

A Civil Rights Agenda for California's Next Quarter Century



Meeting its Potential:
*A Call and Guide for Universal Access
to Bilingual Education in California*

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About the Series

A Civil Rights Agenda for the Next Quarter Century

The Civil Rights Project was founded in 1996 at Harvard University, during a period of increasingly conservative courts and political movements that were limiting, and sometimes reversing, major civil rights reforms. In 2007 the Project moved to UCLA. Its goal was—and still is—to bring together researchers, lawyers, civil rights advocates and governmental and educational leaders to create a new generation of civil rights research and communicate what is learned to those who could use it to address the problems of inequality and discrimination. Created a generation after the civil rights revolution of the 1960s, CRP’s vision was to produce new understandings of challenges and research-based evidence on solutions. The Project has always maintained a strong, central focus on equal education and racial change.

We are celebrating our first quarter century by taking a serious look forward—not at the history of the issues, not at the debates over older policies, not at celebrating prior victories but at the needs of the next quarter century. Since the work of civil rights advocates and leaders of color in recent decades has often been about defending threatened, existing rights, we need innovative thinking to address the challenges facing our rapidly changing society. Political leaders often see policy in short two- and four-year election cycles but we decided to look at the upcoming generation. Because researchers are uniquely qualified to think systematically, this series is an attempt to harness the skills of several disciplines, to think deeply about how our society has changed since the civil rights revolution and what the implications are for the future of racial justice.

This effort includes two very large sets of newly commissioned work. This paper is the one of several in a series on the potential for social change and equity policies in California, a vast state whose astonishing diversity foretells the future of the U.S. and whose profound inequality warns that there is much work to be done. The second set of studies is national in scope. All these studies

will initially be issued as working papers. They will be brought together in statewide conferences and in the U.S. Capitol and, eventually, as two major books, which we hope will help light the way in the coming decades. At each of the major events, scholars will exchange ideas and address questions from each other, from leaders and from the public.

The Civil Rights Project, like the country, is in a period of transition, identifying leadership for its next chapter. We are fortunate to have collaborated with a remarkable network of important scholars across the U.S., who contributed to our work in the last quarter century and continue to do so in this new work. We are also inspired by the nation's many young people who understand that our future depends on overcoming division. They are committed to constructing new paths to racial justice. We hope these studies open avenues for this critical work, stimulate future scholars and lawyers, and inform policymaking in a society with the unlimited potential of diversity, if it can only figure out how to achieve genuine equality.



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Table of Contents

About the Series	3
Acknowledgements	5
Executive Summary.....	7
Introduction.....	12
The Context: Bilingual Education in California’s Past and Present.....	15
The Call: The Wide-Reaching Benefits of Bilingual Education	19
The Guidance: Three Priority Areas to Build California’s Multilingual Public Education	26
Conclusion	37
Recommendations.....	39
References.....	42

Executive Summary

California’s cultural and linguistic diversity are remarkable assets for the state. In particular, bilingualism is linked not only to economic growth, but also to improved health, social empathy, educational attainment, community cohesion, and civic engagement. Harnessing this potential depends upon the educational success of California’s more than one million students classified in K-12 schools as English learners (ELs). Abundant evidence illuminates not only the potential of this talented group of students, but also the danger of them being relegated to a second-class status in school. After nearly twenty years of English-only education, California has made significant strides in growing bilingual education programs, programs such as dual language immersion, maintenance bilingual, and heritage language revitalization, and in doing so has recognized bilingual education’s potential to improve academic and post-schooling outcomes for all students. State initiatives including Global California 2030 and the EL Roadmap both emphasize the importance of bilingual education in preparing California’s diverse student population for a globalized and multilingual future.

However, the state’s history with bilingual education has been complex, marked by periods of both progress and setbacks—and much remains to be done to deliver on these ambitious bilingual promises. This report explores the past and present of bilingual education in California, and then outlines a series of recommendations for making bilingual education the universal standard of service in the state’s K–12 schools and California a national leader in bilingual education and multilingualism.

We organize our recommendations around three areas for growth:

- **Expand bilingual instruction in the state**, including creating high quality programs in districts across the state that currently do not have them, and supporting the growth and expansion of programs that already exist;

- **Invest in efforts to grow the state’s bilingual teacher pipelines** in both the long and short term through revitalizing the state’s bilingual teacher credentialing programs and creating and strengthening alternative pathways into the profession through grow-your-own and other programs; and
- **Prioritize access, quality, and relevance for the state’s ELs**, while also expanding access for other multilingual students and English-only speakers.

Bilingual education has wide-ranging benefits, both for individual students and society as a whole. Research consistently shows that the development of students’ bilingualism enhances cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. Over time, bilingual students do as well or better than monolingual peers on standardized tests and gain access to more expansive post-secondary opportunities. Investing in bilingual education is therefore not only a social justice issue but also an economic, social, and political imperative for California.

While California has made strides in removing holdover policy obstacles from its recent English-only epoch, it has not made sufficient investments to actively regrow its bilingual education system. California enrolls a smaller percentage of its EL students in bilingual education than the U.S. as a whole. Texas, perhaps the only state whose linguistic diversity compares to California’s, enrolls more than twice as many ELs in its bilingual programs. California must do more to expand bilingual learning opportunities for its ELs and other students at all levels of the preK-12 system, including bilingual preschools as well as middle and high schools.

This new bilingual push needs a workforce requirement. California’s many years running English-only public schools didn’t just strip hundreds of thousands of students of their emerging biliteracy: they also strangled most of the state’s bilingual teacher education programs. During the English-only period, demand for bilingual teachers dropped and institutions of higher education stopped training them. As such, when the state’s voters ended its English-only mandate in 2016,

most districts didn't—and still don't—have enough available credentialed bilingual teachers to grow bilingual education in their communities. California must invest more in training a teaching workforce that meets its students' needs.

As the state invests in expanding bilingual education programs—and more robust bilingual teacher education programs—it must prioritize EL-classified students' access. While all students benefit from enrolling in bilingual schools, research is clear that EL-classified students garner unique benefits. What's more, EL students outside of bilingual programs face numerous equity barriers to rigorous and relevant high-quality schooling. That's why inadequate access to bilingual education leaves EL-classified students underserved with their core rights too often unmet and their multilingual assets overlooked. There are various ways to achieve this among them ensuring new programs go into communities with high numbers of ELs, weighting lotteries to preference EL-classified students, and reserving seats for native speakers of programs' non-English partner languages.

Recommendation #1: Expand multilingual instruction in the state through the balanced use of requirements and supports.

- Pass legislation requiring districts to provide K-5 bilingual education if the district has at least 20 students in a given grade level that speak the same home language. This could be done through updated local control accountability plans as a strategy for closing academic gaps between ELs and non-ELs.
- Adopt a state funding formula that provides additional per pupil funding for every student enrolled in a bilingual program regardless of grade or language status.
- Publish annual updates on progress towards the state's Global California 2030 goals, including
 - a list of bilingual programs with information on program model, grades served, and languages of instruction and

- analysis of the demographics and EL status of students attending bilingual programs at the state and local level.
- Invest in greater CDE capacity for supporting and monitoring California’s bilingual education expansion efforts.

Recommendation #2: Invest short- and long-term resources in efforts to grow the state’s bilingual teacher pipelines.

- Create a task force including state leaders, university teacher education and credentialing program directors, and teacher representatives to create a blueprint for the expansion of bilingual teacher education and credentialing programs.
- Support the development of bilingual teacher education and credentialing programs through a combination of direct funding, scholarship or loan forgiveness programs, and grants for such programs.
- Consider accreditation or accountability standards for state bilingual teacher education and credentialing programs.
- Grow the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program by an order of magnitude, providing at least \$200 million in funding for the next round of grants.
- Commit at least half of future Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program grants towards alternative teacher credentialing pathways, such as apprenticeships, residencies, and/or “grow-your-own” models.
- Prioritize the training of bilingual teachers in all subsequent rounds of California’s Teacher Residency Grant Program, Golden State Pathways Program, and Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program.
- Launch a statewide program to provide bilingual teacher candidates with stipend support during their student teaching experience.

- Grant additional credential flexibility and provide substantial resources for Seal of Biliteracy recipients interested in pursuing bilingual teaching roles in TK or the broader TK–12 education system.
- Provide matching funds for districts that implement research-based levers to retain bilingual teachers

Recommendation #3: Prioritize access to bilingual education for the state’s 1.1 million ELs, who gain unique linguistic and academic benefits from these programs.

- Develop state guidance for districts to design and develop bilingual programs focusing on ensuring:
 - Prioritized access to EL-classified students with regard to preferential placement in available bilingual program seats
 - Equitable access to educational opportunities within programs
 - Culturally-relevant, community-informed, asset-based instruction and curriculum within programs
 - Minimized linguistic isolation for ELs either through dual language models or other means of integrating students
 - High quality programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels

Meeting its Potential: A Call and Guide for Universal Access to Bilingual Education in California¹

Conor Williams, Ilana Umansky, Lorna Porter, Manuel Vazquez Cano and Jonathan Zabala

Introduction

In the early 2000s, then-California state librarian Kevin Starr opened a chapter of his *Coast of Dreams* (2006) entitled “Immigrants to the Rescue,” by writing that it was “apparent that economic recovery was significantly in the hands of California’s recent immigrants—an irony not lost on a state that had lately been so busy about the business of immigrant bashing” (p. 205). Eight years prior, the state’s voters had passed a referendum mandating English-only education for essentially all of the state’s multilingual students developing English (i.e. students classified as English learners [ELs]), many of whom are children or grandchildren of immigrants, heavily restricting ELs’ access to the evidence-based, asset-oriented, educational support of bilingual education.

While Starr was focused on the economic potential of California’s diverse and multilingual population, the benefits of multilingualism – and bilingual/dual language education – extend much wider. Extensive research in diverse fields of medical sciences, psychology, sociology, and economics has shown positive effects of bilingualism and multilingualism on physical health and well-being, community and family connections, long-term life outcomes such as income and crime, and self-esteem, identity, and sense of self (Bialystok, 2016; Spitzer, 2016). Bilingual education, by which we refer to any educational program model that provides instruction in both English and an additional ‘partner’ language (e.g. dual language immersion, maintenance bilingual, heritage language), is widely-accepted as the single most important state lever towards building and sustaining

¹ Portions of this report were previously published in two different publications: (1) Williams, C. P., & Zabala, J. (2023). Moving from vision to reality: Establishing California as a national bilingual education and dual language immersion leader. The Century Foundation. (2) Porter, L., Vazquez Cano, M., & Umansky, I. (2023). Bilingual education and America's future: evidence and pathways. University of California Los Angeles Civil Rights Project / Proyecto de Derechos Civiles.

California’s multilingualism (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2017).

California boasts enviable demographics, with nation-leading labor force diversity driving its current prosperity—but also extraordinary linguistic and cultural diversity brightening the state’s future. The state’s demographics reflect how immigration is helping California’s population grow. In 2021–22, the state’s schools were 56 percent Latino/a/x, ten percent Asian, five percent Black, four percent multiracial, and two percent Filipino. Just 21 percent of California students identify as white (Ed-Data.org, n.d.). In 2022, roughly 40 percent of California K–12 students spoke a non-English language at home (California Department of Education [CDE], 2024d). California schools enroll nearly 1.1 million students who are EL-classified —meaning that the state’s ELs constitute more than 21 percent of the U.S.’ 5 million ELs (U.S. Department of Education, 2023, Table 204.20).

California’s dynamic social, cultural, economic, and educational spheres could be an exemplar for the rest of the country. But the state’s schools have not always capitalized on these rich linguistic and cultural assets. In particular, Proposition 227’s English-only mandate (1998), described above, stunted the state’s burgeoning multicultural education system by mandating English-only instruction for ELs.

The past decade has marked improvements to California’s policies for multilingualism and students classified as ELs. Above all, with landmark initiatives including the EL Roadmap (CDE, 2018) and Global California 2030 (CDE, 2019), the state has addressed some of the larger policy obstacles limiting multilingual instruction in its schools. English-only instruction is no longer mandatory, there is useful guidance from the state encouraging schools to make EL students’ needs a priority, and state leaders regularly extol multilingualism and multiculturalism as educational, social, and economic virtues. These advancements parallel bilingual education expansion across the country and calls for bilingual education as the standard service for EL-classified students nationally (Porter et al., 2023).

Advocates, family and community members, policymakers, and educators deserve credit for California’s recent reforms. And yet, much remains to be done to build—and fund—a genuinely multilingual public education system. Many of the state’s recent shifts on bilingual education are voluntary guidance backed by few resources, which has left California not only ~~not~~ short of its goals, but trailing many other states with regard to access to high quality bilingual education. In this report, we make a case—and chart a path—for a genuinely multilingual public education system in the state of California. We title the report “A call and guide for universal access to bilingual education in California.” By universal access, we mean that all students—particularly ELs with emerging or advanced proficiency in a non-English language—who wish to attend a bilingual program in a California public school should have access to one. In what follows we argue that it is time for California education leaders to deliver on the state’s linguistic potential by:

1. **expanding bilingual instruction in the state**, including creating high quality programs in districts across the state that currently do not have them, and supporting the growth and expansion of programs that already exist;
2. **investing in efforts to grow the state’s bilingual teacher pipelines** in both the long and short term through revitalizing the state’s bilingual teacher credentialing programs and creating and strengthening alternative pathways into the profession through grow-your-own and other programs; and
3. **ensuring that bilingual education programs prioritize access, quality, and relevance for the state’s 1.1 million students classified as ELs**, while also expanding access for other multilingual students (not classified as ELs) and English-only speakers.

By committing energy and resources to these priorities, California can deliver on the multilingual vision set out in its EL Roadmap (CDE, 2018) and Global California 2030 (CDE, 2019). We first provide a brief historical context of bilingual education in California. We then make the case for bilingual education by synthesizing research on bilingual program effectiveness with a

focus on effectiveness for multilingual and EL-classified students. Finally, we outline our three action priorities for California leaders. The report closes with a brief conclusion as well as action steps that synthesize our recommendations.

The Context: Bilingual Education in California’s Past and Present

California’s laws and practices often lead those of the nation at large, and the history of bilingual education in the state is no exception. Bordering Mexico and historically part of the Mexican state, as well as a major destination for immigrants from Asia, public schools in California have long educated students with diverse home languages and English language proficiency levels. And, like the country at large, California has experienced waves of more progressive and more restrictive sentiments and laws around language, schooling, and immigration (Wiley, 2019).

In the late 1950s, as part of a broader response to a perceived Communist threat, California’s state legislature amended state education code to prohibit classroom instruction in any non-English language (Petrzela, 2010), echoing a similar law from 1872. This was soon preempted, however, by the federal Hart-Keller Act (1965) which transformed immigration law, removing discriminatory quotas and prioritizing family unification. With over 1,000 new state residents daily, and amidst this more open sentiment toward immigration, California reversed its English only mandate in 1967, a year before the Bilingual Education Act was passed by the federal government, the first major federal law considering the responsibilities of schools toward multilingual students (Gándara, 2015).

A year later, the federal Bilingual Education Act (1968) allocated competitive grant funding for EL programs and ushered in further state-level legislation in support of bilingual education (García & Sung, 2018). This approach came with challenges, however. Vague language, a deficit perspective on multilingual students, limited funding, political backlash, and a lack of support for capacity-building all compromised the Bilingual Education Act’s (1968) promise (Gándara, 2015; Gándara & Escamilla, 2017). California responded by passing its own state bilingual education law,

which unlike the Bilingual Education Act, explicitly identified bilingualism as an asset and highlighted the connection between language and culture. Taken together, federal and state legislation led to a proliferation of innovative district-level bilingual programs in California including teacher and curricular exchanges between Mexico and the U.S. (Petrzela, 2010).

In subsequent years, pendular rises in anti-immigrant sentiment produced new objections to bilingual education (García & Sung, 2018). Federal support for bilingual education shrank, and states took a more central role in determining EL services (Hakuta, 2011). U.S. education policy became increasingly dominated by conversations around standards and accountability. Bilingualism was conspicuously ignored, creating what Lyons (2014) described as the “one-language educational standard” (p. 41).

In California, nothing shaped the past quarter-century of California ELs’ educational experiences like Proposition 227, the 1998 voter referendum that once-again effectively banned bilingual instruction. As a result, the state’s bilingual teacher training programs were largely dismantled, and millions of California students progressed through a K–12 educational system that actively stigmatized students’ bilingualism and emerging proficiency in non-English languages. Outcomes for a generation of English learners did not improve (Parrish et al., 2002), not least because implementation of Proposition 227 segregated many of them away from academic instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for many hours of their school days. Teachers reported that, under Proposition 227, they were not able to cover as much content with their ELs as with their non-EL students and had difficulty providing their ELs with challenging content (Parrish et al., 2002).

In 2016, California’s tides turned once more. California voters approved Proposition 58, the California Education for a Global Economy Initiative, which reset the state’s education landscape for ELs. It unwound the statewide monolingualism mandate and gave local education leaders

flexibility to implement a wider range of language instruction models for ELs, particularly various forms of bilingual education, including dual language immersion.

That reversal reflects extraordinary hard work. In the years between the two propositions, from 1998 to 2016, advocates for California’s multilingual students—educators, political figures, and families—were hard at work reframing state education discourse around the value of bilingualism and multilingualism for all students. Their efforts leaned on an ever increasing body of research, detailed in this report, that consistently shows that bilingual programs are superior to English only program in helping ELs to succeed academically, learn English, and deepen their emerging multilingual abilities.

The advocates’ efforts first led to the launching of the state’s Seal of Biliteracy in 2011. The Seal of Biliteracy is an award that students can earn as they graduate high school that indicates they are assessed to be bilingual and biliterate in at least two languages. This achievement is increasingly being recognized by institutions of higher education, which may grant Seal of Biliteracy recipients academic credit for their achievement. This approach has been highly successful in changing attitudes toward multilingualism. Since California adopted its Seal of Biliteracy all forty-nine other states in the union have developed similar programs (USDE Office of English Language Acquisition [OELA], 2024; Williams & Zabala, 2023), and growing evidence suggests that when high schoolers earn a Seal of Biliteracy they see benefits in a range of higher education outcomes (Arellano & Prier, 2022).

Bilingual education advocates’ work continued to bear fruit. In 2017, after the state’s English-only mandate was lifted, California adopted the EL Roadmap, which lays out a vision of a state K–12 system where “English learners fully and meaningfully access and participate in a twenty-first century education from early childhood through grade twelve that results in their attaining high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages” (CDE, 2018, p.10). The state implemented the EL Roadmap with

\$10 million in grants spread between two EL advocacy groups, Californians Together and the California Association for Bilingual Education (CDE, 2024b).

Momentum for multilingualism reached its zenith in 2018, with the CDE’s Global California 2030 initiative. Framed around the economic and social potential of California’s diverse population, as well as a recognition of the benefits of multilingualism and the potential for bilingual education to support more effective and equitable schooling experiences for multilingual learners, this initiative called for a minimum of 1,600 dual language immersion programs enrolling half of California’s K–12 students by 2030, with the ultimate goal of proficient bilingualism or multilingualism in at least 75 percent of graduating students (CDE, 2019).

And yet, progress towards the expansion of bilingual education in California has been frustratingly slow. Proposition 58 gives districts room to experiment, but this is not enough, on its own, to deliver on the state’s ambitious new multilingual promises. Likewise, neither the EL Roadmap nor Global California 2030 is binding policy, meaning that neither requires districts to make any programmatic changes. As the EL Roadmap states: “The guidance in the CA EL Roadmap is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities...the document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory” (CDE, 2018, p. 2). The lack of accountability attached to these new priorities might matter less if the state had committed significant new resources to their implementation, but new funding supporting the rebuilding of California’s bilingual education system has also been relatively scarce.

As a result, a May 2023 Century Foundation report found that California bilingual program enrollment is lagging (Williams et al., 2023a). In 2019-20 188,381 ELs were enrolled in bilingual programs. While this ranked second among all states for total EL enrollment (Texas enrolled 375,275 ELs in bilingual programs that year), it represented a modest 16.4 percent share of California’s more than one million ELs. This share slightly lags the United States’ average: according to U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) data, 16.5 percent of all U.S. ELs were enrolled in

bilingual programs in 2019–20. At the state level, California’s share of ELs in bilingual education ranked behind Wisconsin’s (55.9 percent), Texas’ (36.7 percent), Illinois’ (35.9 percent), New Jersey’s (33.4 percent), Connecticut’s (29.9 percent), the District of Columbia’s (29.8 percent), New York’s (19.8 percent), and Alaska’s (17.7 percent) (Williams et al., 2023a).

Meanwhile, data from the CDE shows that 57,582 students received the state’s Seal of Biliteracy at the end of the 2021–22 school year, in a year when California graduated nearly 450,000 students—meaning that not quite 13 percent of graduates earned this recognition. Of those who received the Seal, just 28,698 were former or current ELs, slightly under 50 percent of that year’s Seal recipients (CDE, 2022b; California School Dashboard, 2022).

To step into its natural role as a leader in multilingual education and equitable educational opportunity for California’s EL students, the state must do far more. In this report, we outline the three most pressing steps forward. The state must (1) invest more resources in launching and expanding bilingual programs, (2) prioritize bilingual teacher pathways in state teacher development programs, and (3) center the needs and interests of ELs when designing and implementing bilingual programs and when allocating seats within these programs. Before turning to these steps, however, we briefly describe the research base on the design and benefits of bilingual education.

The Call: The Wide-Reaching Benefits of Bilingual Education

Bilingual education emerged in the U.S. as grassroots efforts to support the educational opportunities and growth of students from communities whose dominant language is not English (Spring, 2016). While bilingual education has many benefits for language majority (i.e. English monolingual) students, as will be described below, the historical and cultural roots of bilingual education underscore the importance of centering the needs and experiences of California’s multilingual and EL students, as we do in this section synthesizing existing knowledge and research on bilingual education.

Bilingual education design in the context of multilingual students' rights in school.

Multilingual students bring important academic, linguistic and cultural strengths to their education, their communities, and the nation (Gándara & Acevedo, 2016; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Valenzuela & Rubio, 2018). Indeed, bilingual students never classified as ELs and those who have reclassified out of EL status systematically outperform students who only speak English (de la Torre et al., 2019; Hill, 2012; Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). Despite these assets, students who hold the EL classification underperform compared to their non-EL peers on an array of educational outcomes (Sugarman & Geary, 2018). Much of this comparative underperformance is driven, not by differences in student skill or ability, but instead by systematic inequities in EL-classified students' access to high quality educational instruction and content. Any forward-looking vision for California schools must address these disparities.

To improve instruction and access for ELs, it is necessary to understand the rules that shape their education. EL classification defines a protected class of students, defined as those whose English proficiency level does not allow them full access to instruction when provided without supports (ESSA, 2015). EL-classified students have two core rights: the right to English language development instruction and the right to equitable and accessible core content instruction (Office of Civil Rights, 2020). Both are typically provided through a language instruction education program, or LIEP (Faulkner-Bond et al., 2012). In this report we use the term program and LIEP synonymously.

The choice of LIEP, which has two overarching approaches—English immersion and bilingual instruction—is, by federal law, left up to state and local education agencies (Zehler, et al., 2003). Broadly speaking, English immersion programs provide instruction in English only, but do so in ways that are modified for accessibility to students who are developing English as a new language. They have as their goal full English proficiency and equitable access to academic content.

Bilingual programs use a partner language alongside English to provide direct access to the same curriculum that monolingual, English-speaking students are given. The goals of bilingual

programs are for students to develop English proficiency, to have equitable access to academic content, and, typically, to maintain or develop proficiency in the non-English partner language.

Program model. Bilingual programs span an array of different models (e.g. dual language immersion, maintenance bilingual, or heritage language), with certain features that differentiate commonly employed program models from one another (Baker, 2011; Blackburn, 2018; Sugarman, 2018). First, the length of time that a non-English partner language is used to support instruction varies across language models. Some approaches will cease the use of a partner language in early or mid-elementary grades, while other forms extend the use of a partner language through secondary school.

Second, the extent to which a partner language is used for instruction varies. Some models maintain an even split of English and the partner language for instruction while others vary the proportion of instruction in each language by grade or subject area.

Third, teacher and student composition may be organized differently. Some models rely on one teacher to deliver content instruction in both English and a partner language while others will adopt a co-teaching approach. Some programs are composed exclusively of EL-classified students or of speakers of the partner language, while others integrate partner-language speakers with monolingual English speakers. These are generally called two-way dual language immersion or two-way bilingual models; this approach relies on enrolling a roughly even balance of native speakers of each language of instruction.

Further, bilingual education models can have different values and goals (Flores & Beardsmore, 2015; Palmer, et al., 2019). Some approach linguistic development with the primary purpose of English proficiency, using bilingual education to temporarily teach content as students transition to full English instruction. Others have the goal of full bilingualism and biliteracy, viewing proficiency in a partner language, in addition to English proficiency, as the end goal. Finally, some, especially in the context of heritage and Indigenous education programs, are primarily focused on

developing partner language proficiency, since students in these programs typically enter with English proficiency already established (Boyle, et al., 2015). Beyond language development goals, bilingual programs also vary in the extent to which the pedagogy and curriculum centers on the culture and experiences of students from the partner language.

Secondary-level access. There are far fewer secondary level bilingual education programs than there are programs at the elementary level. Yet evidence suggests that extending bilingual programs into the secondary level likely has several advantages. For example, bilingual education programs focused on full biliteracy lead to higher scores on college entrance exams compared to outcomes from other programs (Garza-Reyna, 2019; Vega, 2014). Students who maintain higher levels of bilingualism have a lower likelihood of dropping out of high school and a higher likelihood of enrolling in postsecondary education (Rumbaut, 2014; Santibañez & Zárate, 2014). These results suggest that secondary bilingual programs are important since they are able to support the development and maintenance of full biliteracy in ways that elementary level programs cannot. As California aims toward a true multilingual public education system, secondary school programs will be critical to consider.

Student composition. Bilingual programs also vary in their target—and actual—student enrollments. Some serve only EL students and other speakers of the partner language, while others include English dominant students. An exclusive focus on serving EL-classified students in bilingual programming could risk establishing these programs as separate and—potentially—unequal education settings for linguistically diverse children. Without taking proactive steps to minimize segregation, bilingual programs that exclusively serve EL-classified students with a specific home language risk exacerbating the racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic segregation that many EL-classified students already experiences (Gándara, 2010; Garver, 2020; Quintero & Hansen, 2021).

Other models, namely dual language immersion models can integrate linguistically and racially diverse students (Gándara, 2020; Uzzell & Ayscue, 2021). However, by including English

dominant students, these programs can grow less centered on EL-classified students (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Poza, 2024; Valdés, 1997). Further, since dual language programs offer only a portion, often half, of seats to EL-classified students, California would need to build two new dual language programs to serve the same number of ELs as every single new traditional bilingual program. In sum, no single form of bilingual education is universally optimal—diverse communities do better with diverse bilingual models. While the effectiveness of both bilingual and English immersion programs depends on the quality of individual models, a robust body of research has identified multiple benefits of bilingual education over English immersion programs, briefly synthesized next.

Academic outcomes. Studies conclusively find that on average, bilingual education confers a null to large positive effect on academic outcomes, with no evidence of negative effects. These studies, many of which use rigorous designs that identify the causal effects of bilingual programs, have found academic benefits across diverse subject areas, grade levels, and program designs, as well as for different student groups, and over time (Marian et al., 2013; Morales, 2024; Steele, 2017; Steele et al., 2024; Valentino & Reardon, 2015; Vasquez Cano & Greenberg-Motamedi, 2024; Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2016).

English language growth. Bilingual education also supports English language development, including the likelihood and timing of reclassification, or exit, from EL services (Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 2000; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow & Humbach, 2009; Steele, et. al., 2017; Uchikoshi & Maniates, 2010; Vasquez Cano & Greenberg-Motamedi, 2024). These studies confirm language theory that posits that developing home language literacy strengthens students’ ability to develop a new language (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Home and partner language development. A critical benefit of bilingual education is the development of EL students’ home language oral and literacy proficiency (Arteagoitia & Yen, 2020; Burkhauser, et al., 2016; Murphy, 2014). Compared to multilingual students that participate in English instruction, those in bilingual education programs develop home language proficiency at

faster rates (Durán, et al., 2013). Longer duration bilingual programs that focus on developing full partner language proficiency are more effective at supporting students' home language development (Murphy, 2014). Closely related, English dominant and English monolingual students also benefit from bilingual programs by developing language skills in their programs' partner languages (Arteagoitia & Yen, 2020).

Socio-emotional and sociocultural benefits. There is a growing body of work that finds that bilingual education supports social-emotional and sociocultural outcomes for EL-classified students. For instance, EL-classified students enrolled in bilingual education express positive sentiments towards bilingualism (Lindholm-Leary, 2016; Block & Vidaurre, 2019; Lopez & Taskakkori, 2006) and bilingual programs support students' sense of comfort and confidence in school (Block & Vidaurre, 2019; de Jong et al., 2020; Block & Vidaurre, 2019), intergenerational communication (Mueller et al., 2020), and sense of connection with culture and identity (Smallwood, et al., 2009). Evidence also suggests that English dominant and English monolingual students benefit from bilingual education through more open and favorable attitudes towards diversity and reduced levels of prejudice (Wright & Tropp, 2005).

Family engagement. Bilingual learning environments may also improve family engagement in school and students' education (Olivos, 2006). Multilingual families and those without full English proficiency may be better positioned to engage and support their child if their child is enrolled in a bilingual program, as research finds that parents feel better able to support their child's content learning at home if they understand their child's language of instruction (Farruggio, 2010). Families of students in bilingual programs report high rates of home practices to support academic development such as reading at home, as well as school engagement, and sense of belonging (Ramos, 2007).

High school and college outcomes. Bilingual programs result in or are associated with higher high school achievement (Vega, 2014), higher college entrance exam scores (Garza-Reyna,

2019), higher graduation rates (Vazquez Cano, 2024) higher likelihoods of enrolling in postsecondary education (Rumbaut, 2014), and higher likelihoods of attending four-year, as opposed to two-year, colleges, where their chances of completing a bachelor's degree are also higher (Santibañez & Zárate, 2014).

Economic and well-being benefits. Ultimately, public schools aim to provide students with tools and skills to succeed economically and support their long-term well-being. Individuals who maintain a higher level of bilingualism are more likely to be employed full time (Agirdag, 2014) and enter a higher prestige occupation (Rumbaut, 2014) compared to other linguistically diverse students who did not maintain proficiency in a second language. Further, individuals with high proficiency in two languages earn more than English dominant individuals and individuals with more limited bilingual skills (Agirdag, 2014; Cappellari & Di Paolo, 2018; Polanco, 2019). They are often also preferred over monolinguals by employers (Porras et al, 2014).

Bilingual education also contributes to individuals' quality of life (Adesope et al., 2010; Bialystok, 2018). Benefits include improved executive functioning, such as working memory, metalinguistic awareness, and cognitive flexibility, all of which are associated with more efficient learning. There are also health benefits: bilingualism is protective against Alzheimer's disease and dementia (Bialystok, 2011; Fox et al., 2019).

Public benefits. All of these benefits of bilingual education and bilingualism have downstream benefits for society. For example, higher wages translate into higher tax revenue (Gándara & Acevedo, 2016) and higher educational attainment lowers unemployment rates, increases civic engagement, and lowers incidences of smoking (Baum et al., 2013).

The Guidance: Three Priority Areas to Build California’s Multilingual Public Education

Creating a multilingual public education system that provides universal access to bilingual programs for those that wish to enroll will require bold policy steps. In this section, we outline three key state actions.

Recommendation #1: Using Mandates and Incentives to Expand Bilingual Education

Universal access to bilingual education begins with tangible resource commitments to growing bilingual programs around the state. A glance at state budgets suggests that California lags behind other, smaller, less linguistically diverse states in the resources it commits to expanding access to bilingual education. Utah—a state that enrolled just over 54,000 ELs in 2020 and has an annual K–12 education state budget of just over \$8 billion—committed more than \$5 million to its dual language immersion program in 2023, and appropriated more than \$7.3 million to the program for 2024 (US DOE, 2023; Utah Legislature, 2023). Since 2012, Delaware—a state with fewer than 15,000 ELs in 2020 and an annual K–12 education budget of not quite \$2 billion—has annually spent between \$1.6 million and \$1.9 million on dual language immersion expansion (US DOE, 2023; Delaware House of Representatives, 2023). California, by contrast, enrolled 1.1 million ELs in 2020 and has an annual K–12 education state budget of nearly \$130 billion (US DOE, 2023; CDE, 2023b). That is, California enrolls more than 70 times as many ELs as Delaware and spends 65 times as much on K–12 education—but its 2021 \$10 million Dual Language Immersion Grant investment (discussed in more detail below) is less than Delaware’s last decade of dual language investments. California can—and must—do much more to expand access to these programs, particularly for its 1.1 million EL-classified students.

There are two main state policy approaches for expanding access to bilingual education: “sticks” to mandate bilingual programs and “carrots” to provide districts with resources to grow bilingual programs. Many states take a “stick” approach, requiring districts to offer bilingual education when there are a specific number of EL-classified students in a grade who speak the same language. Legislative examples can be found in Illinois (810 Ill. Comp. Stat. § 5/14C), New Jersey (N.J. Rev. Stat. § 6A:15-1.4), New York (New York Education Law § CR Part 154), Texas (Tex. Bus. & Com. Code § 89.1201), and Wisconsin (Wis. Stat § 115.95). Meanwhile, other states draw more from the “carrot” design. States such as Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Utah offer grants to support bilingual education programs, although the scope of these programs varies and may be limited (Boyle, et al., 2015). We recommend that California adopt a joint approach, using a combination of carrots (incentives) and sticks (mandates).

We posit that Texas offers a good base model for a balanced carrot and stick approach to advance bilingualism in its schools. Texas mandates bilingual education for districts enrolling significant numbers of ELs. Specifically, if a district serves 20 or more students in the same grade level who speak the same non-English home language, that district must offer a bilingual program for those students in pre-K through at least grade 5 (Texas Education Code § 29.053, 2023).

Texas also has an important “carrot” approach, giving districts additional resources for students enrolled in dual language immersion classrooms. As in most states, Texas school districts receive extra state funding for enrolled ELs—an additional 10-percent increase on their base amount of per-pupil funding. Additionally, and unlike other states, Texas ELs enrolled in dual language immersion programs also generate an additional 5 percent in state funding for their district, for a total of 1.15 times the base per-pupil amount (Zabala, 2022). This gives schools a financial incentive to convert their existing English immersion programs into dual language programs that make student bilingualism and biliteracy their goals throughout their K–12 experiences. Additionally, non-English learners enrolled in Texas dual language schools also generate an extra 5 percent in state

funding, promoting the adoption of integrated two-way models that enroll both EL and non-EL students (Zabala, 2022). This consistent annual funding for EL and non-EL students in dual language immersion can also support long-term resource sustainability for these programs, avoiding fiscal cliffs that can occur when EL students are reclassified. By building these incentives into its funding formula, Texas tilted its already-large bilingual education system towards universal adoption.

By contrast, California’s lack of bilingual education requirements for districts paired with the state’s modest investments have produced only slow progress towards its EL Roadmap and Global California 2030 goals. Two years after Proposition 58’s passage, the state legislature passed AB 2514, which created the Pathways to Success Grant Program. This aimed at “establishing and expanding dual language immersion or developmental bilingual programs in elementary and secondary schools” (Torlakson, 2019). The program would have given priority for grants to districts whose EL-classified student enrollment was greater than 40 percent, but it was not subsequently funded (Torlakson, 2019).

In 2021—five years after Proposition 58’s passage—the legislature passed AB 130, which provided enough funding to distribute twenty-seven new competitive grants under the Dual Language Immersion Grant program (CDE, 2022a). In a press release announcing the \$10 million in one-time grant funding, the CDE announced that it anticipated these grants would launch fifty-five new dual language programs across the state, “contributing toward the goal of 1,600 dual language immersion schools set by the Global California 2030 Initiative” (Thurmond, 2022). As is evident from that ratio, these grants may be valuable, but they are insufficient.

What’s more, competitive grants like the Dual Language Immersion Grants have significant limitations for effecting systemic change in a state education system. Most obviously, the impact of these grants is limited to the few schools and districts that are awarded funding – in this case 97% of California districts received no funding (CDE, 2024c). In addition, these competitive grants can deepen existing inequities by rewarding resources to those communities and agencies that already

have the time, capacity, and resources to devote to the competition's application process. As a result, bilingual enrollment lags in the state. Seventy percent of EL students in Dallas Independent School District in Texas are enrolled in bilingual programs, compared to 26% of ELs in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and 11% of ELs in the San Francisco Bay Area (Williams, 2022).

Rather than pursuing piecemeal incentives, California should adopt a bilingual education requirement, following in the footsteps of states that mandate bilingual programs in settings where a set threshold of EL-classified students speak a specific non-English language. This approach promises access to a large number of students while also accounting for realistic limitations when, for example, a district serves few ELs or serves ELs from a disperse set of language backgrounds. Other states' examples show that California must back this mandate with sufficient financial and non-financial resources, and, equally important, carefully monitor its implementation.

In addition, we recommend that California adopt a funding mechanism for bilingual education similar to 'Texas', such that districts garner additional funds for each student enrolled in a bilingual program, be they reclassified former ELs, current ELs, or English only students. This funding incentive would not replace state funding for EL-classified students, but instead provide a small additional amount targeted toward bilingual program enrollment specifically.

A critical consideration in scaling up bilingual education in the state relates to grade level. While access to bilingual education is limited across the board in California, access to bilingual education at the secondary level is far rarer. Yet, as described above, longer-duration bilingual education has larger benefits, and full biliteracy, key to many of the economic benefits of bilingual education, develops over time. In expanding funding for bilingual education, the state should not overlook middle and high schools. Districts with no access to bilingual education will want to begin at the elementary level, while those with existing bilingual programs at the elementary level should begin expanding into the secondary level. This is another benefit of a per-student funding mechanism like 'Texas'. When bilingual program enrollment triggers funding regardless of students'

grade levels, there is an incentive for districts to expand bilingual programs into these higher grades. Whatever the path, the conclusion is inescapable: California must invest more energy and resources in the expansion of bilingual programming to fulfill its commitments under the EL Roadmap and Global California 2030.

Recommendation #2: Strengthening Bilingual Teacher Training Pathways

More state resources committed to launching bilingual programs are necessary to meet California’s stated aspirations for its schools, but they would not be sufficient on their own. Even if districts were awash in resources to design, plan, and implement new bilingual programs, many would struggle to find enough bilingual teachers to deliver instruction. That’s because California’s many years running English-only public schools didn’t just strip hundreds of thousands of students of their emerging biliteracy: they also strangled most of the state’s bilingual teacher training programs. With bilingual education largely prohibited across the state, demand for trained bilingual teachers dropped, so institutions of higher education stopped training them.

As such, when the ban on bilingual education ended, most districts simply didn’t—and still don’t—have enough available credentialed bilingual teachers to grow their bilingual offerings. In the decade preceding the 2021–22 school year, California teacher training programs produced an annual average of just 800 trained, bilingually authorized teachers (Kaplan, 2023). During this period, California generally issued around 15,000–17,000 new teaching credentials each year, meaning that only around 5 percent of new teachers had bilingual authorizations (Suckow & Lau, 2018; California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2023). The good news is that California boasts many young bilingual and bicultural adults interested in working in schools. California must find more and better ways to train these individuals to be credentialed bilingual teachers.

California state leaders are aware of this challenge and have, again, devoted resources to addressing it. Most notably, in 2017, California devoted \$5 million to create its Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program with the explicit goal of growing bilingual programs under

Proposition 58 (California State Assembly, 2017). The funding was then divided into eight \$625,000 grants and distributed to local education agencies through a competitive process. The program aimed to 1) increase the number of bilingual teachers and 2) provide professional development to current bilingual teachers (CDE, 2023a).

Early returns on the program are encouraging: the state reported that it supported the credentialing of more than 350 new bilingual teacher candidates and helped nearly 400 more licensed bilingual teachers move out of English-only classrooms (Lambert & Stavely, 2023). Calls to revive—and expand—the program have intensified since it ended in June 2021. Recently, California Governor Gavin Newsom proposed—and the California Assembly enacted—\$20 million in funding for five years of additional Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program grants (California State Assembly, 2023).

These are important steps that California can continue to build on. However, a concrete and actionable plan to scale up bilingual teacher preparation in the state is needed. A task force that includes state lawmakers and department of education leaders, directors of university teacher credentialing programs, and bilingual teachers could develop a blueprint for scaling up bilingual teacher preparation. Direct funding, scholarship and loan forgiveness programs, and the continued use of bilingual teacher education program grants will all likely be necessary. The state should also consider current and future requirements for bilingual teacher credentialing programs as well as bilingual teacher authorizations, ensuring that these align with current knowledge about bilingual education and instruction.

California's expanded funding may seed a broader range of California bilingual teacher training pathways. The CDE could maximize the efficacy of these funds by encouraging applications that focus on growing traditional pre-service training programs for new bilingual teachers and/or flexible, alternative pathway programs designed for bilingual paraprofessionals, district staff, and/or teacher candidates who have fulfilled many—but not yet all—of their teacher licensure

requirements. This expanded funding should also prioritize applications that allow bilingual teacher candidates to earn bilingual authorization concurrently within their credentialing programs, so that they do not have to spend more time and money on their pre-service training.

Even as the state grows the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program, it could also prioritize bilingual teacher pathways within other California programs that fund teacher preparation. For instance, the state’s Teacher Residency Grant Program puts \$350 million towards launching or expanding teacher residency programs over the next five years. These are often aimed at increasing teacher diversity or closing specific teacher shortages, including bilingual education (Williams and Zabala, 2023; Afacan, 2022). The state has room for more of these programs: a 2019 Center for Equity for English Learners review of the state’s teacher training programs found “few bilingual teacher residencies offered and a greater need to expand and study bilingual teacher residencies as one of the most viable pathways to respond to [the bilingual teacher] shortage” (Lavadenz et al., 2019, p. 1)

Similarly, the state’s Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program is a ‘Grow Your Own’ program providing small grants for classified school employees such as teacher aids to get their teaching credential. In 2021, California allocated \$125 million for this program. The program includes support for bilingual teachers as a goal, but—as with its Teacher Residency Grant Program—the state could make that the program’s primary aim in future rounds (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2024).

For this to work, however, state leaders will need to significantly improve the program’s efficacy in recruiting and training bilingual teachers: an analysis found that just four of the 209 teachers credentialed through the program’s first round (2016–2019) had a bilingual authorization. A second round of grants (2017–19) produced just eight bilingual authorizations out of 108 teachers credentialed. At a total cost of \$45 million in competitive grants, this is not yet a particularly high-yield bilingual teacher pathway (Osamwonyi & Mendoza, 2019).

State leaders could also consider a corresponding adjustment to the Golden State Pathways Program, the state’s \$500 million investment in aligning K–12 education systems with college and career pathways. The program provides grants for school districts to build, adjust, and promote these pathways, as the CDE explains it, “with an emphasis on addressing areas of acute statewide need, such as developing a diverse workforce to meet the need for professional and learning support positions in childcare settings, preschools, and schools maintaining prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12” (CDE, 2024a). Given California’s stark shortage of bilingual teachers in the context of the aspirations articulated in the EL Roadmap and Global California 2030, state leaders could prioritize Golden State Pathways grants to projects connecting bilingual K–12 students with bilingual teaching careers.

The state could also target grants through this—and similar—teacher pathway investments to K–12 graduates who earned a Seal of Biliteracy. For instance, the California Mini-Corps program recruits college students with migrant backgrounds to work as tutors for K–12 migrant students with the goal of training the tutors to eventually become bilingual teachers (Williams & Zabala, 2023). Currently, Mini-Corps supports approximately 600 students statewide with a budget of \$7.5 million. Its scope could be expanded: an additional \$5 million in annual state funding could result in approximately 1,000 students participating in the program each year (Williams & Zabala, 2023). Further, all California grant programs aimed at recruiting and training bilingual teacher candidates could invite applications for local leaders interested in linking Mini-Corps program alums with teacher training pathways.

In addition to creating and expanding pathways for bilingual certified teachers, California should consider programs that incentivize bilingual teachers to stay in the classroom. Stipends, hiring bonuses, and pay differentials have all been shown to support teacher retention (Bueno & Sass, 2018). While typically established at the district level, the state could provide matching funds to districts that institute evidence-based levers to retain bilingual teachers.

Recommendation #3: Prioritize English Learner Classified Students in Bilingual Education Design and Access

Bilingual education is—first and foremost—a means of ensuring equitable access to high quality education for students who speak a language other than English. This context is important in reminding California leaders that multilingual students, especially those still developing English, have been and should remain the priority population as the state pursues universal bilingual access. While all students benefit from enrolling in bilingual schools, research is clear that EL-classified students garner unique benefits (NASEM, 2017; Williams et al., 2023a; Williams et al., 2023b). In an era where public investments have not yet been sufficient to grow sufficient supply of bilingual programs or bilingual teachers to meet demand, the resulting scarcity of programs, and seats within those programs, can reduce access for those EL-classified students who stand to gain the most.

Bilingual education should be California’s standard service, rather than the exception, for EL-classified students (Porter et al., 2023). Without access to bilingual education (Zehler, et al., 2003), EL-classified students are underserved: core rights are unmet and multilingual assets are overlooked. EL-classified students are disproportionately likely to be children of color and to be growing up in low-income households (Williams et al., 2023a). Many face multiple challenges when interacting with U.S. public systems—including segregation and discrimination. As Agirdag (2014) notes, “linguistic assimilation policies do not merely *steal* from people, they steal from those who already have *less*” (p. 457). It is time to shift away from linguistic assimilation policies that center English to the detriment of students’ multilingualism and towards language instructional policies that recognize that English language development goes hand in hand with nurturing multilingualism and multiliteracy.

Policymakers can rectify existing inequities by prioritizing EL-classified and other multilingual students in new and expanded bilingual programming. First, as the state ramps up investment in new programs, it should provide guidance and rules around where to establish

programs, focusing on communities with large and concentrated multilingual students. Other states, including Massachusetts, provide preference to such community settings in bilingual program funding (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). In addition to program location, the state can provide guidance on best practices in locally-relevant program design including design decisions around partner language, transportation, and resourcing. Within programs, seats should also prioritize EL-classified students, albeit with the caveat that some programs, such as dual language immersion programs, may have student composition goals that also prioritize certain additional learner profiles. Carefully designed dual language immersion programs can also advance racial and/or socioeconomic integration in addition to linguistic integration (Ayscue, J. et al, 2024).

There are various enrollment policy mechanisms for ensuring ELs' access. Policymakers can balance “by-right” neighborhood enrollment with open enrollment policies allowing EL students to access bilingual programs outside their immediate neighborhoods. Alternatively, they can reserve a set number or percentage of seats in new bilingual education programs for EL-classified students or for students who are native speakers of the program’s partner language. When enrollment is conducted by lottery, they can weight those lotteries to prioritize families whose children are EL-classified or non-native speakers of English.

In addition, California must prioritize the educational interests of EL-classified students and their families and communities. These interests should be determined locally, but certainly should include equitable access to educational content and opportunities, culturally-sustaining and enriching pedagogy and curricula, and the opportunity to develop full bilingualism and biliteracy in English and the partner language (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Robinson-Cimpian et al., 2016). Program model design and implementation should be shaped around these and other goals of EL-classified students and their families and communities. In traditional bilingual programs that serve only speakers of the partner language, programs will need to pay careful attention to ensuring equitable

access to content and opportunities, avoiding situations in which these programs can become segregated spaces of unequal learning. For example, there should be efforts to create integrated experiences throughout the day—through, for example coursework and recreation (de Jong, 2006; DeNicolo, 2016). Further, bilingual programs should not be sequestered to certain parts of school campuses in ways that feel exclusionary, nor set up in ways that create stigmatizing experiences for students (DeNicolo, 2016). By contrast, in dual language immersion programs, special attention will need to be paid to ensuring that pedagogy and content stay focused on the needs and interests of EL students rather than being shifted toward the interests of English speaking families who often hold more economic and political clout within schools (Wall, et al., 2019).

A third means of prioritizing EL students in building a multilingual education system is through accountability policies. Accountability is a hallmark of the modern U.S. public education system, and the metrics used to evaluate school performance, such as standardized assessments, can shape local level teaching practices (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005). As research suggests that those in bilingual education programs compared to English only programs initially see slower growth in English-administered assessments and longer time to reclassification (Umansky & Reardon, 2014), schools or districts may fear penalization for not meeting expected accountability benchmarks. We encourage state lawmakers and leaders to move away from accountability indicators that research has found to be unreliable for EL-classified students (Abedi, 2004), especially those in bilingual programs, and towards indicators that capture meaningful information on students’ opportunity to learn. For example, creating new accountability indicators such as enrollment rates in grade-level or advanced core content coursework can help to better understand inequities in access to curricula, which may be more informative for ensuring equal access to learning opportunities. Additionally, including bilingualism and biliteracy as accountability metrics, through partner language proficiency on language arts assessments or Seal of Biliteracy uptake, may incentivize local investment in bilingual instruction and ensure primary language instruction is not

positioned as less valued than English language development. Formative assessment may be of particular importance when supporting EL-classified students and can become more prominent in accountability policy moving forward (Heritage, Walqui, & Linqunti, 2013). This will require investment in the development of language arts assessments in non-English languages.

In sum, California’s efforts to build universal access to bilingual education need to prioritize EL students and their families first and foremost, and they can do this through program development and access policies, program design, and accountability measures. California education leaders should ensure that state resources supporting bilingual education expansion should prioritize EL-classified students’ access first, and—when locally feasible—linguistically integrated bilingual models such as two-way dual language immersion second. Until EL-classified students’ access to bilingual programming has considerably increased across the state, California should not provide incentives or additional funding to launch one-way language immersion programs that serve predominantly or exclusively monolingual, English-dominant students.

Conclusion

Since California adopted an ambitious multilingual vision in Global California 2030 and the EL Roadmap, the state’s education community has steadily pushed to make it a reality. The state has periodically supported implementation with modest investments in bilingual programming and efforts to grow California’s bilingual teaching workforce. But much remains to be done. Investments have been too piecemeal and too small to convert these initiatives from vision documents into a compelling force for systemic changes, one that enables a thriving multilingual society and equitable and meaningful schooling for the state’s 1.1 million ELs. At present, California lags other states at expanding students’ access to multilingual programming.

Without state leadership, systemic progress towards the goals encoded in the EL Roadmap and Global California 2030 will be difficult. It is time for California to move from vision to action. Specifically, the state should invest adequate state education resources to:

1. expanding bilingual instruction in the state, including creating high quality programs in districts across the state that currently do not have them, and supporting the growth and expansion of programs that already exist;
2. investing in efforts to grow the state's bilingual teacher pipelines in both the long and short term through revitalizing the state's bilingual teacher credentialing programs and creating and strengthening alternative pathways into the profession through grow-your-own and other programs; and
3. ensuring that bilingual education programs prioritize access, quality, and relevance for the state's 1.1 million students classified as ELs, while also expanding access for other multilingual students (not classified as ELs) and English-only speakers.

Taken together, such investments would vault California into its rightful place as a national exemplar in educational equity for EL-classified students and bilingual education access for all students.

Recommendations

California education leaders can convert their state’s vision for bilingual education into a reality by pursuing the following reforms. Taken together, these actions can create a multilingual public education system that centers the needs of the state’s multilingual EL students and provides the opportunity for every student to become multilingual.

Recommendation #1: Expand multilingual instruction in the state through the balanced use of requirements and supports.

- Pass legislation requiring districts to provide K-5 bilingual education if the district has at least 20 students in a given grade level that speak the same home language. This could be done through updated local control accountability plans as a strategy for closing academic gaps between ELs and non-ELs.
- Adopt a state funding formula that provides additional per pupil funding for every student enrolled in a bilingual program regardless of grade or language status.
- Publish annual updates on progress towards the state’s Global California 2030 goals, including
 - a list of bilingual programs with information on program model, grades served, and languages of instruction and
 - analysis of the demographics and EL status of students attending bilingual programs at the state and local level.
- Invest in greater CDE capacity for supporting and monitoring California’s bilingual education expansion efforts.

Recommendation #2: Invest short- and long-term resources in efforts to grow the state’s bilingual teacher pipelines.

- Create a task force including state leaders, university teacher education and credentialing program directors, and teacher representatives to create a blueprint for the expansion of bilingual teacher education and credentialing programs.
- Support the development of bilingual teacher education and credentialing programs through a combination of direct funding, scholarship or loan forgiveness programs, and grants for such programs.
- Consider accreditation or accountability standards for state bilingual teacher education and credentialing programs.
- Grow the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program by an order of magnitude, providing at least \$200 million in funding for the next round of grants.
- Commit at least half of future Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program grants towards alternative teacher credentialing pathways, such as apprenticeships, residencies, and/or “grow-your-own” models.
- Prioritize the preparation of bilingual teachers in all subsequent rounds of California’s Teacher Residency Grant Program, Golden State Pathways Program, and Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program.
- Launch a statewide program to provide bilingual teacher candidates with stipend support during their student teaching experience.
- Grant additional credential flexibility and provide substantial resources for Seal of Biliteracy recipients interested in pursuing bilingual teaching roles in TK or the broader TK–12 education system.
- Provide matching funds for districts that implement research-based levers to retain bilingual teachers

Recommendation #3: Prioritize access to bilingual education for the state’s 1.1 million ELs, who gain unique linguistic and academic benefits from these programs.

- Develop state guidance for districts to design and development of bilingual programs focusing on ensuring:
 - Prioritized access to EL-classified students with regard to preferential placement in available bilingual program seats
 - Equitable access to educational opportunities within programs
 - Culturally-relevant, community-informed, asset-based instruction and curriculum within programs
 - Minimized linguistic isolation for ELs either through dual language models or other means of integrating students
 - High quality programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels

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