicity, culture and experiences with diverse youth, including multilingual learners, can foster a sense of trust, belonging and safety which can positively impact students' success in school and in life.¹⁴²

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- 135 Gandara, Patricia, et al., "English Learners in California Schools: Unequal Resources, Unequal Outcomes," Education Policy Archives, October 2003, <https://epaa.asu.edu/index.php/epaa/article/view/264>
- 136 Sikes, Chloe Lathan and Villanueva, Chandra King, "Creating a More Bilingual Texas," March 2021, https://everytexan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021_ELL_Primer_Final.pdf
- 137 Interview with Education First (2023).
- 138 Interview with Education First (2022).
- 139 Carver-Thomas, Desiree, "Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color," Learning Policy Institute, April 2018, https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/165/download?inline&file=Diversifying_Teaching_Profession_REPORT.pdf.
- 140 Will, Madeline, "Teachers of Color Are Linked to Social-Emotional, Academic Gains for All Students," EducationWeek, February 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teachers-of-color-are-linked-to-social-emotional-academic-gains-for-all-students/2022/02>
- 141 The Greater LA Education Foundation, "Advancing a Diverse Future, Recruiting and Retaining Educators of Color in Los Angeles County," December 2020, <https://www.greaterlaedfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/gla-advancing-a-diverse-future-120220.pdf>
- 142 Campbell, Brendan, et al., "Rising hate drives Latinos and immigrants into silence," The Center for Public Integrity, August 2018, <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/rising-hate-drives-latinos-and-immigrants-into-silence/>.



Improve school engagement, attendance and test scores: Students of color taught by educators of color are more engaged in school, attend school more frequently, score higher on core content exams and experience greater academic gains.¹⁴³ When taught by an educator of color, students of color have higher graduation rates and are more likely to attend college.¹⁴⁴ Research also suggests that educators of color are more likely to hold students to high expectations and implement culturally responsive teaching practices—which can improve academic, social and emotional outcomes for multilingual students.¹⁴⁵

Why is there a gap in teacher representation?

Despite evidence pointing to the benefits of a diverse educator workforce for multilingual learners and all students, the reality is that there is a gap in representation of educators of color and well-trained, credentialed bilingual educators.

In part, the low number of bilingual educators in California may be a remnant of Proposition 227, which required English learners to be taught in English-only classrooms unless families said otherwise. While Proposition 227 ended in 2016, its legacy still impacts the teacher workforce to this day.¹⁴⁶ ¹⁴⁷ In Texas, decreased spending, among other issues, has generated a growing gap between the number of bilingual teachers and the number of ML students. In 2018, over ten percent of all students in Texas public schools were in an ESL or bilingual program, but only 2.3 percent of teachers were ESL or bilingually certified (down from 2.9 percent of teachers in 2008).¹⁴⁸

Across the nation, the schooling disruptions and burnout as a result of the pandemic accelerated the rate of teachers of color exiting the profession.¹⁴⁹ ¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵¹ The decline in

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- 143 Blazar, David, “Teachers of Color, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Student Outcomes: Experimental Evidence from the Random Assignment of Teachers to Classes,” Annenberg Brown University, December 2021, <https://www.edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai21-501.pdf>.
- 144 Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color,” Learning Policy Institute, April 2018, https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/165/download?inline&file=Diversifying_Teaching_Profession_REPORT.pdf.
- 145 Ibid.
- 146 Stavelly, Zaidee, “To find more bilingual teachers, California needs to cast a wider net,” EdSource, April 2022, <https://edsourse.org/2022/to-find-more-bilingual-teachers-california-needs-to-cast-a-wider-net/670595>.
- 147 A note on the term “family”: Throughout this paper, the term family is used interchangeably to describe individuals who support students’ well-being outside of a school setting; the term “family” is inclusive of other caregivers in students’ lives.
- 148 Sikes, Chloe Lathan and Villanueva, Chandra King, “Creating a More Bilingual Texas,” IDRA and Every Texan, March 2021, https://everytexan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021_ELL_Primer_Final.pdf
- 149 Walker, Tim, “Survey: Alarming Number of Educators May Soon Leave the Profession,” National Education Association, February 2022, <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/survey-alarming-number-educators-may-soon-leave-profession>.
- 150 Edelman, Adam, “More than half of teachers looking to quit due to COVID, burnout, poll suggests,” NBC News, February 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/more-half-teachers-looking-quit-due-covid-burnout-poll-suggests-n1288365>
- 151 De Marco, Heidi, “New threat to COVID-era education: Black and Latino teachers are leaving the profession,” February 2022, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-02-10/black-and-latino-teachers-california-leaving-profession-in-high-numbers>.

educator numbers, particularly in teachers of color, most severely impacts districts that support low-income students and students of color, two student populations severely affected by pandemic-related learning loss and thus in great need of skilled, diverse educators to help them get back on track.¹⁵² An inability to secure these educators jeopardizes multilingual learners' academic and SEL outcomes.¹⁵³

Encouragingly, state and local education agencies are working to address educator labor demands. The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) provided more than \$122 billion to state and local education agencies to support needs arising from the pandemic.¹⁵⁴ USED outlined several ways that funds could be used to improve all steps of the educator pipeline (preparation, recruitment, hiring and retention).¹⁵⁵ Providence Public District in Rhode Island, for example, uses ARP ESSER funds to increase teacher recruitment and retention through early signing bonuses for newly-hired educators, increased support for educators pursuing an ESL certification and a loan forgiveness incentive for teachers of color.¹⁵⁶

In California, at the state level where a dearth in multilingual teachers—particularly for teachers fluent in Asian languages—exists, Governor Newsom's 2022-23 California Budget allocated \$5 million for Asian-language multilingual teacher education programs which will support education students' tuition payments toward multilingual education classes.¹⁵⁷ Such policies offer hope for building a robust educator pipeline to support multilingual learners. However, in addition to increasing the number of educators of color and bilingual educators, we must also improve their training and preparation to support multilingual learners' social and emotional development.

152 Desiree Carver-Thomas, Tara Kini, and Dion Burns, "Sharpening the Divide: How California's Teacher Shortages Expand Inequality," Learning Policy Institute, September 2020, https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Sharp_Divide_California_Teacher_Shortages_REPORT.pdf.

153 State, district and school leaders interested in learning more about efforts to diversify the educator workforce in LA County can read the report: "Advancing a Diverse Future: Recruiting and Retaining Educators of Color in Los Angeles County." <https://www.greaterlaedfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/gla-advancing-a-diverse-future-120220.pdf>

154 U.S. Department of Education, "Addressing the Teacher Shortage with American Rescue Plan Funds," n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/teacher-shortage.pdf>

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid.

157 Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Southern California, "\$5 Million Provided to Accredite More Asian-Language Bilingual Teachers in California," July 2022, <https://www.ajsocal.org/2022/07/08/5-million-provided-to-accredit-more-asian-language-bilingual-teachers-in-california/>.

FINDING 4: Professional development for practicing educators around multilingual learners' SEL needs is limited, despite the desire of many educators to provide high-quality SEL instruction to MLs.

“Educators are demanding modeling of implementation of social and emotional learning, but time is a challenge. We wonder: How do we build professional development to support them throughout the day?”
—Dr. Natalie Taylor, Director of Intervention and English Learner Programs at Claremont Unified School District, California

In order to build a foundation for valuing multilingual students' assets in the classroom and providing high-quality SEL instruction, practicing educators need opportunities for ongoing professional development to improve and hone asset-based pedagogy and other SEL-related skills and knowledge. As defined above, asset-based approaches to teaching and learning ground education in multilingual students' strengths and positions diversity of thought, culture and community as assets students bring to the classroom every day. While educator coursework on areas related to asset-based pedagogy is sometimes offered through preparation programs to pre-service educators, professional development in this area is not often available to practicing educators in schools (except in some cases of practicing educators seeking specialist certifications).¹⁵⁸ Researchers and educators emphasize the need to expand practicing educators' access to job-embedded learning on asset-based pedagogy as well as social and emotional instructional strategies.^{159 160}

In California, in spite of a desire for quality professional development in asset-based pedagogy and SEL instruction, educators note that a significant gap exists in professional

158 California Department of Education, “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students,” 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

159 “Improving Education,” California Department of Education.

160 Najarro, Ileana, “Want to Support English-Learners? Prioritize SEL, New Study Finds,” EducationWeek, July 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/want-to-support-english-learners-prioritize-sel-new-study-finds/2022/07>.

development, curricula and high-quality instructional materials in these areas, hindering their aspirations to weave social and emotional learning throughout the school day.¹⁶¹ School investment in time and human capital for participatory, job-embedded training is challenging. Often, instructional coaches have limited time to devote to collaborative practices that build learning due to multiple classroom demands and additional duties outside of instructional coaching.¹⁶² ¹⁶³ Even when coaching is available, teachers find it hard to take advantage of it: their tough schedules coupled with limited human capital support (e.g., substitute teachers) limit opportunities to engage in professional development and intervention offerings during the school day.¹⁶⁴

Encouragingly, some resources are being directed to professional development. In October 2022 the USED announced that the Office of English Acquisition (OELA) would award nearly \$120 million over five years to support educators of multilingual students through the National Professional Development Program (NPD), naming several universities in California, Florida and Texas as awardees.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, the University of Texas at El Paso launched Project LEAP UP with the goal to improve the effectiveness of K12 ML in-service teachers through state-approved credential courses that can lead to a K12 ESL Graduate Certificate or the Graduate Certificate in Dual Language/Bilingual Education.¹⁶⁶ The University of South Florida launched Project Parasol, an ESL paraprofessional to teacher pipeline project that provides a career pathway for ESL paraprofessionals to earn an Elementary Education bachelors degree with ESL and Reading Endorsements. The goal is for these highly prepared new educators return to Florida's classrooms to support students.¹⁶⁷ The University of California Los Angeles partnered with school districts to implement professional development specifically for practicing educators, or student educators, instructing multilingual learners.¹⁶⁸

Practitioners can also support teacher professional development around SEL concepts (including asset-based pedagogy and other concepts) through the way they deliver

161 Interview with Education First (2023).

162 Sarisohn, Hannah, "Study Reveals Teachers Don't Have Enough Time for Peer Collaboration," EducationWeek, April 2018, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/study-reveals-teachers-dont-have-enough-time-for-peer-collaboration/2018/04>.

163 Interview with Education First (2022).

164 Interview with Education First (2022).

165 United States Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education Awards Nearly \$120 Million Over Five Years to Support Educators of English Learner Students," October 2022, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-awards-nearly-120-million-over-five-years-support-educators-english-learner-students>

166 NCELA OELA, "2022 NPD Summary Abstracts," 2022, <https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/report-2022-npd-summary-abstracts>

167 Ibid.

168 Stavely, Zaidee, "Four California universities receive \$3 million awards for training teachers of English learners," EdSource, October 2022, <https://edsources.org/updates/four-california-universities-receive-3-million-awards-for-training-teachers-of-english-learners>.

professional development to teachers. Practitioners can deliver training in engaging, participatory ways as opposed to lecture-style “sit and get” learning.¹⁶⁹ California educators report that they are more likely to implement SEL lessons with fidelity when first modeled by district or school leaders.¹⁷⁰ Educators acknowledge that all learning is social and emotional, and therefore SEL-related teacher training is even more important to make sure SEL is effectively integrated into every aspect of the school day and learning content.¹⁷¹ Professional development may include supporting and modeling to teachers how to be curious about their students’ identities and backgrounds—especially when students’ identities and backgrounds differ from those of educators.¹⁷² For instance, in many school communities, this can entail incorporating education about systems of oppression and social justice movements that affect historically marginalized populations into academic curricula.

Supporting practicing educators through professional development is essential for implementing instruction and creating learning environments necessary for supporting multilingual students’ social and emotional learning. Beyond the adults working within schools, educators can improve SEL for multilingual students’ by partnering with other adults, like students’ families and community members.

169 Fry, Dani, “A Collaborative Model for PD,” Edutopia, February 2022, <https://www.edutopia.org/article/collaborative-model-pdA-Collaborative-Model-for-Professional-Development-in-K-12-Schools> | Edutopia.

170 Interview with Education First (2023).

171 Interview with Education First (2023).

172 Interview with Education First (2023).

Finding 5: Multilingual learners' SEL is best supported when families, districts, schools and community partners coherently work together. Collaborative efforts across education and community systems enhance MLs' SEL and promote a more inclusive and supportive education environment for all students.

“We need to recognize families as educators. They are students’ first educators, so any type of education system that does not embrace educators is missing a key piece in terms of SEL and culturally responsive education.”
—LEA Stakeholder, New York

When it comes to social and emotional learning, students have constant opportunities to learn from others beyond the classroom. Community-based social and emotional learning systems are family-inclusive and include partnerships among district and out-of-school time intermediaries.¹⁷³

Research suggests that school-based social and emotional learning programs that include opportunities for connecting with students' families are more effective.¹⁷⁴

- School-based SEL partnerships with families allow these adults to share knowledge about their childrens' development, experiences and cultural needs, helping teachers understand how to better serve the children in school.
- Partnering with families helps create the conditions for quality SEL to continue before and after the school day through extended learning and at-home activities and relationships.¹⁷⁵
- Integrating family voice in students' learning can offer educators insight into students' cultural contexts which is key for centering equity and culture in SEL instruction.
- Families are more likely to be engaged in their students' learning and schools when schools' norms, values and cultural representatives mirror their own realities.¹⁷⁶

173 Schwartz, Heather et al., “Early Lessons From Schools and Out-of-School Time Programs Implementing Social and Emotional Learning,” RAND Corporation, 2020, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR379-1/RAND_RRA379-1.pdf.

174 Albright, Michelle and Weissberg, Roger, “School-Family Partnerships to Promote Social and Emotional Learning,” in Handbook of School-Family Partnerships, 2009, School-Family Partnerships to Promote Social and Emotional Learning | (taylorfrancis.com)

175 CASEL District Resource Center, “Develop and Strengthen Family and Community Partnerships,” n.d., <https://drc.casel.org/promote-sel-for-students/family-and-community-partnerships/>.

176 Antunez, Beth, “When Everyone is Involved: Parents and Communities in School Reform,” NCBE, 2000, https://www.ncela.ed.gov/files/rcd/BE022841/Framing_Effective_Practice_Everyone.pdf.

To accomplish effective family engagement, schools can consider activities such as: co-creating a shared vision of goals and outcomes for social and emotional learning; inviting families to participate in school “walkthrough” processes in which families can observe and identify social and emotional areas of strength and opportunity; and reflecting on social and emotional data alongside families.¹⁷⁷

Families are essential stakeholders in multilingual students’ development and strong family engagement is key to supporting students’ social and emotional development,¹⁷⁸ but districts and schools should strengthen their engagement practices to make it easier for families to partner and engage with their students’ education. In a review of Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP) across California, many districts referenced family engagement as a strategy. However, practices for engaging multilingual families specifically are vague and often limited to District English Learner Advisory Committees (DELAC).¹⁷⁹

Strong family engagement is essential for MLs’ academic success and should commence early in their school journey, especially for newcomer students, who represent a significant demographic within the ML population. Unfortunately, newcomers and their families may face inadequate support during the enrollment process. Districts’ lack of uniformity in enrollment processes risks improperly placing MLs in classrooms that don’t reflect their previous education backgrounds.¹⁸⁰ This challenge can make it difficult for ML families to navigate enrollment processes for their students and could impede their engagement with schools throughout their student’s academic journey. Twenty-one states, including Texas and Florida, explicitly mandate that districts gather information from newcomers about their prior academic experiences during enrollment.¹⁸¹ In states lacking specific statutes like those in Texas and Florida, districts—such as LAUSD and the NYCDE—have developed internal guidance to ensure newcomers and their families understand the enrollment process and can make informed decisions.¹⁸²

177 CASEL, “Guide to Schoolwide SEL, Focus Area 3, Family Partnerships,” n.d., <https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-3/family-partnerships/>.

178 “Develop and Strengthen,” CASEL District Resource Center. <https://drc.casel.org/promote-sel-for-students/family-and-community-partnerships/>

179 Lavadenz, Magaly et al., “In Search of Equity for English Learners,” Californians Together, 2022, <https://californianstogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/21024-LCAP-2022-Report-R5.pdf>.

180 Cano, Manuel Vazquez and Baur, Alejandra Vazquez, “On the Right Path: Newcomer Student Enrollment and Course Placement Promising Practices,” The Next 100 and Education Northwest, October 2023, <https://thenext100.org/wp-content/uploads/On-the-Right-Path-Newcomer-Student-Enrollment-N100-EDNW.pdf>

181 Najaro, Ileana, “Most States Don’t Offer Districts Guidance for Enrolling Students New to the U.S.,” EdWeek, October 2023, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/most-states-dont-offer-districts-guidance-for-enrolling-students-new-to-the-u-s/2023/10>

182 Ibid.

Beyond families, it is also critical for districts and schools to leverage relationships with external community organizations with potential to strengthen multilingual students' social and emotional learning. Not all community partners' work centers social and emotional learning explicitly, yet their activities and programming can nurture students' social and emotional skill-building nonetheless. Partnerships—whether in school, part of out-of-school time or in the community—can provide multilingual learners with supportive adult relationships and safe, welcoming environments.¹⁸³ For students acquiring additional languages, welcoming spaces and trusting adult relationships can make a significant difference by promoting students' self-confidence, easing anxiety and reducing affective filters that obstruct language acquisition.¹⁸⁴ Connecting students with the community can also foster students' understanding that they are part of a broader group connected to their community's success.¹⁸⁵ For newcomer multilingual students—who are more susceptible to experiencing stressors as they navigate a new country—developing new relationships with adults and peers within their community can forge a sense of social integration and belonging.¹⁸⁶



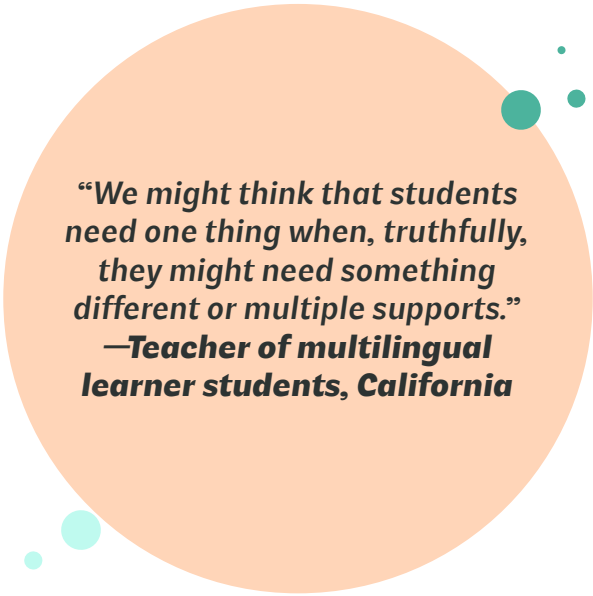
183 Schwartz, Heather, et. al, "Early Lessons From Schools and Out-of-School Time Programs Implementing Social and Emotional Learning," RAND Corporation, 2020, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA300/RRA379-1/RAND_RRA379-1.pdf.

184 "Affective Filter," Colorín colorado, n.d., <https://www.colorincolorado.org/glossary/affective-filter>.

185 CASEL, "Focus Area 3: Community Partnerships," n.d., Community Partnerships - Casel Schoolguide. <https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-3/community-partnerships/>

186 U.S. Department of Education, Newcomer Tool Kit, "CHAPTER 4: How Do We Support Newcomers' Social Emotional Needs?" Chapter 4, n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/Newcomers-toolkit/chap4.pdf>.

Finding 6: Research on evidenced-based strategies to support social and emotional learning specifically for multilingual learners is nascent.



***“We might think that students need one thing when, truthfully, they might need something different or multiple supports.”
—Teacher of multilingual learner students, California***

Research on multilingual learners’ unique SEL needs and the most impactful instructional approaches and materials to support those needs is emergent.¹⁸⁷ For this paper, Education First conducted original research through interviews and focus groups with experts, educators and students, and reviewed existing research literature adjacent to this niche topic; but the lack of a body of direct, rigorous research in the field on the intersection of SEL and multilingual students is significant and calls for action and resources.

As a result of an intentional focus in the field of education on students of color and historically marginalized students, more schools, districts and states are collecting data about multilingual learners. The National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy has produced guidance on finding and understanding multilingual learner data, empowering advocates to raise critical questions about resource allocation, school accountability and program effectiveness, and they are not the only ones.¹⁸⁸ USED refined its collection of data on MLs and immigrant students to provide a broader picture of students’ intersectionality. For example, USED now reports the number of recent immigrant students who are MLs, their most commonly spoken languages and number of students benefiting from Title III funds.¹⁸⁹ Supporting availability and guidance for data on MLs is a positive step toward expanding evidence-based strategies for building MLs’ wellness.

187 Beyer, Nicole, “Social and Emotional Learning and Traditionally Underserved Populations, Policy Brief,” American Youth Policy Forum, October 2017, https://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SEL-Special-Populations_Final.pdf

188 Sugarman, Julie, “A Guide to Finding and Understanding English Learner Data,” Migration Policy Institute Issue Brief, May 2018, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/EL-Data-Guide_Final.pdf

189 Sugarman, Julie, “Recent Immigrant Children: A Profile of New Arrivals to U.S. Schools,” Migration Policy Institute, October 2023, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-recent-immigrant-children-2023_final.pdf

Some researchers and practitioners are starting to make early progress studying strategies for advancing MLs' wellness. Research is underway on the impact of reclassification—when students test out of an ML program or are reclassified as proficient in English—on multilingual learners' sense of self-efficacy, a key SEL competency.¹⁹⁰ Increased research on programming that best supports MLs highlights the effectiveness of linguistically integrated two-way dual language immersion (DLI) schools, which accelerate MLs' language acquisition and home language development.¹⁹¹ Noting the benefits of DLI, education agencies—like the Texas Education Agency—aggregated best practices in DLI asset-based instruction, staffing and professional development in a literature review.¹⁹² And in California, Loyola Marymount University's Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) collaborates with researchers and education practitioners to provide asset-based resources and research centered on meeting multilingual learners' social and emotional outcomes.¹⁹³

Research can also impact education policies for the better. Recently, researchers have begun to explore a group of students often overlooked in studies on MLs: Indigenous English learners. Alaska Native students, constituting over 40 percent of all MLs in Alaska, are the focus of research on how they experience ML policy and practice. This research is guiding policymakers and educators to create more equitable policies that serve Indigenous MLs in Alaska and the broader United States.^{194 195}

These are but a few—yet powerful—examples of a growing field of research. While data on this niche area is developing, based on what we know from research on adjacent topics we must prioritize tailoring social and emotional learning for multilingual learners if we want to meet their academic, linguistic and social and emotional needs.¹⁹⁶

190 Najarro, Ileana, "Want to Support English-Learners? Prioritize SEL, New Study Finds," EducationWeek, July 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/want-to-support-english-learners-prioritize-sel-new-study-finds/2022/07>.

191 Zabala, Jonathan and Williams, Conor P. "How to Grow Bilingual Teacher Pathways: Making the Most of U.S. Linguistic and Cultural Diversity," The Century Foundation, August 2023, <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-to-grow-bilingual-teacher-pathways-making-the-most-of-u-s-linguistic-and-cultural-diversity/>

192 Kennedy, Barbara, "Effective Practices in Bilingual Education Program Model Implementation: A Review of the Literature", Texas Education Agency, January 2019, <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/english-learner-support/bilingual-education-programs-literature-review-jan-2019.pdf>

193 Loyola Marymount University, Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL), n.d., <https://soe.lmu.edu/centers/ceel/>.

194 Education Northwest, "Alaska Native Students as English Learners: Exploring New Research," August 2021, <https://educationnorthwest.org/resources/alaska-native-students-english-learners-exploring-new-research>

195 Umansky, Ilana, et al., "Alaska Native Students as English Learner Students: Examining Patterns in Identification, Classification, Service Provision, and Reclassification," Institute of Education Sciences, May 2021, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021088.pdf

196 Najarro, Ileana, "Want to Support English-Learners? Prioritize SEL, New Study Finds," EducationWeek, July 2022, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/want-to-support-english-learners-prioritize-sel-new-study-finds/2022/07>.

Recommendations

The work needed to support multilingual learners' social and emotional learning will take dedicated time and effort from actors across all levels of the education system (e.g., state policymakers, district and school leaders, school-based and out-of-school time educators and families). Stakeholders may begin the work by considering the recommendations that follow. These recommendations can serve as a place for stakeholders to start to support multilingual students in their social and emotional learning in order to thrive in school and life.

Recommendation 1: Invest in the teaching and learning of asset-based pedagogy

An asset-based approach to teaching and learning grounds education in multilingual students' strengths and positions diversity of thought, culture and community as assets students bring to the classroom every day. Asset-based pedagogy disrupts deficit narratives of marginalized youth, combats educator biases and holds students to high academic expectations. State, county, district and school leaders who seek to support multilingual learners' social and emotional development can champion asset-based pedagogy and invest in high-quality professional learning in asset-based pedagogy.

County/Regional Offices of Education (COEs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the U.S. can consider the following actions:

Use communication channels to champion the assets of multilingual learners.

Ensure all communications about and for multilingual learners—communications campaigns, materials for families, teacher preparation programs, partnerships with decision-makers—highlight the assets of multilingual learners and their families.

- **California Bright Spot:** *Multilingual students interviewed for this paper recognize the benefits of speaking multiple languages, with several citing expanded career opportunities afforded to professionals who speak more than one language as well as expanded academic opportunities. Students also shared how their families affirm multilingualism as an asset in these ways. Anna, a multilingual learner in California designated as a Long-Term English Learner, shared: "It's very important to be multilingual. I know that [as a multilingual student] I can help more people in multiple languages; I can have better job prospects and it makes me a better student. It makes you a better person."*¹⁹⁷

- **Texas Bright Spot:** *The Twain Dual Language Academy in the San Antonio Independent School District made the shift from bilingual education (which focuses on English proficiency) to dual language education (which focuses on learning subjects and skills in English and students' home language).¹⁹⁸ This shift transformed the school from underperforming—and where families and students saw their native language as a handicap—to an “A” rated campus where students and families believe that: being multilingual is an asset. To continuously shift mindsets around biliteracy and bicultural education, the Twain Dual Language Academy offers “Parent University”—a multilingual learning session for parents seeking to support multilingual students at home.¹⁹⁹*
- **New Mexico Bright Spot:** *The Native American Community Academy (NACA) in New Mexico provides culturally-affirming, asset-based social and emotional learning for Indigenous students.²⁰⁰ NACA's core values call out the culture and perseverance of Indigenous people and youth as central tenets of the education experience.²⁰¹ For example, at NACA students engage in culturally-affirming social and emotional learning by practicing articulating their emotions through a “wellness wheel” that is rooted in Indigenous cultural norms and practices.²⁰²*

Expand practicing educators' access to high-quality professional development opportunities related to asset-based pedagogy by building revenue streams and cultivating partnerships with professional development providers, county/regional offices of education and/or institutes of higher education. Ensuring educators understand and implement asset-based pedagogy is central to providing multilingual students the academic and social and emotional education they need to thrive. Professional development for asset-based pedagogy can help all educators—regardless of whether they work directly with multilingual learners or not—build a foundation of practices that respect students' diverse cultures, identities and languages. Professional development for asset-based pedagogy should provide job-embedded opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback in a timely manner.

- **California Bright Spot:** *Downey Unified School District (DUSD) provides educators with professional development opportunities for teaching and supporting SEL in the*

198 Windes, Isaac, “U.S. Department of Education touts SAISD school as blueprint for multilingual education,” San Antonio Report, October 2023, <https://sanantonioreport.org/san-antonio-isd-twain-multilingual-education-recognition/>

199 Huddleston, Scott, “U.S. education secretary in San Antonio to promote multilingual learning,” San Antonio Express News, October 2023, <https://www.expressnews.com/news/education/article/ed-secretary-hails-san-antonio-school-18404052.php>

200 “Our Educational Philosophy,” NACA School, n.d., https://www.nacaschool.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1664046&type=d&pREC_ID=1813147.

201 Ibid.

202 Ibid.

classroom.²⁰³ The professional development programming includes SEL-specific training from CASEL, the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) for early grades, and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). Educators learn strategies for creating secure and affirming learning environments and integrating SEL into academics, for example using “morning circles” for student reflection and relationship-building, and using culturally diverse literature when teaching English Language Arts.

- **New York Bright Spot:** The New York State Education Department (NYSED) published a Blueprint for ELL Success, which states that “All teachers are teachers of ELLs.” In keeping with this principle, NYSED works with the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN), Stanford University’s Understanding Language Institute and other continuing teacher and leader education-approved sponsors in order to provide high-quality professional development to ML educators.²⁰⁴
- **New York Bright Spot:** The Division of Multilingual Learners and the Department of Social Studies at the New York City Department of Education collaborated to develop “Scaffolded Models for the Integration of Language and Content in Social Studies for Multilingual and English Language Learners.” The document serves as a resource to support social studies teachers and English as a New Language teachers to center the learning process around social studies texts, to deepen understanding about the text genres and types that historians write and to use authentic writing in history as a model for student writing.²⁰⁵
- **Texas Bright Spot:** The National Professional Development Program from the U.S. Department of Education provides grants for implementation of preservice and inservice professional development activities to support instruction of MLs.²⁰⁶ One grantee, Project ELEVATE at the University of Texas Austin, engaged teachers in professional learning sessions focused on English/Spanish read-aloud time. Educators learned how to: engage students’ prior knowledge and lived experience by previewing texts; pre-teach key vocabulary and language concepts to provide high-quality linguistic input; incorporate nonlinguistic representation to support learning new language concepts; and engage students in meaningful and structured language practice around texts.²⁰⁷

203 Interview with Education First (2022).

204 New York State Education Department, “Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) Requirements for ELL and ML Educators,” n.d., <https://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/continuing-teacher-and-leader-education-ctle-requirements-ell-and-ml-educators>

205 New York City Department of Education, “Scaffolded Models for the Integration of Language and Content in Social Studies for Multilingual and English Language Learners,” n.d., <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/scaffolded-models-for-the-integration-of-language-and-content-in-social-studies-for-multilingual-and-english-language-learners/>

206 Program Description - NPD Program, U.S. Department of Education, n.d., <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/nfdp/index.html>

207 The Office of Language English Acquisition (OLEA), NPD Program Grantee Spotlight, November 2023, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ed-olea_oleagranteespotlight-educators-activity-7117251179469819904-JC1V/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios

- **National Bright Spot:** In June 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration allocated \$8 million of funding to promote Native languages and support Native teachers and tribal education agencies. Approximately one third of this funding supports a new Native American Language Resource Center program to create new centers to preserve and protect Native languages through promoting the use of Native American languages in classrooms for all age levels, content areas and types of schools.²⁰⁸

Increase SEL and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) departments' capacity to co-create SEL programming with educators and staff. Collaboratively develop SEL programming in schools that considers multilingual students' contextual factors (e.g., access to opportunities, experiences in schools, racism, etc.) and cultural backgrounds. Involve all adults who work with multilingual learners across learning environments in co-creating and implementing SEL programming.

- **California Bright Spot:** Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) merges social and emotional learning and equity through departmental collaborations and equity-centered professional development offerings for educators at all levels of their education system.²⁰⁹
- **New York Bright Spot:** International High School at LaGuardia Community College in New York, in addition to formal curriculum-based home language development support, offers several clubs and after-school programs for students to draw on, develop and celebrate their home languages and cultures. For example, the Chinese club is an afternoon elective where students organize cultural events, publish an annual Chinese magazine and engage in partnerships with organizations to connect students to communities, such as South Asian Youth Action.²¹⁰
- **New York Bright Spot:** Educators at Saugerties Central School District in New York create opportunities for ML students to connect with MLs students across various grade levels and through multiple learning modalities. ML students prepare and deliver group presentations on a topic of choice to audiences throughout the school, boosting students' confidence and connection to their school community.²¹¹
- **Maryland Bright Spot:** Wicomico County Public Schools in Maryland has a district-wide EL supervisor that supports teacher capacity to serve ML students by advocating for teachers' time, finding and providing resources and working to increase the number of English Language teachers (the supervisor has doubled the number of EL teachers in the last four years).²¹²

208 "The Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$8 Million to Promote Native Languages, Support Native Teachers and Tribal Education Agencies," U.S. Department of Education bulletin, June 2023, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-announces-8-million-promote-native-languages-support-native-teachers-and-tribal-education-agencies>

209 Schlund, Justina, et al., "Advancing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a Lever for Equity and Excellence," Energizing Insights, CASEL, August 2020, <https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/eMc8OmSr-CASEL-Equity-Insights-Report.pdf>.

210 U.S. Department of Education, "Newcomer Toolkit," U.S. Department of Education, September 2023, <https://ncela.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/NewcomerToolkit-09152023-508.pdf>

211 Elia, Sarah, "Four Ways to Engage Multilingual Learners With The Times", New York Times, November 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/learning/lesson-plans/ways-to-engage-multilingual-learners.html>

212 Interviews with Education First (2023).

To support these recommendations, regional education offices and LEAs can consider how each can leverage its network and existing partnerships to support asset-based pedagogy in schools. Whether by providing content directly or soliciting input from educators who work closely with multilingual learners, these agencies can highlight the existing opportunities as well as growth opportunities for providing all adults with the capacity to instruct multilingual learners using asset-based pedagogy.

Recommendation 2: Implement school, family and community partnerships to support multilingual students' social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning occurs everywhere. For multilingual learners, a community-based approach to social and emotional learning that incorporates expanded learning programs, community engagement and learning at home with family members can create valuable spaces to practice SEL skills and cultivate a sense of belonging. Families of multilingual learners can share cultural perspectives and context pertaining to their multilingual, multicultural children's needs, while community organizations can leverage the assets and resources of the community to support and educate multilingual students outside of the traditional school day.

County/Regional Offices of Education (COEs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the U.S. can consider the following actions:

Consider adopting elements of community schools models. Through a community schools model, schools offer an integrated approach to academics, social services and community engagement.²¹³ A multi-pronged approach to students' and families' learning and wellbeing, including multilingual students and families, can pool resources and support the creation of targeted, asset-based interventions.

- **California Bright Spot:** *LA County Office of Education's Community Schools Initiative is integral to supporting multilingual students' and families' well-being and social and emotional learning.²¹⁴ The initiative combines the efforts of social workers and community specialists to expand mental health and SEL services for students and families alike. Providers are multilingual and reflect the cultural diversity of the community.*

213 Oakes, Jeannie, et al., "Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement," Learning Policy Institute, June 2017, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/community-schools-equitable-improvement-brief>.

214 Interview with Education First (2022).

Uplift statewide frameworks that address multilingual learners' holistic needs through integrated systems of support.

For example, a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) addresses students' academic, behavioral and social and emotional learning within a fully integrated system of support.²¹⁵ MTSS is used in some way in every state and territory, with thousands of districts using MTSS as a way to strengthen school, family and community partnerships.²¹⁶

- **New York Bright Spot:** *The New York City Department of Education uses MTSS data in tandem with other qualitative information about its students to understand them from an ecological perspective instead of just numbers and individual students. Looking at student data through the lens of their contexts is part of their intent to take an asset-based approach and understand students more deeply.*²¹⁷

Build or strengthen partnerships with community organizations that bridge in-school and out-of-school social and emotional learning for multilingual learners.

Communicate, connect and collaborate with local organizations and other partners with resources beneficial to multilingual learners and their communities. Increase funds for LEAs to partner with community organizations on SEL for multilingual learners.

- **California Bright Spot:** *The Miguel Contreras Learning Complex's (MCLC) is an LAUSD high school with its own "Dream Center."*^{218 219} *MCLC's Dream Center is a safe and affirming space for multilingual students and families to connect and build community. MCLC's Dream Center empowers students and families through culturally affirming well-being practices that celebrate students' and families' multilingualism.*²²⁰ *The Dream Center supports immigrant youth through programming and resources that center the well-being of immigrant youth.*²²¹
- **New York Bright Spot:** *With a significant ML population, Manhattan Bridges High School, attains a 90 percent graduation rate due, in part, to its intentional partnerships with community organizations that match ML students with mentors across New York City. Mentors meet with students on a monthly basis and support students' attainment of pre- and post-graduation goals.*²²²

215 California Department of Education, "Connecting the Dots, California MTSS and English Learners," n.d., https://ocde.us/MTSS/Documents/CA_MTSS_and_EL_Instruction.pdf.

216 Pendharkar, Eesha, "MTSS: What Is a Multi-Tiered System of Supports?" EdWeek, October 2023, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/mtss-what-is-a-multi-tiered-system-of-supports/2023/10>

217 Interview with Education First (2023).

218 LAUSD, "Miguel Contreras Learning Complex," n.d., <https://sites.google.com/lausd.net/mclc-dream-center/home>

219 LAUSD, "Miguel Contreras Learning Center Dream Center," n.d., <https://sites.google.com/lausd.net/mclc-dream-center/home>.

220 MCLC Dream Center, "2022 Overviews: Highlights from this year's Coming Out of the Shadows," 2022, <https://sites.google.com/lausd.net/mclc-dream-center/coming-out-of-the-shadows/2022-overviews>.

221 "2022 Overviews," MCLC Dream Center.

222 U.S. Department of Education, "Newcomer Toolkit," U.S. Department of Education, September 2023, <https://ncela.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/NewcomerToolkit-09152023-508.pdf>

Design and implement strategies that foster positive, open communication streams between families, districts, community organizations and schools.

Build opportunities for families and community partners to understand and support district and school approaches to social and emotional learning. Increase family engagement by starting or strengthening home visit programs using multilingual family liaisons. Ensure that families can access information by minimizing jargon in all outreach languages, offer translation services and connect with parents via multiple modes of communication beyond technological platforms.

- **California Bright Spot:** *Affirming the value of community and family involvement in students' well-being, Bassett Unified School District plans to implement a school-based Wellness Center to optimize SEL resources and mental health education for students and the community at-large.²²³ To ensure a welcoming environment for multilingual students and their families, the Wellness Center will be led by a multilingual social worker with translation expertise to increase access to programming for Spanish-speaking students and families in the community. Wellness Centers in schools can offer an opportunity for extended community engagement, particularly with families who may not have availability during traditional business hours. As one Long-Term English Learner shared in an interview, "My parents aren't as involved as they'd like to be. They work long hours, and most of the times when they're invited to attend school activities—like coffee with the principal—is during the school day. My parents are interested, but they're only free to attend during the evening."*
- **Florida Bright Spot:** *In Collier County Public Schools, over half of students come from homes where a language other than English is spoken and many of them identify as newcomers. To bridge the digital gap during the pandemic, the district initiated programs tailor for migrant students, refining them based on community feedback. For instance, Immakole High School introduced "Immakole High School Road to Graduation," a virtual course providing personalized support, with a 100 percent enrollment rate among seniors. The district's Migrant Education Program engages with migrant families through home visits and follow-ups. By collaborating with families, the program ensures familiarity with school processes and resources.²²⁴*
- **Texas Bright Spot:** *The Texas Education Agency created a strategic plan in response to the Senate Bill 560 to support the growing number of emergent bilingual students in the state. As part of this strategic plan, the Emergent Bilingual Support Division developed an Emergent Bilingual Family Empowerment Toolkit, focusing on eight different aspects of parental and family engagement that supports children's educational experiences. The*

223 Interview with Education First (2022).

224 TNTP, "Rising Together: How Four Districts are Building Community During the Covid-19 Pandemic," n.d., <https://tntp.org/blog/how-four-districts-are-building-community-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

toolkit includes readiness rubrics, implementation checklists and tools for implementation, as well as guidance for multiple engagements per year. The toolkit has been piloted in 2023 in 10 school systems across Texas.²²⁵

- **New York Bright Spot:** Schools across New York use the U.S. Department of Education's translation phone line—a phone line that connects educators with on-demand interpreters—to help with translation and engagement with parents with limited English.²²⁶
- **National Bright Spot:** In June 2023 the Biden-Harris Administration allocated \$8 million of funding to promote Native language and support Native teachers and tribal education agencies. Approximately one third of this funding supports the State Tribal Education Partnership program (STEP) that provides funding for projects designed to strengthen Tribal self-determination as well as promote collaboration between Tribal, State and Local education agencies to serve Native students. The program supports cross-agency coordination, community engagement and Tribal consultation to promote systemic change.²²⁷

Multilingual students are not a monolith. Ensure community partners, early warning systems and data reporting communicate multilingual learners' needs through disaggregated data reflective of the diverse demographics of multilingual learners. Disaggregated data reveal patterns unique to multilingual learners and identify the areas in which they require strategic support. In California, Governor Newsom's recent authorization of Assembly Bill 1868 (Rivas) will require the CDE to report disaggregated standardized test scores across different groups of multilingual learners to better serve their academic needs.²²⁸ Community partners and early warning data systems can also consider how data is disaggregated across the multilingual student population; for example, disaggregating by student language group.

- **National Bright Spot:** National organizations such as YouthTruth and Re-Imagining Migration provide schools and districts with a survey of middle and high school students that uses demographic markers and culturally-informed questions to reveal how their experiences are shaped by their intersecting identities within their schools.²²⁹

225 Texas Education Agency, "Senate Bill 560 Emergent Bilingual Strategic Plan," January 2023, <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/sb-560-emergent-bilingual-strategic-plan.pdf>

226 Interview with Education First (2022).

227 "The Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$8 Million to Promote Native Languages, Support Native Teachers and Tribal Education Agencies," U.S. Department of Education bulletin, June 2023, <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/35f90db>

228 The Education Trust-West, "The Equity 8-California's Key Legislative Proposals 2022," <https://west.edtrust.org/the-equity-8-californias-key-legislative-proposals-2022/>

229 Re-Imagining Migration, "2023 Climate Survey," n.d., <https://reimaginingmigration.org/2023climatesurvey/>

To support these recommendations, states and regional education offices can encourage district efforts to build school, community and family partnerships that provide SEL for multilingual learners.

Recommendation 3: Diversify the educator workforce

Not all educators of color are multilingual, and not all multilingual students are people of color. Educators of color are more likely to have high expectations for and better cultural understanding of their students of color which can benefit the students' social and emotional development.²³⁰ For multilingual students—especially newcomer students—an educator of color can foster a sense of belonging and cultivate an enriching learning environment. Working to diversify the educator pipeline and retain educators of color could have a positive impact on multilingual students' academic and social and emotional outcomes.

County Offices of Education (COEs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the U.S. can consider the following actions:

Expand and diversify educator preparation pathways. Consider “Grow your own” programs, in which paraprofessionals and student apprentices learn alongside practicing educators while earning a stipend or course credit.

- **California Bright Spot:** *The Alder Graduate School of Education used funding from the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) program to establish urban teacher residency programs.²³¹ Alder's residency program centers the provision of aspiring educators across schools in California—Los Angeles' Gabriella Charter Schools being one of them—and in teaching teams that reflect the demographics of the school.²³²*
- **Florida Bright Spot:** *The U.S. Department of Education, through the Augustus F. Hawkins Center of Excellence Program, awarded Florida International University (FIU) \$1.5 million to recruit, train and support educators to better serve multilingual students in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, where approximately 23 percent of students are MLs. FIU's project, Supporting Educators to Educate Diverse Students (SEEDS), will consist of four teacher preparation tracks that include paraprofessionals already employed, multilingual speakers focused on Spanish and multilingual speakers focused on Haitian Creole. To address*

230 Gershenson, Seth et al., “Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student-Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations,” IZA, Discussion Paper Series, July 2015, <https://docs.iza.org/dp9202.pdf>.

231 The Education Trust, “How States Can Use American Rescue Plan Funding and Federal Grants to Support Teacher Diversity,” September 2014, <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/How-States-Can-Use-American-Rescue-Plan-Funding-Federal-Grants-to-Support-Teacher-Diversity-October-2022.pdf>.

232 Alder Graduate School of Education, <https://aldergse.edu/>.

common barriers that affect student enrollment in teacher preparation programs, the grant will: offer paid teaching residencies, test preparation, dedicated advising and financial support for FIU undergraduate students interested in becoming educators. Project SEEDS will help more than 100 teacher candidates and paraprofessionals in Miami-Dade County Public Schools secure early employment.²³³

- **Illinois Bright Spot:** The Opportunity Schools Initiative—an initiative of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)—promotes hiring and professional development practices that support hardest-to-staff schools.²³⁴ Once staffed, educators receive dedicated instructional coaching and mentorship. Through the initiative, teacher recruitment and retention rates among teachers of color in CPS improved by more than 50 percent in 2020.
- **National Bright Spot:** In June 2023 the Biden-Harris Administration allocated \$8 million of funding to promote Native languages, support Native teachers and tribal education agencies. Approximately one fourth of this funding supports the Native American Teacher Retention Initiative (NATRI), which is a discretionary grant competition designed to address the shortage of Native American educators and promote retention by offering opportunities for Native teachers to take leadership roles in schools.²³⁵

Tap into middle and high school multilingual students’ interest in the teaching profession. Current multilingual students can be future educators themselves. Provide the connections and development necessary to cultivate and maintain their interest in the profession through job shadowing, paid internships and early college credit courses. Districts ready to build robust, high-quality educator pathways for high school students can learn more through the “To, Through and Teaching: A Toolkit for Creating High-Quality Educator Pathways for High School Students.”

- **Indiana Bright Spot:** To broaden opportunities for teacher candidates of color interested in entering education, states used Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to develop systems for strengthening the educator pipeline. For instance, Indiana used funds to contract and partner with 13 institutes of higher education to increase candidates’ access to English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching certifications.²³⁶

233 Fattal, Ayleen Barbel, “Teacher prep program to support “English learners” in public school system,” Florida International University News, February 2023, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-announces-8-million-promote-native-languages-support-native-teachers-and-tribal-education-agencies>

234 Chicago Public Schools, “The Opportunity Schools Initiative,” October 2021, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d2613d1ed45730001ef81ef/t/6168441f8d748026dda900bb/1634223138159/OS+Case+Study_101421_Final2.pdf.

235 “The Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$8 Million to Promote Native Languages, Support Native Teachers and Tribal Education Agencies,” U.S. Department of Education bulletin, June 2023, <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/35f90db>

236 The Education Trust, “How States Can Use American Rescue Plan Funding and Federal Grants to Support Teacher Diversity,” September 2019, <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/How-States-Can-Use-American-Rescue-Plan-Funding-Federal-Grants-to-Support-Teacher-Diversity-October-2022.pdf>.

- **New Jersey Bright Spot:** *The Red Hawks Rising Teacher Training Academy in New Jersey is a partnership between Montclair State University, the Newark Board of Education and the American Federation of Teachers. The program offers students enrolled in two high schools in Newark the opportunity to take college-level courses for free that would apply towards a degree at Montclair State University, in order to prepare students of color to become teachers.*

Use monetary incentives to attract potential teachers of color to enter the workforce. Service scholarships, loan forgiveness and relocation funds can be useful incentives.

- **Texas Bright Spot:** *Texas' Region 8 Education Service Center supports forty-six school districts in Northeast Texas, and hosts several initiatives to close the financial gaps that prevent ML paraprofessionals from becoming ML K–12 teachers. One of the districts in the region, Mount Pleasant ISD, whose population is almost half ML students, offers scholarships for paraprofessional teachers enrolling in Texas A&M University-Commerce's Pride Pathway. Pride Pathway is an online degree and teacher certification program that allows paraprofessionals to count their work in classrooms through their jobs as student teaching experience, which saves them (and Mount Pleasant ISD) both time and money.²³⁷*
- **Colorado, Maryland and Michigan Bright Spot:** *Teacher training programs often require that candidates pay tuition while also working close to full-time for their clinical practice hours that are unpaid. Michigan, Colorado and Maryland are providing funds to student teachers who might be financially burdened by their clinical practice requirement hours.²³⁸*

To retain educators of color, improve educators' working environments and compensation. The pandemic exacerbated stressful working conditions for all educators, particularly educators of color. To ease educator attrition rates, particularly for educators of color, consider the following:

- Increase educator compensation and benefits so that they are earning a comparable wage to their similarly-educated and credentialed peers; strategic staffing could be a means to achieve this ^{239 240}
- Provide free, accessible mental health support to educators, and cultivate supportive—rather than exploitative—school communities for educators²⁴¹

237 Zabala, Jonathan and Williams, Conor P. "How to Grow Bilingual Teacher Pathways: Making the Most of U.S. Linguistic and Cultural Diversity," August 2023, The Century Foundation, <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-to-grow-bilingual-teacher-pathways-making-the-most-of-u-s-linguistic-and-cultural-diversity/>.

238 Zabala, Jonathan and Williams, Conor P. "How to Grow Bilingual Teacher Pathways."

239 United Teachers Los Angeles, "Burned Out, Priced Out, Solutions to the Educator Shortage Crisis," United Teachers Los Angeles, 2022, https://utla.net/app/uploads/2022/08/UTLA_ShortageReport_Summary.pdf.

240 Education First, "Strategic School Staffing Landscape Scan: Transforming School Staffing to Improve Student Learning and Reimagine the Role of Teachers," August 2023, PowerPoint Presentation (education-first.com)

241 United Teachers Los Angeles, "Burned Out, Priced Out."

- Reduce class sizes across all grade levels. Doing so can increase teachers' time and capacity to provide students with one-on-one support²⁴²
- Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for school leaders to support educators of color²⁴³
 - **Alabama Bright Spot:** *The Russellville City Schools District in Alabama, committed to equitable education for its students, used federal pandemic relief funds to hire bilingual aides to improve the quality of education for the growing population of MLs in the district.*²⁴⁴
 - **Texas Bright Spot:** *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) offers a strategic school staffing initiative focused on paid teacher residencies. In this two-year process, districts and educator preparation programs commit to redesigning and implementing a paid teacher residency program by reallocating district resources to compensate teacher residents during their clinical experience.*²⁴⁵

Recommendation 4: Adopt high-quality SEL instructional materials for multilingual learners

Understanding what constitutes high-quality SEL instructional materials for multilingual learners and implementing such materials is key to supporting this student group's SEL education. Local education leaders can ensure that multilingual learners gain increased access to high-quality SEL instructional materials.

County/Regional Offices of Education (COEs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the U.S. can consider the following actions:

Provide funding and guidance for adopting high-quality SEL instructional materials. Develop guidance for those making purchasing decisions about how to select SEL materials that will best meet multilingual learners' needs: those that are culturally relevant, provide opportunities for student agency and voice and include multiple modalities for learning, and appropriately scaffold content.

- **California Bright Spot:** *To support students' conflict resolution capabilities Lancaster School District implements Kelso's Choice, a counselor-driven curriculum that supports*

242 United Teachers Los Angeles, "Burned Out, Priced Out."

243 Carver-Thomas, Desiree, "Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color," Learning Policy Institute, April 2018, https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Diversifying_Teaching_Profession_REPORT_0.pdf.

244 Najjarro, Ileana, "The English Learner Population Is Growing. Is Teacher Training Keeping Pace?," EducationWeek, February 2023, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-english-learner-population-is-growing-is-teacher-training-keeping-pace/2023/02>

245 Education First, "Strategic School Staffing Landscape Scan: Transforming School Staffing to Improve Student Learning and Reimagine the Role of Teachers," August 2023, PowerPoint Presentation (education-first.com)

social and emotional learning through games and tools such as Kelso's choice wheel.²⁴⁶ Beyond presenting instruction through engaging practices, the curriculum is lauded by LA County educators for its ability to scaffold learning through different modalities and experiences such as discussions and role-playing. For multilingual learners, opportunities to practice SEL skills through various forms of learning ensures instruction is accessible.

Establish structures for multilingual students to support co-design of SEL

programming. Engaging the voices of multilingual students whose lived experiences reflect the school, district or community affirms students' sense of ownership over their learning. Furthermore, it empowers students to own, design and lead their own social and emotional learning experiences and creates reciprocal learning opportunities between adults and students.

- **California Bright Spot:** *The California Indian Education Act, an education policy recently approved by Governor Newsom, encourages school districts to collaborate with local Native American tribes to develop academic lessons and strategies.²⁴⁷ The legislation aims to let Native Americans share their history and culture in the classroom by providing teachers with more instructional tools for building understanding among students and between local tribal families. The policy serves as an example of how collaboration with communities can nurture students' academic outcomes through culturally relevant curricula.*
- **Connecticut Bright Spot:** *In 2020, Norwalk Public Schools in Connecticut conducted a comprehensive review of district policies and programs, including a listening tour and a student roundtable in response to low graduation rates among the district's growing ML population. The superintendent, Alexandra Estrella, listened to educators' experiences to better understand MLs' needs in response to the pandemic. As a result, the district offered MLs and other students specialized services like early in-person education, afternoon and evening classes for older MLs with jobs, asset-based professional development and additional coaches and interventionists in every school across the district. Following a year of programming shifts, ML graduation rates increased by 10 percent.²⁴⁸*
- **Nevada Bright Spot:** *To ensure social and emotional learning for multilingual learners was culturally responsive for its racially diverse, multilingual learners, Washoe County Schools gathered feedback from students and educators on its social and emotional*

246 Interview with Education First (2022).

247 Office of James C. Ramos, "Ramos measure would require K-12 education accurately reflect historical mistreatment of Native Americans," January 2024, <https://a45.asmdc.org/press-releases/20240111-ramos-measure-would-require-k-12-education-accurately-reflect-historical#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20Governor%20Gavin%20Newsom,or%20residing%20in%20their%20region.>

248 Najjarro, Ileana, "The English Learner Population Is Growing. Is Teacher Training Keeping Pace?," EducationWeek, February 2023, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-english-learner-population-is-growing-is-teacher-training-keeping-pace/2023/02>

*learning curriculum. Multilingual students provided their perspective and opportunities for ensuring the curricula reflected their lived experiences and met their language acquisition needs. Educators' and students' perspective culminated in implementation of varied multiple modalities for learning of social and emotional learning through real-life examples relevant to multilingual students' lived experiences.*²⁴⁹

Partner with and support practitioners and institutes of higher education to continue the research and creation of measures, tools and materials grounded in the social and emotional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse youth.

An intentional focus on high-quality social and emotional research that investigates the needs of increasingly diverse student populations can lead to the creation of HQIM that promote social and emotional well-being for diverse students.

Integrate family voice in SEL and instructional materials. Families are students' first instructors; integrate their voices in social and emotional learning instruction and materials. Their support can provide additional context that can mitigate adult biases and provide cultural context necessary to right-size learning to fit multilingual learners' diverse needs.

- **Alaska Bright Spot:** *In the Anchorage School District in Alaska, experts in Native and Indigenous culture and language provided professional learning for educators and families. Families, schools and community members engaged in a process for developing relationships with each other and explored actions relevant to student success. The process affirmed the academic and well-being of the population through a cultural lens.*²⁵⁰

249 Davidson, Laura, "How Washoe County School District Uses SEL Data to Advance Equity and Excellence," <https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/washoe-county-school-district>.

250 Education First, "Heeding the Call for Change: Centering Equity in Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)," PowerPoint Presentation, July 2021, https://www.education-first.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NoVo-SEL-Landscape-Scan-FINAL_For-Website-Copy.pdf.

Appendix

Stakeholder Engagement

For this research, we engaged stakeholders most proximate to the experiences of multilingual student education across the country through interviews and focus groups.

We engaged the following stakeholder groups

- Fourteen multilingual high school students²⁵¹
- Eleven K12 educators, administrators and district representatives who work with multilingual students and/or oversee programs for multilingual students
- Two experts on multilingual student education

The schools, districts and organizations represented in our stakeholder engagement include:

- Bassett Unified School District
- Claremont Unified School District
- Creative Response to Conflict
- Downey Unified School District
- Lancaster School District
- Loyola Marymount University Center for Equity for English Learners
- Montebello High School
- Norwalk High School
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)
- School of the Future Manhattan
- Synergy Kinetic Academy Charter School
- Torrance Unified School District
- West High School
- Wicomico County Public Schools, English Language Support Center
- William S. Hart Union High School

251 The students interviewed were primarily designated as Long-Term English Learners and Newcomers.

Glossary of terms

Designated English language development (ELD): Designated ELD is a protected time during the regular school day when teachers use the California ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build into and from content instruction in order to develop critical English language skills, knowledge and abilities needed for content learning in English.²⁵²

Integrated ELD: “Integrated ELD is made up of effective instructional experiences for English learners throughout the day and across disciplines that: are interactive and engaging, meaningful and relevant, and intellectually rich and challenging; are appropriately scaffolded in order to provide strategic support that moves English learners toward independence; build both content knowledge and academic English; value and build on primary language and culture and other forms of prior knowledge.”²⁵³

Dual language program or two-way immersion program: “Dual Language Program: Also known as two-way or developmental, the goal of these bilingual programs is for students to develop language proficiency in two languages by receiving instruction in English and another language in a classroom that is usually comprised of half native English speakers and half native speakers of the other language.”²⁵⁴

Dual language learner: “A dual language learner is a child aged from birth to five, learning two (or more) languages at the same time as well as a child learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language.”²⁵⁵

English Learner (EL): “An individual who, due to any of the reasons listed below, has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to be denied the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in the larger U.S. society. Such an individual (1) was not born in the United States or has a native language other than English; (2) comes from environments where a language other than English is dominant; or (3) is an American Indian or Alaska Native and comes from environments where a language other than English

252 California Department of Education, “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students,” 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

253 California Department of Education, “California English Learner Roadmap, Strengthening Comprehensive Educational Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Learners,” <https://californianstogether.app.box.com/s/z1wj2vi6kn3wu4a2w1dshi67b0wq67yy>.

254 U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Programs for English Language Learners, “Part IV Glossary,” <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/edlite-glossary.html>

255 California Department of Education, “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students,” 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency."²⁵⁶

Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP): "A student in kindergarten through grade 12 for whom a language other than English is reported on the HLS and who, upon initial assessment in California using an appropriate state assessment (currently the ELPAC; prior to the 2017-18 school year, the CELDT) and from additional information when appropriate, is determined to be proficient in English."²⁵⁷

Latine: A person of Latin American descent.²⁵⁸ A note on terminology in this report is the use of "Latine" rather than "Latinx." The Greater LA Foundation and LACOE acknowledge that Latine allows for gender neutrality and phonetic accessibility amongst Spanish-speaking communities.

Long-term English learner: "A multilingual student who is enrolled in grades six to twelve, has been enrolled in schools in the United States for six years or more, and has remained at the same English language proficiency level for two or more consecutive prior years, or has regressed to a lower English language proficiency level as determined by the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)."²⁵⁹ In New York, a long-term English learner is a student who has completed at least six years of ELL services in a New York State school and continues to require ELL services.²⁶⁰

Multicultural education: "Instruction that values and incorporates the histories, values and perspectives of people from diverse, cultural backgrounds."²⁶¹

Multilingual programs: "Multilingual programs prepare students for linguistic and academic proficiency in English and additional languages, and require thoughtful design. Multilingual programs are based on research that demonstrates the program model's effectiveness at leading students toward linguistic fluency and academic achievement in more than one language."²⁶²

256 National Center for Education Statistics, "Glossary," <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/glossary#>

257 California Department of Education, "Glossary of Terms of English Learner (EL) Reports," <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/longtermel/Glossary.aspx>.

258 Merriam-Webster, "Latine," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Latine>.

259 California Department of Education, "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleeducationch1.pdf>.

260 NYSED, "English Language Learner/Multilingual Learners Demographics/Data Reports," <https://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/english-language-learnermultilingual-learners-demographicsdata-reports>

261 The Glossary of Education Reform, "Multicultural Education," <https://www.edglossary.org/multicultural-education/>.

262 California Department of Education, "Multilingual Education: Overview of Multilingual Programs," n.d., <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/multilingualedu.asp>.

Multilingual learner: “A student who is developing proficiency in multiple languages and speaks and understands, to varying degrees, one or more languages in addition to English.”²⁶³ Multilingual learners are designated by the state of California as English Learner (EL), Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) or Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP).²⁶⁴

Newcomer student: “Newcomer” is an umbrella term that includes various categories of immigrants who are born outside of the United States.²⁶⁵

Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP): “A student in kindergarten through grade 12 who, upon entering public school in California, is identified as an EL and subsequently reclassified/redesignated in California, per EC 313, as proficient in English. EC 313 criteria include, but are not limited to, an assessment of English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as currently measured by the ELPAC (prior to the 2017—18 school year the CELDT was used), teacher evaluation of curriculum mastery, parental opinion/consultation, and student's performance of basic skills, as measured by the CAASPP-ELA that demonstrates sufficient proficiency in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for students of the same age whose native language is English.”²⁶⁶

Social and emotional learning (SEL): “The process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”²⁶⁷

Identity formation: “The process by which we, as well as others, define our sense of membership and belonging. Identity consists of the chosen and assigned names we give ourselves and/or are given. Identity is connected to our history or histories, and it is varied, multifaceted and dynamic.”²⁶⁸

263 Yankelowitz, Julia, “A Move Towards Multilingual: Why this Term is Better than Other [for Now],” SRI Education, February 2023, <https://multilinguallearner.org/a-move-towards-multilingual-terms/>.

264 California Department of Education, “Glossary of Terms of English Learner (EL) Reports,” <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/longtermel/Glossary.aspx>.

265 United States Department of Education, “CHAPTER 1: Who Are Our Newcomers?” <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf>

266 California Department of Education, “Glossary of Terms of English Learner (EL) Reports,” <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/longtermel/Glossary.aspx>.

267 CASEL, “Fundamentals of SEL,” <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>

268 California Department of Education, “Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students, Research to Practice,” <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleleducationch2.pdf>



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