

Improving Graduation and College Readiness of English Language Learners: A Briefing of Key Issues and Strategic Opportunities for Investment

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Summary Findings

Findings

- **There are significant rationale and opportunity for funders to invest in improving educational outcomes for ELLs.** The field serving adolescent ELLs is under-developed with little research, evaluation, training, infrastructure or policy. This should be considered an opportunity for funders.
- Expectations for ELLs are very low. It is as if we do not expect them to graduate.
 - The graduation rates and college participation of ELLs are not monitored or included in federal policy nor are they easily available from states.
- ELLs have been concentrated in five states. However, the recent trends show that ELLs are increasing rapidly in an additional 14 states. In addition, within states, ELLs are clustered within a limited number of high schools. This suggests that a combination of targeted and national approaches will be needed.
- Within adolescent ELLs, students vary according to their content knowledge in high school subjects and their English language skills. One strategy will not work for all ELLs. Although most ELLs can reach graduation and college readiness within 4-7 years, there may be some newcomers that enter with so little English and so little educational background that it is better to modify the expected outcome.
- Variation in federal and state policy inhibits accountability and research on adolescents ELLs.
- There are many similarities between the recommended structures and policies for adolescent ELLs, other academically challenged students, and off-track students.
- In general, ELL advocates believe that ELL literacy instruction is different than that for native English speakers with low-literacy skills. However, more in-depth conversation reveals that there is overlap between the instructional models.

Summary: Strategic Direction and Sample Investments

Funding should address a four-pronged strategy

- **Build consistent policies, definitions, and assessments of ELLs across state/federal**
 - Build research base to better inform policy
 - Support WIDA's efforts to build consensus across states on definition and assessment
 - Integrate focus on ELLs in all state data and accountability systems
 - Data Quality Campaign
 - P-16 information systems
- **Target those states, districts and schools with high or increasing numbers of ELLs**
 - Work with districts to analyze patterns and outcomes of ELLs as part of segmentation analysis
 - Establish policies to monitor 4 and 6 year graduation rates
 - Increase capacity of districts to provide teachers that can integrate language development and content as part of their small schools effort.
- **Build knowledge and human capital development of effective newcomer schools and instructional practices that integrate language development and content.**
 - Invest in research on methodologies that integrate content and literacy, specific instructional models that show promise, and professional development policies and programs that are effective with ELLs.
 - Evaluate and replicate newcomer schools.
- **Explore development of standard instructional practices for students with academic challenges that draws from ESL, special education, differentiated instruction and gifted and talented.**
 - Convene experts and practitioners from adolescent ELL, adolescent literacy, special education and gifted/talented to explore the ways in which instructional practices are similar and different as well as potential strategies to promote the development of all such groups.

Purpose of this Briefing

- **Overall Project: How to Increase Graduation and College Readiness of Struggling Students** Identify strategies for funders to increase high school graduation rates and college readiness, with special focus on struggling students who may face challenges and have opportunities related to literacy including learning English as a second language. Investigations include potential opportunities to enhance Career and Technical Education (CTE).
- **Specific Objective of this Briefing:** Identify strategies to increase high school graduation rates and college readiness of high school English Language Learners (ELLs). (See Appendix A for research and experts interviewed for this report.) Note: The focus of this briefing is on high school students who are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs). However there is no organized field focused on high school ELLs. The limited research and discussions of older ELLs often include middle and high school ELLs. As such this briefing relies on some information that includes middle school ELLs as well.
- **Key Questions:**
 - What is the current status of ELLs terms of achievement and graduation in the U.S.?
 - What is the policy context for ELLs?
 - What are approaches to educating ELLs?
 - What will it take to increase graduation rates of students with ELL and get them to be college ready?
 - What do small school developers need to take into consideration if they are going to design a school to effectively serve What can investments can funders and other foundations make to increase the graduation rates and college readiness of ELL?
- **Note:** *This briefing is not exhaustive. If more information is desired, MetisNet can continue to investigate the issues in order to obtain a deeper understanding of research of specific ELL program models, a wider range of perspectives on high school ELL issues, professional development models for ELLs, ELL assessments, and an understanding of high school ELL issues in target states .*

Why Focus on English Language Learners?

- ELLs are a sub-group of the 70% of students that enter high school not proficient for which we have tremendously low expectations (NAEP 2007) Current focus is on achievement with little attention to graduation rates and no attention to college readiness.
 - 4% of 8th grade ELLs and 20% of former ELLs scored proficient or above on 2005 NAEP reading.
 - ELLs reporting speaking English with difficulty on the 2000 US Census have less than a one-in-five chance of completing high school. (Little or no graduation rate data from education sources is available).
 - There is no substantial research on the college outcomes for ELLs. Researchers may use Hispanic as a proxy.
- High schools are seeing increases of number of ELLs across the country. The ELL population is currently concentrated, but the number of ELLs is rapidly growing – and in states with historically few ELLs.
 - Over 50% of the adolescent ELL population is located in just 10% of the secondary schools.
 - California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois have 60% of all ELL students in grades 6 -12.
 - Between 1989-1990 and 2004-2005, ELL K-12 enrollment increased more than 200% while the total school population increased only 20%.
- High school ELLs are concentrated in 25 districts, but many states have rapidly growing ELL population.
 - 25 school districts enrolled 15,000 or more ELLs in 2004-2005,
 - NC, GA and OR have had more than 200% growth of ELL from 1993 - 2003 and will likely be under pressure to expand infrastructure in terms of trained teachers, policies and curriculum.
- There is criticism that small high schools, including transfer schools, are not providing equal access to ELLs. In addition, the trend to break large schools into small schools may be harming quality of education for ELLs as the breadth of educational programs available often decreases.

Background Information on High School ELLs

- What is an English Language Learner?
- Three Types of High School ELLs
- What are the Language and Instructional Needs of ELLs?



What is an English Language Learner?

- There is no uniform definition of an English Language Learner (See Appendix H: National ELL Policy Context and Funding).
 - In general ELL and LEP are interchangeable terms.
 - The US Department of Education defines Limited English Proficient (LEP) as students between the ages of 3 and 21 "enrolled in elementary or secondary education, often born outside the US or speaking a language other than English in their homes, and not having sufficient mastery of English to meet state standards and excel in an English-language classroom."
 - States vary in definition, classification and methodologies to count ELLs.
 - Some consider all students eligible to receive language instruction classes as ELLs, while others include only those receiving services as ELLs.
 - Some track former ELLs now considered fluent in English, known as FEPs, while others do not.
 - It is nearly impossible to find graduation rates for students currently designated ELL or former ELLs.
 - Best way to determine if student is ELL is to use language proficiency tests, but states use different tests.
- Number of students with language-related literacy needs is largely unknown.
 - 2000 Census data suggest 12% of students are ELLs. It is thought that this is an underestimate.
 - Approximately 43% of ELLs are first generation and 57% were born in US (second or third generation). 17% of first generation ELLs are recently arrived.
 - ELLs have lived in the US for many years may have not learned English for various reasons including mobility, being transferred between different language programs, or not receiving instruction focused on academic English. *Please note that being born in the US does not mean students have lived their entire lives in the US.*
 - Some studies have found that students that transferred between different types of programs were less proficient in English.
 - NCELA estimates that as many of 1/4 of all US immigrants may be undocumented, the exact number is unknown.

Three Types of High School ELLs

High School ELLs are not a monolithic group. And, while not every student falls neatly within one of the three types of high school ELLs, they help us understand their different needs. Please note that CCSSO refers to these categories.

- Newcomers with strong academic backgrounds
 - Who: ELLs who have recently arrived to the US and had a strong educational experience in their home country. These students are considered at grade-level in content areas.
 - Needs: These students need a shorter time in language development programs and move quickly into mainstream classes. These students tend to have strong academic outcomes including doing well on exit exams, graduating high school and going on to college.
- Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE)
 - Who: These students can be either newcomers with limited educational experience in their home country or transnational ELLs who live and attend school for periods both in the US and their family's home country. This may be a large portion of the 57% of ELLs who were born in the US. These students may be illiterate in English and their native language.
 - Needs: SIFEs need intensive language development programs. They typically need a long time to become literate in English and may never transition to mainstream classes. SIFEs tend to have low high school graduation rates.
- Long-term ELLs – students who have been classified as ELL for at least seven years
 - Who: - ELLs who haven't been in consistent, quality language development program, but received a variety of educational approaches – ESL, bilingual and mainstream due to school mobility and/or programmatic changes at their school. Their oral English skills may be much stronger than their written skills. They may be similar to native English speakers with low literacy.
 - ELLs with learning disabilities (ELL/Ds) are often diagnosed very late into their educational career, being identified as SPED only after years of not making progress in regular classes for ELLs. Unfortunately 56% of ELL/Ds receive services only in English.
 - Needs: Important to provide consistent, long-term, high quality language development programming. There is very little research on high school ELL/Ds, but we can assume they need specialized integrated language and learning assistance.

What are the Language and Instructional Needs of ELLs? (1)

- Oral proficiency takes **3 to 5** years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take 4 to 7 years. This study was based on students enrolled in kindergarten in high quality programs that remained in the same district throughout their education. Thus, it is probably an underestimate of the time it takes to fully prepare students.
- While each program has its own specific levels, the language ability of ELLs can be generally categorized as beginner, intermediate and fluent (FEP)
 - Beginners are learning the basics of English, how to make conversation how to write basic sentences.
 - Intermediates can write a paragraph, respond to questions about content with vocabulary.
 - Redesignation as FEP, a status taken to indicate that the student is no longer in need of special language support services is often determined by meeting the 36th percentile rank on norm-referenced tests such as the SAT-9 or CTBS. Critics have rallied around both sides of this criterion. Some students pass out of language development programs, but still do not meet the FEP criterion.
- 96% of eighth grade ELLs scored below the basic level on NAEP.
- ELLs speak over 460 different languages; 81% of ELLs in grades 7-12 are Spanish speakers.
- 9% of ELLs in grades K-12 are also enrolled in Special Education (ELL/D). However, schools typically have either a very high number of ELL/Ds including many inaccurately placed or a very low number such that many ELLs with SPED needs haven't been identified or receive services. A large number of long-term ELLs, students that never move out of ELL programs may also have SPED needs. Many districts do not have SPED assessments in languages other than English and more than half of ELL/Ds receive SPED services only in English.
- Adolescent ELLs are twice as likely to be low income than native English speakers. According to 2000 Census data, 59% of adolescent LEP students live in families below 185% poverty line compared to 28% of adolescents that speak English only.
- **Like all students, ELLs need high quality instruction and good schools. Not surprisingly, ELLs show higher academic progress in schools where the overall student population performs well on English language exams.**

What are the Language and Instructional Needs of ELLs? (2)

- High school ELLs need academic English programs designed to meet their specific needs.
- There is a significant difference between *social English* that allows an ELL to negotiate their community, work and school with *academic literacy* which is crucial for success in school.
- All ELLs need language development instruction that is focused on teaching **academic English** and **aligned to state standards**.
 - High school ELLs need instruction that is specifically based on the content in the required, for-credit classes, including necessary vocabulary.
 - Instruction should include reading, writing and oral discourse.
 - Instruction should vary from subject to subject so that students can engage effectively in specific academic disciplines.
- ELLs need language development programs that meet his/her specific needs. There is no one model that works for all ELLs.
 - Schools should use effective diagnostic tools to thoroughly assess each ELL in order to match him/her with the most effective classes/schools for his/her needs. There are two continuums that are most influential in determining the specific combination and course of services each ELL needs:
 - the strength of the student's academic background.
 - the student's experiences with English.
 - Where each student sits on these two continuums varies widely.
 - Some ELLs are not very literate in their own language, have had interrupted schooling and are behind grade level in subject areas in addition to English. Other ELLs have had strong academic experiences in their native language would be considered at grade level in their native language or country of origin.
 - Some students have lived in the United States for a long time and speak social English, but their skills in Academic English are not at grade level. Other students are new to the US and are learning beginning English.

What are the Language and Instructional Needs of ELLs? (3)

Types of Instructional Models

- **Content-based ESL classes** are taught by language educators whose main goal for students is English language development. Teachers develop the students' English language proficiency by building background knowledge and vocabulary from subject areas that students are likely to study.
- **Bilingual programs** are teach adolescent ELLs who are literate in their native language and on grade level augment their content knowledge in their native language. For example, **Transitional bilingual education** provides initial instruction in academic content in the ELLs' native languages, along with content-based ESL instruction. Students typically spend 2 to 3 years in a TBE program, and then gradually transition to instruction in English. *There is research documenting the effectiveness of bilingual programs which is becoming accepted at the national level. (See Appendix F: National Debate is Less Focused on English Only vs. Bilingual Instruction)*
- **Dual language** and **two-way bilingual programs** use both English and their first language for academic instruction, promoting full proficiency in all aspects of the two languages. However, these program types are rarely implemented for adolescent students and are most effective for ELLs at grade level.
- **Sheltered instruction** classes are academic subjects taught in English specifically designed for ELLs. This model was developed to comply with English-Only legislation. Content-area teachers incorporate ESL techniques to make the content comprehensible to students while at the same time promoting their English language development. In the research-based Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model, teachers include language objectives in every content lesson, develop background knowledge for the lesson's topic, focus on content-related vocabulary, promote oral interaction, and emphasize academic literacy practice. This approach is somewhat similar to the model used at International High School Network. ***There is limited research on effectiveness of methodologies that integrate content and literacy for adolescent learners.***
- **Newcomer programs** are often implemented at the secondary level to educate recent immigrant students—particularly those with no or very limited English language proficiency and limited formal education—many are designed as transitional programs. Common features among newcomer programs include (a) distinct, intensive courses to integrate students into American life and fill gaps in their educational backgrounds; (b) specialized instructional strategies to address literacy because many students become literate for the first time in these programs; (c) a length of enrollment determined by individual students' needs, usually one to three semesters; and (d) hand-picked staff who have ESL endorsements or long-term experience in working with adolescent ELLs. *(Note: Transitional programs of any type need to be evaluated in terms of the outcomes of they return to a regular high school.)*

A Deeper Look at ELLs in New York City

- A Deeper Look at ELLs in New York City: Who are they?
- A Deeper Look at ELLs in New York City: Academic Outcomes



A Deeper Look at ELLs in New York City: Who are They?

- NYC designates students as ELLs if they both indicate on the Home Language Identification Survey (given to all entering students) that they speak a language other than English at home and score below proficiency in English on the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R)
- While 42% of current NYC students live in a home where a language other than English is spoken, only 13% are current ELLs. Many of the remaining 29% are former ELLs (students who were ELLs, but have since reached proficiency in English)
- 26% of the NYC ELL population are in high school.
- **15% of all NYC 9th graders are current ELLs.**
- 51% of the overall NYC ELL population are foreign-born, but **75% of high school ELLs are foreign born.**
- NYC offers three types of programs for ELLs (families choose in which to enroll)
 - English-only ESL – 69% of all ELLs (up from 53% five years ago)
 - Transitional Bilingual Education – 26% of all ELLs (down from 37% five years ago)
 - Dual Language – 4% of all ELLs (up from 2% five years ago)
- NYC examines its ELL population by subcategory:
 - Longterm ELLs, 13% of all ELLs, have received more than six years of ELL services and continue to require language support
 - Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), 10% of all ELLs, have had 2 years less schooling than peers, function at least 2 years below expected grade level in reading and math and may not be literate in their first language. 45% of SIFEs entered in high school – mostly in 9th and 10 grades.
 - ELLs receiving Special Education services: 12% of SPED students are also ELLs, and 9% of ELLs are also SPED.

Note: From NYC Department of Education's Office of English Language Learners 2007 report on demographics and performance.

A Deeper Look at ELLs in New York City: Academic Outcomes

- The number of ELLs reaching English proficiency each year has risen consistently in the past four years from 3% to 17%.
- Both ELL and English Proficient 4th grade students achieving standards in English has risen consistently over past 8 years – by 18% and 27% to 21% and 62% respectively. 8th grade students achievement has also risen but just to 5% and 46% respectively.
- The difference between ELL and English Proficient 4th and 8th grade students meeting proficiency in math is much smaller, and they have also seen similar gains in math. In 2007, 49% of 8th grade English proficient students and 25% of ELLs achieved math standards.
- **Pass rates for ELLs on the Math and English Regent’s exams have remained constant or fallen since 2003, while English Proficient students pass rates have increased.**
- **Comparison of four year high school outcomes by ELL status show that bilingual students who were English Language Learners have higher outcomes than native English speakers.**

	Graduates	Still Enrolled	Dropouts
Native English Speakers	61%	25%	14%
Former ELLs	69%	21%	10%
Current ELLs	26%	44%	30%

Note: From NYC Department of Education’s Office of English Language Learners 2007 report on demographics and performance.

How Do Instructional Needs of ELLs Compare to Native English Speakers with Literacy Needs

- Comparison of Native English Speaking Struggling High School Students and Each Type of High School ELL
- Summary: Comparison of Native English Speaking Struggling High School Students and Each Type of High School ELL
- Native English Speaking Struggling Students and High School ELLs can Benefit from Similar School Design and Policy Reforms
- ELLs and Special Education

Comparison of Native English Speaking Struggling High School Students and Each Type of High School ELL (1)

There are some key differences and similarities between the needs and instructional models of high school ELLs and Native English speakers with low-literacy skills. As high school ELLs are very diverse it is helpful to look at each type. Further investigation is needed to determine if there are benefits of integrating instructional practices..

	Adolescent Native English Speaking Struggling Students	Newcomer ELLs w/ Strong Academic Background	ELLs with Interrupted Schooling	Long-term ELLs
Position on the path to literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Experienced failure •Unsuccessful learning to read •In lower tracks or remedial classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Steady progress towards academic literacy •May not have experienced failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May not be literate in any language •May struggle learning English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Experienced failure •Unsuccessful learning to read and write English
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Feel frustrated •Tend to have weak intrinsic motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Often feel positive and optimistic •May have strong intrinsic motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May feel unsure about school •May have weak or strong motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Often feel frustrated •Tend to have weak intrinsic motivation
Oral English Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tend to have strong oral abilities – at least conversational. •Know the meaning of written words by sounding them out •Can often participate effectively in oral-based lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May have weak or no oral English skills •Cannot determine meaning of a word by sounding it out •Struggle equally with oral lessons •Need to develop oral skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May have weak or no oral English skills •Cannot determine meaning of a word by sounding it out •Also struggle with oral lessons •Need to develop oral skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Often speak conversational English •May or may not know the meaning of a word by sounding it out •May also struggle with oral lessons •Need to develop oral skills

Comparison of Native English Speaking Struggling High School Students and Each Type of High School ELL (2)

	Adolescent Native English Speaking Struggling Students	Newcomer ELLs with Strong Academic Background	ELLs with Interrupted Schooling	Long-term ELLs
Background Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Likely to understand US cultural references •Can recall material from prior courses •Can be guided by teachers to use prior knowledge to understand new text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have some knowledge in content areas •Limited understanding of US cultural references •Need teachers to build on personal experiences, access existing content and fill-in background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have limited knowledge in content areas •Limited understanding of US cultural references •Need teachers to make the connection between current lesson and personal experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Likely to understand US cultural references •Can recall material from prior courses •Can be guided by teachers to use prior knowledge to understand new text.
Context in which literacy is developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May be in lower tracks or remedial classes that don't teach literacy specifically •Need specific literacy instruction •Literacy skills are not tested after 8th grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have, or should have specialized ESL classes that are tied to state standards •Need content teachers who understand linguistic needs •Progress in English is tested annually under NCLB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have, or should have specialized ESL classes that are tied to state standards •Need content teachers who understand linguistic needs •Progress in English is tested annually under NCLB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have, or should have specialized ESL classes that are tied to state standards •Need content teachers who understand linguistic needs •Progress in English is tested annually under NCLB

Summary: Comparison of Native English Speaking Struggling High School Students and Each Type of High School ELL

- Major differences between language development and literacy development needs:
 - ELLs need instruction that develops oral fluency.
 - Teachers of native English speakers can draw on their US cultural context and background knowledge.
 - Native English speakers are more likely to know the meaning of words even if they struggle to read them, while ELLs have more vocabulary to learn.
- Not surprisingly, the instructional practices for each group have some differences:
 - Classes for ELLs focus on developing oral fluency
 - Classes for ELLs teach US cultural contexts and background knowledge
 - Classes for ELLs focus more on vocabulary – especially at lower levels.
- However, the instructional practices for both groups (especially intermediate and above ELLs) have significant similarities:
 - Focus on developing literacy in academic English necessary for high school classes.
 - Teach content classes that also develop literacy through specific vocabulary instruction, writing to learn strategies, and opportunities to read – shared reading, read-alouds, Sustained Silent Reading.
 - Teach academic strategies including structured note-taking, anticipatory guides, graphic organizers.
 - Use differentiated instruction to help students of differing abilities progress in the same classroom.
 - Focus on thematic units relevant to their lives such as career related academies and project based learning.

Native English-Speaking Struggling Students and High School ELLs can Benefit from Similar School Design and Policy Reforms

- **More time to learn and more strategic use of time**
 - **Extended hours for learning** – longer school days or years, after school programs, double blocking.
 - **More years to graduate** – in order to develop academic English literacy and take content classes required for graduation and exit exams.
 - **Accelerated credit accrual** – quarter system, summer programs etc.
- **High quality tailored educational experiences:**
 - **Educational program tailored to each student's needs** – data based diagnostic assessments to place students in programs and tracking of their progress in order to adjust services as needed.
 - **Classes that teach academic strategies** – structured note-taking, anticipatory guides, graphic organizers.
 - **Content classes that also develop literacy** – specific vocabulary instruction, writing to learn strategies, and opportunities to read – shared reading, read-alouds, Sustained Silent Reading.
 - **Highly qualified teachers** – can teach both content and literacy (there is a lot of overlap in what is needed by native speakers and ELLs but there are some differences, especially in developing oral fluency – see slides 12 and 13)
 - **Differentiated instruction** – help students of differing abilities progress in the same classroom.
 - **Thematic units relevant to their lives** – career related academies and project based learning.
 - **Sheltered for-credit classes designed for ELLs and students with low-literacy** – in many schools these students often find themselves together in these classes.
 - **Alternative assessments** – including portfolio assessments, more time for tests.
- **NCLB policy changes:**
 - **Change definition of a highly qualified teacher** – include skills teaching content and literacy
 - **Track five and six year graduation rates** - encourage schools/districts to continue educating students.
 - **Monitor Outcomes of ELLs** - Graduation rates should include students that enter 9th grade as ELL or FEP.

ELLs and Special Education

- **Very little is known about English Language Learners with disabilities** (referred to as ELL/D or LEP- IEP)
- 9% of ELLs in grades K-12 are also enrolled in Special Education. However, schools typically have either a very high number of ELL/Ds including many inaccurately placed or a very low number such that many ELLs with SPED needs haven't been identified or receive services.
- A large number of long-term ELLs, students that never move out of ELL programs may also have SPED needs. Many districts do not have SPED assessments in languages other than English and more than half of ELL/Ds receive SPED services only in English.
- The National Center on Educational Outcomes has done some research into instructional strategies, participation in assessments, and outcomes for ELL/D.
- NCEO has found that instruction, assessment and policies typically adapt regular ELL or SPED strategies instead of focusing on the special situation of English Language Learners with disabilities.
- Assessment accommodations are often ELL accommodations and not specific to the students needs. A promising initiative being developed is The Selection Taxonomy for English Language Learner Accommodations (STELLA) which is a computer program that determines which testing accommodations are appropriate for individual ELLs based on individual student characteristics and variables using triangulated data from records, parents/guardians, and teachers.
- NCEO conducted some very limited research into the instructional practices used by teachers for ELLs with IEPs which began looking at seven LEP-IEPs in Minnesota. It was then expanded to classrooms in schools that met AYP for ELLs in 20 states, but they were never able to look at the effectiveness of specific strategies.
- Recent research in urban California districts reveals that when compared to English proficient students, Latino English language learners are overrepresented in special education beginning in grade 6 and that placement increases through grade 12. Analyses also found that placement in special education programs increased for students who were in English immersion programs. That is, students who participated in programs that included native language support for concept learning were less likely to be in special education than those students who were in English-only programs, a finding that warrants further research and investigation.
- **Clearly much more research is needed into instruction, assessment, and policy for ELLs with disabilities.**

Challenges

- Challenges in Addressing Needs of ELLs
- Challenges for Building Political Support to Integrate Issues of ELL into Core of High School Reform Policy Discussion

Challenges in Addressing Needs of ELLs

- Failure to monitor outcomes of ELLs
 - Lack of common criteria for identifying and monitoring outcomes of ELL achievement, graduation and college outcomes
 - Lack of common, appropriate assessments
 - Variation in how long students are monitored as FEPs
- Inadequate use of research-based instructional practices
 - Lack of clarity of definition and practices that make up different approaches
 - Instructional models often refer to the language the teacher is speaking at the front of the classroom rather than the instructional practices they are using or learning in which students are engaged
 - Lack of research on effective practices
 - Most research on elementary school programs
 - Limited evaluation of long-term outcomes transitional newcomer schools
 - Inadequate number of teachers trained to meet needs of high school ELLs (*See Appendix E: Supply of Teachers for High School ELL*)
 - Aging of elementary school population, increases in immigration rates, and trend of high school age newcomers balancing school and work, rather than solely entering workforce are all increasing demands at high school level for teachers trained to meet language development needs.
 - Lack of appropriate and flexible program and school options
 - Inadequate number of degree-granting newcomer schools
 - Inadequate sheltered immersion programs that allow students to develop language skills while simultaneously accessing high school content and credits.

Challenges for Building Political Support to Integrate Issues of ELL into Core of High School Reform Policy Discussion

- Compliance paradigm is in force; it may be difficult to engage advocates
- General high school reform leadership is not familiar with issues related to ELL. Tend to place them as secondary or even tertiary issues.
- Competition with adolescent literacy to have all teachers trained in appropriate methodologies
- NCLB split ELL advocates
 - NABE and NCLR support standards and testing ELLs, even if testing methodology is not valid. They believe the only way to have schools pay attention is to have ELLs included in tests.
 - The Institute for Language and Education Policy is strongly against NCLB.
- Competing political forces
 - **Public sentiment against transitional bilingual education has been growing.**
Starting in 1998 with proposition 227 in California, and followed by Arizona and Massachusetts, bilingual education was eliminated in public schools. Now most ELLs in these states are placed in Sheltered English-immersion (SEI) programs. Colorado voters rejected a similar state initiative. There have also recently been successful state initiatives to make English the official language and anti-immigrant legislation such as prohibiting undocumented immigrants from in-state college tuition.
 - **At the same time, increased recognition of need to serve ELLs well and effectiveness of methodology.**
At the national level, US Dept. of Education now acknowledges validity and efficacy of bilingual programs. Arizona, California, and Florida have mandated all teachers have some training in language acquisition.
- It is anticipated that with an economic downturn anti-immigrant and English-Only efforts may increase. It will be important to take these political forces into account in shaping ELL communication and policy strategies

Strategic Opportunities and Investments

- Strategic Outcomes
- Evaluation and Research
- Replication and Small School Development
- Districts
- State Policy
- National Efforts

Strategic Outcomes

- Strategic Outcomes
 - Raise expectations of high school ELLs to graduate and be prepared for college, except for SIFEs with limited English skills.
 - Build knowledge base to inform policy development, program and school design, and teacher preparation.
 - Establish common policy framework for ELLs across states.
 - Increase capacity of districts that serve high % of ELLS to monitor and serve ELLs.
 - Identify best practices for newcomers schools and ensure that districts integrate adequate number of such schools into their portfolios.
 - Expand teacher capacity to integrate language development and content in states, districts and schools serving high numbers of ELLs.
- Whenever possible ELL issues should be integrated into current strategic funding efforts rather than create separate investments including special scholarships for ELLs. This requires leadership on the part of program staff to encourage grantees to become up-to-speed on ELLs and modify efforts to fully integrate ELL issues. This will require engaging key stakeholders such as Data Quality Campaign, ACHIEVE, and consultants to begin to integrate attention to ELLs into their operations.

Evaluation and Research

- Identify intermediary(ies) to act as hub to promote and dissemination knowledge on adolescent ELLs.
- Research
 - Improve understanding of patterns and outcomes of high school English Language Learners
 - Generate research at district level to better inform dynamics of ELLs
 - Kate Menken’s research in New York City
 - Integrate ELLs into any further studies on increasing graduation rates
 - To what degree is small schools movement and breaking large school into smaller schools helping or hindering ELLs accessing high quality language and literacy programming?
 - In what way are current school grantees serving ELLs? How are they ensuring that their schools are responsive to language and literacy needs?
- Evaluate
 - Newcomer schools
 - Transitional
 - Degree-Granting
 - Adolescent ELL Instructional Models
 - Fund a comprehensive examination of research in high school ELL programs that includes efficacy and potential for replication.

Replication and Small School Development

- Investigate
 - In what way are small school developers including early college and ahsi addressing issues of ELLs and providing language and literacy development?
 - Survey
 - Interviews
- Replication
 - Investigate if there are any other models similar to Internationals Network for Public Schools that can be replicated.
 - Investigate to what degree Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol is ready for replication or adaptation.
 - Identify intermediary to work with districts to establish and evaluate high quality newcomer schools.
 - Begin to integrate criteria that grantees must integrate literacy development into curriculum and have strategy for providing services to ELLs.
- Innovations
 - Establish innovations fund for current school developers to integrate language and literacy development into their operations.

Districts ELLs)

(See Appendix K: District Checklist to Promote High Outcomes for High School

- Support District Understanding of its ELLs and Programs
 - Support research into patterns and dynamics of ELLs
 - Identify effective schools and programs

- District Policy
 - Establish accountability policy to monitor 4 and 6 year graduation rates. This is of particular importance in those districts with significant number of ELLs and newcomers.
 - Monitor ELL and FEPs graduation rates.
 - Develop consistent policy for delivery of language development programming.
 - Develop strategies to ensure adequate number of teachers for secondary school language development programming, including district incentives. This is especially important in the development of efforts to create smaller high schools.
 - Develop shared information systems with high schools to collect and use more data about each ELL using effective diagnostic assessments and gathering information on native language skills, immigration generation, age of arrival in US school system, mobility history, and levels of educational attainment and achievement.
 - Monitor the assignment of students to ELL, special education, and accelerated programs.

- School Portfolios
 - Ensure that there are adequate newcomer schools to meet need of students. Newcomer schools should be designed as full high schools, not as transitional programs.
 - Support new small schools to develop language and literacy development programming, especially incorporating it into their core curriculum.
 - Consider including the criteria for negotiating new investments to not fund school developers that do not include either language or literacy development in the design of their core curriculum.

State Policy

- States need to agree upon common definition and methodology to monitor outcomes of ELL students including integrating it fully into graduation rates and P-16 information systems.
 - Information needs to include age of enrollment in US, educational background, and mobility.
 - Newcomers that are entering with little education and little English need realistic target for completing high school.
 - Information needs to track FEP students.
 - New Jersey tracks FEPS for 2 years.
- State Policy
 - Fund key advocacy institutions in target states to improve state policy for high school ELLs including:
 - Teacher preparation requirements
 - High school ELL funding
- Testing
 - Students should not be required to take high stakes tests until they have completed the courses upon which the test is based. Thus, newcomers and other students with academic challenges should take Regents and exit exams at the point they are ready, not based on a timeline based on the number of years since they first enrolled in high school.

National Efforts

- Build consistent policy framework across states (definition, accountability, assessments)
 - Build consensus or voluntary compact similar to NGA compact on graduation rates.
 - Investigate support to World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)
 - Consortium of 15 states including Illinois, Georgia, and District of Columbia serving over 480,000 ELLs that developed common definitions of ELL, common language acquisition standards and a common assessment (ACCESS for ELLs) www.wida.us
 - Could use funding to conduct more research as they collect data at the high school level.
 - Expand use of WIDA developed assessment, ACCESS.
- Raise expectations of high school ELLs to go on to college and promote ELL college readiness.
 - Funder leadership - speeches, convenings, website, discussions with grantees and grant seekers
 - Formal communication strategy
 - Intentional convenings to discuss ELL with key partners
 - Fund key advocacy institutions to improve national policy for high school ELLs including:
- National Policy
 - Include knowledge on integrating language development and content into NCLB teacher quality standards.
 - NCLB monitor 4 and 6 year graduation rates.
 - NCLB requires disaggregating graduation rate by ELL and FEP.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Research Reviewed for this Briefing
- Appendix B: Key Experts Interviewed for this Briefing
- Appendix C: Key Organizations
- Appendix D: Other Key Experts
- Appendix E: 25 School Districts Enrolled 15,000 or more ELLs in 2004-2005
- Appendix F: National Debate is Less Focused on English Only vs. Bilingual Instruction
- Appendix G: ELLs and Anti-immigrant Legislation
- Appendix H: National ELL Policy Context and Funding
- Appendix I: ELL Assessment Policy
- Appendix J: Increasing Supply of Teachers for High School ELLs
- Appendix K: District Checklist to Promote High Outcomes for High School ELLs
- Appendix L: Notes from Interviews

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Appendix E

25 School Districts Enrolled 15,000 or more ELLs in 2004-2005

Rank	District	LEP Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Percent ELL
1	Los Angeles, CA	328,684	747,009	44
2	New York City, NY	122,840	1,023,674	12
3	Chicago, IL	82,540	434,419	19
4	Miami-Dade, FL	62,767	369,223	17
5	Houston, TX	61,319	211,444	29
6	Clark County, NV	53,517	267,585	20
7	Dallas, TX	51,328	160,400	32
8	San Diego, CA	38,629	137,960	28
9	Santa Ana, CA	36,807	59,312	62
10	Broward County, FL	29,909	271,900	11
11	Fresno, CA	25,233	81,396	31
12	Long Beach, CA	24,601	93,589	26
13	Garden Grove, CA	23,698	49,574	48
14	Fort Worth, TX	21,690	80,335	27
15	Denver, CO	21,630	72,100	30
16	Palm Beach, FL	20,326	169,381	12
17	Hillsborough, FL	18,129	181,298	10
18	San Bernardino, CA	17,913	58,661	30
19	Compton, CA	17,496	30,233	58
20	Austin, TX	17,337	78,807	22
21	Fontana, CA	16,587	41,930	40
22	San Francisco, CA	16,326	56,297	29
23	Pomona, CA	15,826	33,294	48
24	Sacramento, CA	15,382	51,273	30
25	Oakland, CA	15,010	50,034	30

Appendix F

National Debate is Less Focused on English Only Vs. Bilingual Instruction

There are two main methods of educating LEP students: English immersion, which provides instruction only in English, and bilingual education, which teaches English as well as subjects in student's native language. The fight against bilingual education escalated in the past 10 years, but it is now being recognized again. In fact, after 5 years of not including bilingual education on its website or conferences, the US Dept of Education now states that more research recognizes the efficacy of bilingual education.

The objectives of bilingual education are to help students continue to advance in content subject classes while they learn English. The content students learn then transfers over once they become proficient in English and if students first learn to read in the language they are fluent in and then transfer the skills over to English—their second language—they will develop stronger literacy skills in the long term. In addition, in an increasingly global society, far from discouraging native-language retention, schools should work to help students maintain their native tongues, even as they also teach them English. But, bilingual education's critics argue that the approach keeps students in a cycle of native-language dependency that ultimately inhibits significant progress in English-language acquisition. In addition, critics of bilingual education contend that "time on task" in English is essential to English-language learning.

Comparisons of the effectiveness of English-immersion and bilingual education have been controversial and inconclusive. In 1996, a review of literature on the effectiveness of bilingual education concluded that the method is not the most beneficial to English-language learners. Subsequent studies refuted the conclusions and found that bilingual education is the best method of teaching language-minority students. A more recent review of programs for English-language learners found that bilingual education has a particularly positive effect when students are taught to read both in their native languages and in English at different times in a single day.

Complicating the debate is the range of programs that, by some people's definition, fall under the umbrella of bilingual education. Some use bilingual education to refer only to transitional bilingual education or two-way bilingual programs while others consider any program designed for students with limited proficiency in English to be "bilingual." For instance, they may refer to English-as-a-second-language programs, where students are typically taught solely in English, as bilingual education.

Some argue that in fact the context of the debate should change from a discussion about the language in which the teachers instruct to what the students are doing and how they interact with the English language.

Appendix G

ELLs and Anti-immigrant Legislation

Immigration politics directly impact English Language Learners.

- The number of students with language-related literacy needs is largely unknown in part because of challenges faced by undocumented students and students who are legal themselves, but have parents or other family members who are not here legally. It is estimated that as many of 1/4 of all US immigrants may be undocumented, the exact number is unknown.
- Many states and cities have recently been focusing more attention on immigrants – both legal and illegal. Many schools have found themselves in the challenging situation when students were not picked up from school because their parents had been deported while they were at school.
- Since early 2006, several dozen states and localities have considered and/or passed legislation aimed at deterring the presence of unauthorized aliens within their jurisdictions. Such legislation has sought to deny or revoke licenses against businesses that employ unauthorized aliens, create a cause of action for “lawful” employees against their employer if they were discharged at a time when the business employed unauthorized aliens; impose fines on landlords who rent to individuals without lawful status; direct state and local police to verify the immigration status of arrestees; prevent workers from entering into employment contracts on public streets; and require officials to verify the legal status of individuals seeking public benefits.
- The Arizona Example:
 - In 2000, voters passed Proposition 203 requiring English to be the only language used in schools. In a following lawsuit ruled that the State of Arizona failed to adequately fund English as a Second Language programs for ELLs. Today, the state legislature has yet to find a way to adequately fund those programs and meet the lawsuit ruling.
 - In 2004, Arizonans passed Proposition 200 which requires proof of citizenship (not just legal residency) in order to apply for public benefits.
 - In 2006, Arizona passed four more immigrant-related propositions that made English the official language of Arizona – prohibiting the state to provide any information in any language other than English, requires students who can not prove legal residency to pay out of state tuition at all public colleges and universities, and prevents students who can not prove legal residency to be barred from adult education programs including English as a second language.

Appendix H

National ELL Policy Context and Funding

- Under the U. S. Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Civil Rights Act *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), local school districts and states have an obligation to provide appropriate services to limited-English-proficient students.
- Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students and Immigrants Title III under the No Child Left Behind Act consolidated the 13 bilingual and immigrant education programs formerly entitled by Title VII of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 into a State formula program that increased flexibility and accountability.
- The \$669 million in funding under Title III is based on self-reported census data rather than objective assessments by school personnel. Last year the Government Accountability Office found major disparities between the two data sources that seems to have resulted in some states receiving more and other less than they should have. In 2004-05, for example, California served 516,000 more ELLs than the Census Bureau counted through its American Community Survey; Texas served 140,000 more; and Arizona served 53,000 more. By contrast, New York served 128,000 fewer ELLs than the ACS reported; New Jersey, 45,000 fewer; and Georgia, 28,000 fewer.
- The focus of the title is on assisting school districts in teaching English to limited English proficient students and in helping these students meet the same State standards required of all other students. (This accountability caused a rift among the ELL educator community – some being in favor and some against such accountability.) Many argue that current assessments do not meet the law’s “valid measurement” standard. See *Appendix E ELL Assessment Policy*.

Appendix I.1

ELL Assessment Policy

- All states were required to develop English language proficiency standards and last year adopted an aligned English language proficiency assessment for measuring annual growth as soon as they arrive. Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) measure two areas of development:
 - English language development and attainment as related to State English language proficiency standards.
 - Academic achievement in content areas that include reading, language arts, math, and science. This target area addresses accountability under Title I by measuring Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) outcomes for ELLs as a subgroup.
- States set annual targets for each of the AMAOs. Title III grantees use both State academic and English language assessment results to demonstrate growth toward meeting the Title III AMAO goals.
- While many states have developed their own assessments for English Language Learners, there are two key consortia of states that have developed particularly strong assessments: ELDA and WIDA. More information on each is provided in the following slides.

Appendix I.2

ELL Assessment policy – ELDA

- The English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) is a series of comprehensive assessments that measure annual progress in English language skills of English language learners in grades K-12. Currently used by six states, the assessment consists of inventories (grades K, 1-2) and separate tests (grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). Individual student scores indicate one of five possible proficiency levels, ranging from pre-functional to fully English proficient, in listening, speaking, reading, writing, comprehension, and provide a composite score that is calculated from all of the required domains.
- ELDA helps states meet NCLB requirements. ELDA
 - provides an annual assessment of English proficiency and progression in acquisition
 - focuses on academic language proficiency and reflects discourse in the content areas of English language arts, math, science, technology, social studies, and school environment
 - complies with all psychometric requirements
 - provides complete reports of achievement at the school, district, and state levels
- ELDA goes beyond NCLB to further enhance teaching and learning. ELDA
 - provides K-2 diagnostic assessments, called “inventories,” that use multiple measures in a variety of settings to record and analyze student behavior and language development
 - provides scoring for grades 3-12 assessments in each domain of language and comprehension at the school, district, and state levels
 - gives teachers information on their students’ English proficiency through Performance Level Descriptors
 - identifies additional support needed by LEP students
- ELDA was developed by member states of Council of Chief State School Officers’ State Collaborative on Assessment & Student Standards for English Language Learners in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research, the Center for the Study of Assessment Validity and Evaluation at the University of Maryland, and Measurement Incorporated.

Appendix I.3

ELL Assessment Policy – WIDA

- World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) is a consortium of 15 states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. The WIDA Consortium has developed English language proficiency standards and an English language proficiency test aligned with those standards - ACCESS for ELLs, the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), a screening tool, and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs for students with disabilities.
- ACCESS for ELLs stands for *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners*. It is a large-scale test that first and foremost addresses the English language development standards that form the core of the WIDA Consortium's approach to instructing and testing English language learners. These standards incorporate a set of model performance indicators (PIs) that describe the expectations educators have of ELL students at four different grade level clusters and in five different content areas.
- The grade level clusters include PreK-K, 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The five content areas are social and instructional language which incorporates proficiencies needed to deal with the general language of the classroom and the school, English language arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition, the test assesses the student's ability in four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing within each content area.
- The WIDA framework uses six English language proficiency levels to describe the spectrum of a learner's progression from knowing little to no English to acquiring the English skills necessary to be successful in an English-only mainstream classroom without extra support. This final, exit stage for ELL status is designated Level 6 (formerly ELL). Level 7 is used for students who are native English speakers or who have never been designated as ELL. Within each combination of grade level, content area, and language domain, there is a PI at each of the five points on the proficiency ladder, and the sequence of these five PIs together describe a logical progression and accumulation of skills on the path to full proficiency.

Appendix J

Increasing Supply of Teachers for High School ELLs

- A report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education shows that the number of teachers who instructed at least one English-language learner in grades K-12 in 2001-02 more than tripled since 1992. But, teachers who work with three or more of those students reported a median of only four hours of training related to LEP instruction over the past five years
- All high school teachers should be familiar with:
 - First and second language acquisition theory
 - ESL and sheltered instruction methodologies –how to design content-based ESL and sheltered subject curricula that integrate language development with content topics
 - Content-area language and discourse—an understanding of how language is used in a specific subject area or discipline
 - How to minimize the English language demands of assessments to allow ELLs to demonstrate content knowledge and how to employ and interpret multiple measures of assessment to get a fuller picture of student knowledge and ability.
 - Linguistic and cross-cultural contexts
- Professional Development should:
 - Include meaningful, ongoing, on-the-job training for administrators, coaches, and teachers within content area, literacy, and ESL instruction.
 - Assist content area teachers to become more knowledgeable in ELL literacy instruction
 - Assist ESL teachers to become more adolescent literacy instruction, so as to effectively integrate teaching strategies in their lessons and collaborate with regular content-area teachers.
- Promising Initiatives: (under construction)
 - School level – Hoover High School in San Diego, CA
 - State level – Three states have now mandated all teachers have knowledge about educating ELLs.

- What reforms are in place that will increase outcomes for all academically challenged students including ELLs?
 - More time for learning including extended school days and years,
 - Monitor five and six years to graduate
 - Monitor ELL and FEP graduation rates
 - Teacher training in teaching both language and content for regular, mainstream classes
 - Orientation to high school including teaching academic strategies such as note-taking, graphic organizers
 - Differentiated instructional strategies
 - Thematic units including career education and project-based learning
- What is the district policy regarding ELL instruction?
 - District's language instruction services should be consistent and high quality.
 - Offer a language development program in high schools that includes: **content-based ESL** classes that teach the Academic English used in future for-credit high school classes at different levels from beginner to intermediate to advanced and **sheltered instruction** classes – for-credit classes in regular subjects taught in English, but specifically tailored for ELLs to teach both content and language.
 - ELLs typically start taking only ESL classes and then transition into sheltered instruction classes once they reach the intermediate English level. For example, an ELL may take mostly intermediate ESL classes and one sheltered instruction class in a year and then reduce the number of ESL classes and increase the number of sheltered instruction classes next year.
 - Upon reaching a level of Academic English to become re-designated as FEP (Fluent English Proficient), ELLs then take regular mainstream high school classes with perhaps a limited number of sheltered instruction classes.
 - Newcomers with interrupted formal education and long-term ELLs may spend a long time in content-based ESL classes and slowly take sheltered instruction classes. Newcomers with strong academic backgrounds, on the other hand, typically move quickly through the ESL classes and sheltered-instruction classes to regular mainstream high school classes.
 - District should have a plan to ensure adequate number of teachers are prepared to deliver language development to secondary ELLS.
 - District should have available effective diagnostic tools to assess and track each student's academic needs and progress.
 - District should offer adequate number of high school degree granting newcomer schools.