

## The Review of Services for English-Language Learners in the Oakland Unified School District

*Conducted by Understanding Language,  
Stanford University Graduate School of Education*



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## Executive Summary

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The faces of the students of Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) are changing, just as our nation's demographics are changing. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of K-12 English language learners (ELLs) grew 60% in the first decade of this century, compared to 7% growth of overall student population. By 2020, it is estimated that half of all U.S. public school students will have a non-English speaking background.

For the school year [2013-2014](#), 30% of OUSD students are ELLs and 49% speak a language other than English at home. OUSD's shifting demographics now reflect a student population that is 38.1% Hispanic and Latino, 30.6% African-American, 14.1% Asian, and 11.8% White. This is a very different ethnic representation of a community historically perceived as exclusively African American and White.

There have been federal, state, and district-level policy and process adjustments made to better support ELLs. For example, ELLs were designated as a "subgroup" in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, not only identifying this specific type of student, but highlighting the achievement inequities between ELLs and non-ELL students.

The urgency to provide better support to ELLs is clear. Unfortunately, the majority of initiatives implemented and applied to this subgroup are embedded in strategies specific to closing the achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color (Grantmakers for Education, 2014). OUSD recognizes the necessary urgency and specificity needed to better support the ELL population.

An example of OUSD's commitment to ELL success is the establishment of the [Office of English Language Learner and Multilingual](#)

[Achievement](#) (ELLMA) in 2013. This office works collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide ELLs with equity and access to an excellent education, and to ensure all ELLs achieve at high standards in one or more language and ultimately graduate from OUSD schools as college, career, and community ready. ELLMA was established within the Leadership, Curriculum, and Instruction (LCI) Department with the express purpose of collaborating with math, science, and ELA departments to integrate language and content development in tandem for ELLs.

This report was commissioned by then Deputy Superintendent, Maria Santos and ELLMA Executive Director, Nicole Knight. Specifically, ELLMA consulted with the Understanding Language Initiative of Stanford University's Graduate School of Education (UL) to research the district, and combine the findings and best practices to develop recommendations for the district. The goal of this study and its instruments is to support OUSD and ELLMA's momentum beyond compliance and into higher standards and quality of instruction and supports for ELLs.

This study and its instruments were co-developed by UL; Nicole Knight, Executive Director of ELLMA; and Anne Okahara, Research Director of OUSD's Quality, Accountability, and Analytics Office. The report summarizes findings from UL's 2014 review of district policies, practices, and programs for ELLs and presents specific recommendations and next steps to best support ELLs in OUSD and their public education success. UL's recommendations for OUSD are outlined below and are discussed at length within the report. The report and recommendations fall into five key categories of service for ELLs: Policy and Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Social and Emotional Learning, Family Engagement, and Staffing and Resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Policy and Leadership

Clarification on district policy and procedures for ELL identification and reclassification should be developed and made available to teachers and administrators. District personnel and school staff agree that better data management systems and procedures for tracking ELL progress would greatly benefit identification and reclassification processes.

Additionally, ELLMA supports an integrated English Language Development (ELD) model. This model, still in the early stages of implementation in the district, promotes the integration of English Language Development and academic content instruction in addition to having a separate block for ELD. Research findings identified a great need for a thorough, district-wide system and structure for ELD, complete with more professional development, coaching, monitoring, and accountability.

#### Recommendations for OUSD and Supporting Research

- Establish a clear vision for ELL success which includes high expectations for academic achievement (Donato, 1994; van Lier & Walqui, 2012) and social-emotional development (Zins et al., 2004; Elias & Arnold, 2006). Support this vision with a purposeful plan that provides students with diverse trajectories to college, career, and community readiness.
- Engage the community in the review and refinement of the draft policy paper developed by ELLMA, *Essential Practices for ELL and Multilingual Achievement*, to develop and adopt a Blueprint for ELL Success.
- Develop a comprehensive infrastructure in the district's data management system that enables school communities ease of access and use of ELLs and the subgroups (e.g., Newcomers, Developing, Long Term ELLs, Unaccompanied Minors, SPED) (Abedi & Linquanti, 2012; Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012).

- Recognize that bilingualism and bi-literacy are assets and adopt research-informed policies that support the use of the home language in bilingual or Dual Language programs.
  - o Offer coherent and continuous pre-K-12 bilingual programming.
  - o Offer core secondary courses for newcomers in high-incidence home languages (Goldenberg, 2008; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).
- Establish identification and reclassification regulations and procedures, disseminate them to all educators and parents, and hold schools accountable for timely implementation (Flores et al., 2009; Hopkins et al., 2013; Linquanti, 2001).

### 2. Teaching and Learning

To best meet the needs of their ELLs, teachers would welcome support with scaffolding for designing curricula and assessments for ELLs, especially newcomers. Also recommended is continued and enhanced integration of high-level academic discussion and explicit instruction on language practices in classrooms. Additional resources that would be helpful for teachers and other school staff include an on-site coaching model, dedicated time for teacher collaboration, and more cultural, ethnic, and community education.

Integrating home language meaningfully into the school and classroom is important not only as an instructional tool, but also as a way for teachers to show appreciation for students' cultures and to build students' confidence by recognizing bilingualism as an asset. Educator guidance and instruction is needed to support classroom teachers in using students' home languages to transfer content knowledge between languages in addition to developing strong bilingual/bi-literacy programs.

### Recommendations for OUSD and Supporting Research

- Develop a framework for the integration of content and language development aligned to the CCSS, NGSS, and new English Language Proficiency Standards (Lee, Quinn & Valdés, 2013; Schleppegrell, 2004; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).
- Provide extensive professional development to all educators on how the new standards work together and the importance of using both language and content standards to guide instruction (Lee, Quinn & Valdés, 2013; Schleppegrell, 2004; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).
- Employ an Integrated and Designated English Language Development program and finance professional development, curriculum development, assessments, and instructional materials to support implementation (Lee, Quinn & Valdés, 2013; Schleppegrell, 2004; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).
- Build a comprehensive professional learning program to help *all* educators deliver instruction that integrates language development and content (Gándara et al., 2005; Santos et al., 2012).
- Design and finance differentiated supports for Long Term ELLs, Newcomers, Unaccompanied Minors, SPED-ELLs and Bilingual Programs (Valdés et al., 2005; Walqui & Heritage, 2012).
- Provide professional development on how to differentiate instruction and supports for Long Term ELLs, Newcomers, Unaccompanied Minors, SPED-ELLs, and Bilingual Programs (Valdés et al., 2005; Walqui & Heritage, 2012).
- Invest in materials and professional development to build strong and coherent pre-k-12 bilingual programs and supports. (Goldenberg, 2008; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).
- Increase collaboration between ELLMA and the Program for Exceptional Children (PEC).

### 3. Social and Emotional Learning

OUSD and its schools can create a better learning environment for ELLs by strengthening cultural competence at all levels of instruction, administration, and community. UL's research found that bullying occurs at roughly half of the

elementary and secondary schools in the study, and is experienced particularly by newcomers to the district. Recommendations for improvement include increasing educator preparation on bullying prevention and support services such as counseling for ELLs, preferably in their home language and with a counselor of their home culture, particularly when ELLs have suffered trauma. UL also recommends providing more support to teachers around classroom management since disruption in classrooms is an obvious barrier to learning. Also, parent communication from the district, preferably in their home language, about the social and emotional well-being of ELLs is essential to helping ELLs feel comfortable engaging in their education.

### Recommendations for OUSD and Supporting Research

- Engage staff in understanding how diverse ELLs are experiencing classroom instruction, school culture, and support services thereby building a stronger awareness as to their needs.
- Provide professional development on how to develop safe and inclusive learning environments that recognize and respect the languages and cultures of students (Banks, 2001; McAllister & Irvine, 2000).
- Require strategic actions and plans for continuous improvement to create cultures of high expectations and respect for ELLs with significant attention to bullying (Donato, 1994; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).
- Align fiscal and human resources to support the complex and diverse needs of current and former ELLs.
- Establish structure for collaboration with school personnel and community based organizations to address the needs of ELLs (Bryan, 2005; Warren, 2005).

### 4. Family Engagement

Engaging families in order to foster academic achievement has been a main theme in the research and practice of educational reform for decades. Active parental involvement can narrow the achievement gap and increase English acquisition

by ELLs. This idea is reinforced by many educators in OUSD and the parents that participated in this study. There exists an almost unanimous concern about building bridges between home and school, rooted in a vision of educational pragmatism and social justice.

### Recommendations for OUSD and Supporting Research

- Create multiple resources and family learning opportunities to increase parents' capacity to support their students and make informed decisions about program placement (Epstein, 2001; Weiss et al., 2010).
- Create structures and opportunities for parents to be active participants in district and school decisions (Epstein, 2001; Weiss et al, 2010), and educate and prepare those with extraordinary commitment to be cultural liaisons to their communities.
- Ensure that schools hire staff that can bridge cultures and support communication in home languages (Batt, 2008; Tinkler, 2002).

## 5. Staffing and Resources

The impact of the classroom environment on ELLs is powerful, and through its establishment of ELLMA, OUSD has acknowledged the need for staffing and resources. Teachers and administrators have made a clear call for development and implementation of staffing supports. Continuous learning through high quality, consistent professional development is recommended for all educators and administrators.

### Recommendations for OUSD and Supporting Research

- Recruit and hire bilingual and bicultural teachers, leaders, and support staff and monitor levels of representation and support (Goldenberg, 2008; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).
- Establish the quality of educational and support services ELLs receive as the responsibility of all teachers and leaders (Hopkins et al., 2013; Olsen, 2010).
- Establish site-based ELL specialist positions with expertise in the integration of language, literacy, and content.

- Engage all educators in continuous learning and planning to improve the quality of services for ELLs (Gándara et al., 2005; Santos et al., 2012).
- Establish measurable and ambitious language development and academic achievement targets. Design continuous improvement structures and supports that help students achieve these targets (Donato, 1994; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).
- Include in the Teacher Effectiveness Framework and the Leadership Dimensions specific practices to support ELL success such as: integrated language development and content learning (Lee, Quinn & Valdés, 2013; Schleppegrell, 2004; van Lier & Walqui, 2012); differentiation of instruction according to students' needs (Donato, 1994; van Lier & Walqui 2012); development of active and appropriate uses of academic language; and regular student communication and collaboration (Lee, Quinn & Valdés, 2013; Schleppegrell, 2004; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).
- Provide comprehensive resources and supports for SPED teachers of ELLs (Klingner et al., 2008; Ortiz & Yates, 2001).



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## Introduction

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Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) recognizes the need to prioritize efforts to increase educational opportunities for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the district. The demographics and needs of ELLs are changing, and to better meet the needs of this changing population, former OUSD Deputy Superintendent Maria Santos established the [Office of English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement](#) (ELLMA) in 2013. This office works collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide ELLs with equity and access to an excellent education, and to ensure all ELLs achieve at high standards in one or more language and ultimately graduate from high school college, career, and community ready. Led by Executive Director Nicole Knight, ELLMA was established to work across departments to provide an integrated, instructionally-focused department for ELLs to support quality teaching and learning.

This research report and its resulting recommendations was initiated in early 2014 in collaboration with the [Understanding Language Initiative of Stanford University's Graduate School of Education](#) (UL), a leading group of experts and practitioners researching and advocating best practices for teaching ELLs across K-12 schools systems. UL was co-founded by Professor Kenji Hakuta in 2011, and its vision is to increase college, career and community readiness for all students — especially ELLs — by transforming the quality of their educational experiences. The goal of this report is to provide OUSD with access to current information about programs, policies, and practices regarding ELLs to guide future improvements including system adjustments and funding distribution.

In collaboration with ELLMA, a UL team, led by Executive Director Martha Castellón, developed and carried out the study in the spring of 2014. The project's guiding vision was based on UL's [Principles for ELL Instruction](#), and informed by knowledge of

OUSD's current instructional foci and analysis of ELL performance data. The project is focused on various school programs that impact ELLs: bilingual, dual language, Structured English Immersion, English Language Development, social and emotional learning (SEL), and family engagement programs. The project's focus also includes district and school policies relevant to ELLs, including policies surrounding ELL identification and reclassification, A-G Pathways, professional development, and hiring practices.

This report includes details of analysis, findings, and supporting evidence, and recommendations for next steps. The analysis is summarized in five sections that emerged as categories from our research on OUSD's programs, policies, and practices for ELLs: (1) Policy and Leadership, (2) Teaching and Learning, (3) Social and Emotional Learning, (4) Family Engagement, and (5) Staffing and Resources.

## Methodology Summary

This study's methodology, specifically the classroom observation protocol available in Appendix A, was co-developed by the team at UL, ELLMA Executive Director Nicole Knight, and OUSD's Research Coordinator for the Quality, Accountability, and Analytics Office Anne Okahara.

UL staff assisting in data collection include Martha Castellón, Rebecca Greene (Project Manager), Camille Whitney, Steven Weiss, Eduardo Muñoz-Muñoz, and Ingrid O'Brien. Anne Okahara also helped conduct classroom observations and focus groups. The UL team responsible for data analysis included Rebecca Greene, Camille Whitney, Eduardo Muñoz-Muñoz, Ingrid O'Brien, Jessica Barajas, Gina Andrade, Kim Moxley, Chentong Chen, Kimia Pakdaman, and James Ly.

District staff from ELLMA and the Office of Quality, Accountability, and Analytics (QAA) of OUSD chose twelve focal schools: six elementary, three middle, three high (including one middle/high), representing

a range of the types of schools ELLs attend in OUSD in terms of the proportion of ELL students at the school, achievement level, socio-economic level, geographic location, student language and ethnicity, and types of instructional programs at the schools (bilingual early exit, dual language, English only).

The UL team visited each site for approximately two days in March, April, or May 2014. At each site, separate (approximately hour-long) interviews and focus groups were held with principals, teachers, parents, and students. Additional (approximately hour-long) interviews were conducted based on the structure and availability of staff members at each school, including ELL specialists, ELD teachers, resource teachers, school psychologists, academic counselors, teachers on special assignment, intervention specialists, assistant principals, academic coaches, and outreach consultants. Interviews and focus groups were also held with district staff.

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## Policy and Leadership

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This section focuses on district and school-level policy and leadership that ensures ELLs have access to high-quality educational resources.

### Identification and Reclassification

Identification and reclassification processes are essential for ensuring that appropriate ELL programs and services reach the right students at the right time. ELL identification and reclassification services in OUSD reach nearly 3,000 students and their families each year. The vast majority participates in and receives their scores on placement assessments within district-specified timelines. The district has also developed and begun distributing support resources to ELL families to ensure that parents and students are informed about the identification/reclassification process. These efforts reach over 20,000 members of the OUSD ELL community each

year. ELLMA revised the reclassification process in 2014, relying in part on recommendations from a report they commissioned by Norm Gold and Associates, and on preliminary findings of this ELL report. They increased stakeholder engagement, particularly among families, and improved the timeliness of reclassification. Additionally, ELLMA is piloting ELL Student Snapshot, an individualized student report that is a tool to engage students and their families in understanding where the ELL is on the trajectory to reclassification.

While these improvements represent a positive step forward, especially considering the size and scope of the district's identification and reclassification needs, there is room for enhancement.

The district should emphasize with its staff the importance of streamlining ELL identification at the times of year when there are many students being classified, such as the beginning of the school year for kindergarten and district transfer students. Increased numbers of students being classified can create an "assessment backlog" leaving ELL students unclassified after the legally defined identification timelines. Personnel interviewed from at least two district offices were unsure whether ELL identification policies are followed consistently at each school, and mentioned specifically that the mandated timelines for identification are often not met. In the research and interview process, district personnel, administrators, teachers, and school support staff explain that such backlogs often mean that ELL students do not receive appropriate linguistic scaffolding to achieve academic success. Educators expressed that the ELL identification process adversely affects turnaround time for receiving California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores and adds to confusion around data collection by the district.

The ELL reclassification process is another area for improvement for both school and district personnel. All school and district staff indicated a

lack of clarity around how and when a student is reclassified. At least five elementary principals could outline a basic understanding of reclassification procedures, but concede that the process lacks a clear systemic approach. One district office reported that policies change too frequently, and attributed most reclassification issues to failure by school site personnel to comply with district requests for data necessary to complete the ELL assignment status. There is a clear call from school and district staff for district-wide policies on testing timelines and consistent criteria schools can use to perform ELL skill evaluations.

School administrators from both the elementary and secondary level identified some criteria that hinder the appropriate reclassification of certain students no longer needing ELD support. According to personnel from at least four schools, CELDT does not accurately assess their students' progress. At the secondary level, GPA can be another possible barrier to reclassification. Administrators seemed unclear how various criteria are weighted in making reclassification decisions. Again, these concerns could be alleviated by establishing clear and consistent district-wide reclassification policies.

District personnel and school staff members agree that better data management systems and procedures for tracking ELL progress would greatly benefit identification and reclassification processes. Delays in sharing data prevent students from receiving appropriately timed differentiated instruction, and lack of protocol has been linked to possible legal concerns. Personnel from three district offices and school site personnel from at least one elementary school also link lack of data protocols to possible legal concerns, noting there are currently no systems in place to monitor the academic progress of recently reclassified students as is required by law.

OUSD's new ELLMA leadership recognized the need to review identification and reclassification processes immediately and commissioned a review

of practices by ELL compliance expert Norm Gold. Findings from Gold's 2014 identification and reclassification assessment note that professional development for both administrators and teachers about identification/reclassification procedures has been limited. The desultory attempts to increase awareness about district procedures in these areas could account for the persistent themes of confusion found through this study. Adopting universally accessible data management systems in conjunction with delivering seminars to both teachers and administrators about ELL assignment procedures could enhance the effectiveness of these processes. ELLMA used Gold's findings and recommendations to refine and revise OUSD's identification and reclassification procedures and practices in the summer of 2014. In fall 2014, a comprehensive and coherent guide and monitoring structure for identification and reclassification was disseminated to principals, teachers, and other staff. Given the high staff turnover, it will be important to regularly disseminate this new structure at new hire orientation sessions.

## Use of the Home Language at School

Through the review of the best research evidence, UL concluded that leveraging ELLs' home languages and cultural assets strengthens their academic content knowledge and skills. Additionally, UL acknowledges bilingualism and bi-literacy as 21st century skills necessary for global citizenship and competitiveness. ELLs represent a resource for fostering language competencies in American society whether ELLs are in bilingual programs or not. A thoughtfully planned and well-implemented bilingual education program reflects the college and career readiness standards in place in most states. Communities that value bilingualism must address the challenge of systemic capacity by preparing teachers to provide language-rich environments that ensure academic and interpersonal competencies in both languages. Instructional materials in native

languages must be aligned to state standards. Comprehensive assessment resources also need to be developed in multiple languages.

Five out of six OUSD elementary schools involved in this study have some form of bilingual program: either Early Exit (students transition to Structured English Immersion [SEI] classes after second, third, or fourth grade) or Dual Immersion (native English speakers and native Spanish speakers are in the same classroom and receive some instruction in Spanish and some in English). SEI is intended to provide all but beginning-level ELLs with full access to the grade-level curriculum. However, because it is often the only alternative to bilingual programs and enrolls English-proficient students as well, ELLs' needs tend to be overlooked.

OUSD and ELLMA have made great progress toward developing their Dual Language and Newcomer programs. ELLMA has proposed a plan to expand the number of schools with both types of programs, and phase out early-exit bilingual programs. This is in line with this report's recommendations to better leverage home languages in schools and increase support for newcomers.

### ***Bilingual Programs***

There is abundant research showing that well-implemented and high-quality bilingual education programs worldwide succeed in educating language minority and majority students (August & Hakuta, 1997; Brisk, 2005, 2006; Cummins, 1999; Cummins & Corson, 1997; Gomez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2010; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Bilingual education should be considered a viable form of education by OUSD to reach the goals expressed in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Two distinct perspectives exist on the effect of home language instruction on students. One is that it delays academic success in an English-based school system, and the second is that it has a positive effect on students' lives. At two elementary schools with

bilingual programs, parents who participated in the focus groups debated whether Spanish-English or English-only education was better, and their views aligned with the program their own children were in. Parents who favored English-only education viewed bilingual education as "confusing" and feared it would delay children's acquisition of English. This view was held by parents who had enrolled their children in English-only classes, but also by at least one mother whose child had gone through bilingual classes.

One parent felt that since Spanish was spoken at home, the school should focus on English. Other parents (at least one at each school mentioned) expressed that their children had acquired literacy in two languages and were not confused; they saw their children's bilingualism as a source of pride. At one school, all participating parents supported the bilingual program, which is a dual-immersion model.

School staff perspectives also aligned to the models their schools followed. For example, teachers and administrators at three elementary schools talked about the importance of "transitioning" students to English instruction at lower grades to improve reclassification rates and standardized test scores, implying that home language instruction had a negative impact on these indicators. All of these elementary school participants worked at schools with transitional bilingual programs, where emphasis is explicitly placed on moving students to English-only classrooms. One district-level staff member asserted that pressure to raise California Standards Test (CST) scores had undermined support for bilingual education.

Other teachers and leaders believe that native-language instruction actually improves students' ultimate outcomes in English, and can help students make and maintain connections with their families and communities. At a dual-immersion school, multiple stakeholders said that the program was valuable because it helped ELLs maintain their home language and supported integration of the

African-American and Latino populations at the school. Teachers at this school also believed that maintaining Spanish language proficiency supports student success in English instruction. Teachers at a transitional-model school talked about having students who took pride in being able to complete their work in both Spanish and English. A teacher at one school with an early exit program lamented the absence of bilingual education in the upper grades, and felt that its disappearance reflects systemic bias against language-minority students.

These distinct perspectives on the value of bilingual education have led to changes in program models at different schools. At least one school has abandoned a maintenance bilingual model in favor of an early-exit program; teachers report this was done to help students reclassify earlier. Many classes that are ostensibly bilingual were observed or reported to use all or nearly all English. This was more true of upper-grade classes (second, third, or fourth grades) than of the lower grades. On the other hand, some schools have changed their model — or staff are hopeful they will change their model — to maintain home language instruction through fifth grade, because they believe this is best for their ELLs. One school changed its early-exit model to a dual-immersion program that will eventually extend to the upper grades in order to promote social integration among ELLs and native English speakers, and to encourage ELLs to maintain their Spanish skills. The goal is to move away from a model where students learned in Spanish for three years before being abruptly switched to English-only.

Schools would benefit from streamlined policies and approaches when it comes to bilingual education, including content and how to cover it. Teachers in one early-exit program reported being unclear about how to handle the transition from Spanish to English as well as how much of each language to use at each grade, and several district personnel mentioned that their policies on language of instruction across grades are outdated and unclear.

Rather than a standard program across schools, we observed different approaches across each of the four transitional-bilingual elementary schools in the study, with students making the transition from bilingual to English-only at different grades depending on the school. Multiple stakeholders (site-based instructional leaders, teachers, and one district stakeholder) shared the perception that the district lacks clear goals and purpose for its bilingual programs and is not sufficiently supporting dual-language programs with, for example, curricular materials or practical implementation strategies. As teachers are developing curricula and materials for their dual-immersion classes, they struggle to cover all grade-level content when there is significant time spent on language arts. One interviewee's perspective is that all bilingual programs should either be dual-immersion serving grades K-5, or should not exist at all. This approach reflects that of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), which now offers dual-immersion programs (as well as maintenance programs where the population does not support dual-immersion), and all students are encouraged to maintain their bilingualism through secondary school. In SFUSD, early-exit programs are being phased out entirely.

One powerful finding is that bilingual education is non-existent at the secondary level in OUSD; none of the secondary schools surveyed had bilingual programs. Outside of "Spanish for Spanish Speakers" courses, there are no opportunities for students to formally study academic content in a language other than English. In contrast, SFUSD offers core content courses in multiple languages at the secondary level, both for newcomer students and for students pursuing bi-literacy and bilingualism (courses that are open to ELLs as well as proficient English speakers of any linguistic background). To expand bilingual programs to grades 6-12, OUSD stakeholders must be universally committed to the idea that the home language is a valuable educational resource, and that bilingualism is an important goal to achieve through schooling.



### *Home Language in Other Contexts*

Our interviews with teachers across the district revealed mixed feelings about the use of native language instruction. While some view it as an educational resource they can leverage when explaining or asking questions in the classroom, especially if they themselves speak their students' home language, others expressed a view that using the home language would cause their students to depend on such translation and thus inhibit English language development. Some teachers use home language as a way to acknowledge students' cultures. Teachers did not report being aware of any school or district policy regarding use of the home language.

While teacher focus groups and observations at the elementary and secondary schools found that many teachers were using the students' home language (typically Spanish) in class, observations across four elementary schools and three secondary schools indicated that home languages are underutilized in the classroom. Teachers used students' languages in surface-level ways: in greeting students, checking for understanding, translating directions, translating specific vocabulary or grammatical structures, or pointing out cognates. Outside of bilingual elementary classes, there were very few examples of teachers actually leveraging languages other than English at a deeper level, to build skills in one language that could transfer to English. A few secondary schools offer "Spanish for Spanish Speakers" courses where students learn home language literacy skills that can transfer to their English classes, but these courses varied greatly in quality.

Data from student focus groups also show that the home language is permitted but underutilized in school. Classroom observations in at least two elementary schools and three secondary schools support this finding: students were allowed to use their home languages to interact with

each other and translate for each other. Home language use was also frequently reported and observed among newcomer students who have very little English language skills. Students at a secondary school were observed using electronic devices for translation, such as Google Translate on their cell phones; an academic coach at another secondary school confirmed this use of electronic devices for translation.

Professional development could help teachers learn to effectively leverage students' home languages. A resounding theme in the interviews is that although there has been some professional development provided to teachers for leveraging Spanish in some content areas, the district has not provided systematic, explicit strategies for teachers on how to leverage the students' home languages in the classroom, and clear district policies do not exist. Teachers need to learn how to develop content-area courses that make the best use of students' home languages.

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## Teaching and Learning

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### Structure of ELD Services for ELLs

Schools in OUSD meet the state requirement to provide English development services to their ELLs in a myriad of ways. At the elementary level, we found three distinct models (note that the models are not mutually exclusive — for example, a school may use Model 1 for newcomers, but Model 3 for all other students):

- *Elementary Model 1:* Pull-out ELD — Designated students leave their mainstream classes for some period of the day for homogenous, small-group instruction in English as a subject. One elementary school with a low ELL population (<50%) uses this model with ELLs who are below grade level, while three high-ELL (>50%) elementary schools use this model for newcomers.

- *Elementary Model 2: Leveled ELD* — Students regroup according to some criterion (e.g., ADEPT scores, CELDT levels) for some period of the day. This model was in place at one high-ELL elementary school, which groups English-Only (EO), Initially Fluent English Proficiency (IFEP), and Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) students with ELLs during this period. ELD occurs at a specific time, during which the English language is taught as a subject.
- *Elementary Model 3: Integrated English development* — Students do not regroup, but still receive ELD with their homeroom teachers in whole-class or small-group lessons. Language instruction is embedded in regular content instruction (with English implicitly or explicitly developed through content study). This was in place at two schools with low ELL populations and at three schools with high ELL populations.

At the secondary level, we found four distinct models for providing English language development services:

- *Secondary Model 1: Newcomer program* — Newcomers often receive double blocks of English/ELD, and may be in sheltered content classes. A newcomer program was in place at three of the six secondary schools.
- *Secondary Model 2: Forced elective* — Upper-level ELLs (e.g., CELDT 3 and above) may be required to attend ELD in place of an elective or P.E. This model was in place at two schools.
- *Secondary Model 3: Replaced English class* — Students attend ELD instead of regular English courses. ELD 5 meets A-G English requirements, but other replaced English classes do not. One high school offers only ELD 5, but no lower levels of ELD. At one middle school, we received mixed information about whether higher-proficiency ELLs attend mainstream English classes or ELD in place of English.
- *Secondary Model 4: Integrated English development* — Language development is embedded in regular content instruction. One secondary school uses this approach for all ELLs. All other secondary schools in the study officially use this model for their long-term ELLs, and some use it for their newcomers as well.

Every school reported having some kind of stand-alone ELD class for at least some of its students (e.g., newcomers, below-grade-level readers, LTELs, all ELLs), and this is the traditional (and state-mandated) method for teaching English to ELLs. Four sites (three elementary, one secondary) reported that they have an ELD teacher who creates at least some of his/her own materials and curriculum. Additionally, five elementary schools and four secondary schools reported using some type of commercial program for at least some of their designated ELD classes. There is a variety of resources being used in ELD stand-alone programs, and data on student impact are not collected.

Sites with stand-alone ELD classes (e.g., pull-out models, forced electives, or newcomer classes) do not always provide a clear connection to ELLs' mainstream content classrooms. There are no examples of stand-alone ELD classes that are systematically designed to connect with content classes. At both elementary and secondary sites with stand-alone ELD classes, ELD teachers often develop their own curricula, and do not collaborate or align subject matter with mainstream content or subject teachers. ELD teachers also tend to be newer and have less professional development experience than other teachers, and given the high turnover among OUSD teachers, it is difficult for schools to cultivate and maintain expertise. OUSD would benefit from providing more support for ELD teacher professional development, and guidance for schools on selecting experienced teachers for ELD instruction — and from providing opportunities for ELD teachers to collaborate with content teachers.

## Integrated Language and Content Instruction

One major key to ELLs' success is integrated language and content instruction; please see Principle 1 of UL's Key [Key Principles for ELL Instruction](#) in Appendix C. Multiple stakeholders at the district and school-leadership levels reported that they want language development to be fully integrated with content instruction (i.e., Elementary Model 3, Secondary Model 4), and are encouraging this integration by pushing for an end to a designated ELD time that treats the English language as a school subject. The district is gradually moving away from outdated models that teach English as an independent subject, and is aligning with ELLMA's vision of integrating language support and development into content classes for all ELLs.

Indeed, five of six elementary and all six secondary schools use embedded/integrated English development in mainstream classes for some (e.g., non-newcomers, students not below grade level in literacy) or all of their ELLs. The only elementary school that employs the leveled ELD universally also addresses language development during mainstream instruction.

Overall, OUSD schools are building capacity for integrated ELD. While there are some teachers that have not received sufficient support in this area — only four schools (two elementary, two secondary) provided *all* teachers with professional development on instructing ELLs — many teachers reported participating in professional development opportunities around scaffolding ELL participation and language development in the content areas, such as GLAD, RALLI, Results, Open Court, and Constructing Meaning. Other teachers have learned scaffolding strategies for ELLs as part of their pre-service credentialing or CLAD certification, and some have learned to use sentence frames and visuals to support ELLs. At every school, at least one teacher reported having received some professional

development on scaffolding for ELLs in content areas or on supporting ELLs' English development.

In some cases, teachers have not had professional development opportunities to prepare them, and therefore cannot provide strong language supports for their ELLs in mainstream classes. At only four schools (2 elementary, 2 secondary) did *all* teachers attending the focus group report having received some professional development on instructing ELLs, and several teachers at multiple sites reported not having professional development or education in this topic beyond their pre-service or CLAD certification. At four elementary sites, teachers acknowledged that they knew they were supposed to be embedding English development, but felt they and their colleagues were not doing so. Teachers called for more information about how to teach ELLs in the content areas generally. One secondary teacher specifically felt that content support for English development is “non-existent” and asked for district demonstrations of how to scaffold grade-level content for ELLs.

One key issue for OUSD to consider as it continues to build capacity for integrated ELD is that because of the high teacher turnover rate in the district, it is imperative to offer educators multiple opportunities to learn support strategies for ELLs throughout the school year. The district should provide professional development for teachers focused on using students' home language as a resource for learning, building on bilingualism to support self-efficacy and, in turn, engagement in both content and language.

We noted the frequency of three different instructional practices are frequently included in professional development programs, and they are powerful methods for acquiring a language: verbal interaction, reading, and instruction in language practices. The district has prioritized oral language development as an important strategy to increase language and academic gains for ELLs. To do so, the district increased student engagement in Academic Discussion. OUSD intends to transform classrooms from teacher-dominant

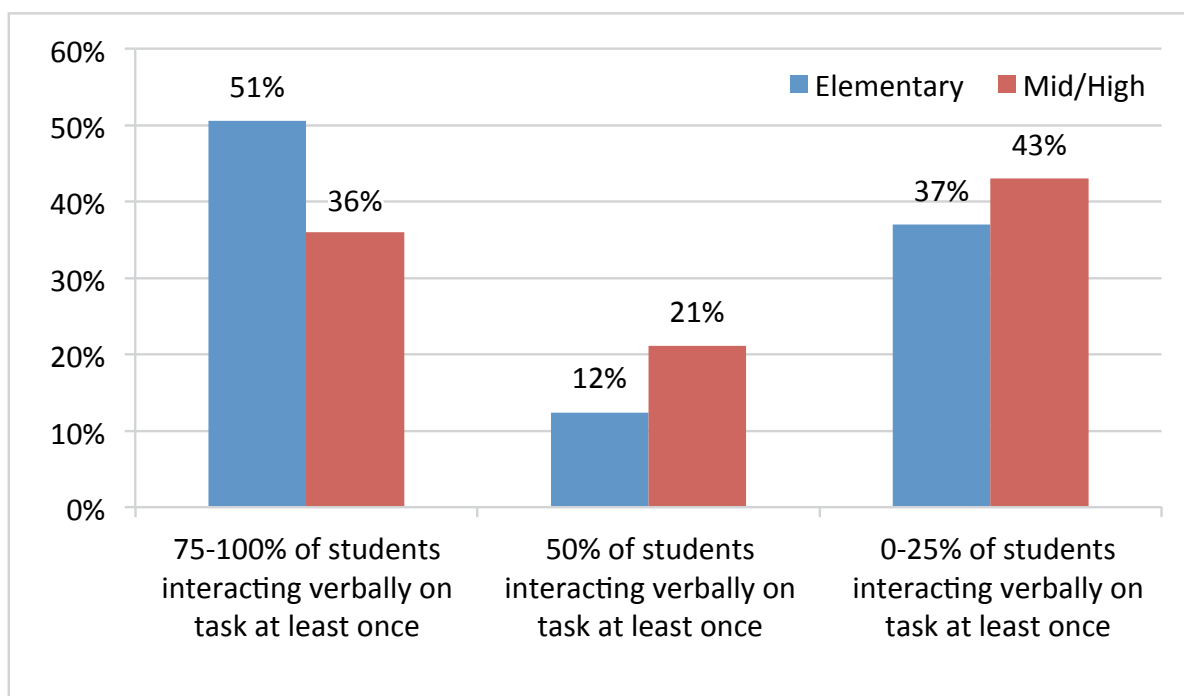


discussion environments to rich student-dominant discussion environments. By emphasizing and building teacher capacity to design and deliver student-centered instruction in this manner, OUSD aims to strengthen students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The first implementation year of Academic Discussion is 2013-2014, and reading complex text and argumentative writing using evidence are included. Sessions and tools were developed to illustrate and support rich academic conversations, measure progress, and inform professional development. Instructional rounds were used to monitor progress and deepen understandings of the enacted practices as well as to inform professional development needs. An Academic Discussion continuum was developed to help educators evaluate and enact shifts in practice over time.

Classroom observation data show that indeed there are frequent opportunities for students to engage in basic discussion in English (e.g., sharing their impressions or experience). Please see **Figure 1a** below. In the first year of Academic Discussion implementation, most students were "explaining"

their thinking, a clear sign that the strategy holds promise. Observed classrooms had fairly high levels of participation in terms of the percentage of students interacting verbally on task at least once during class (e.g., approximately 75-100% of students participated verbally in about half of elementary school classrooms and more than a third of secondary classrooms observed).

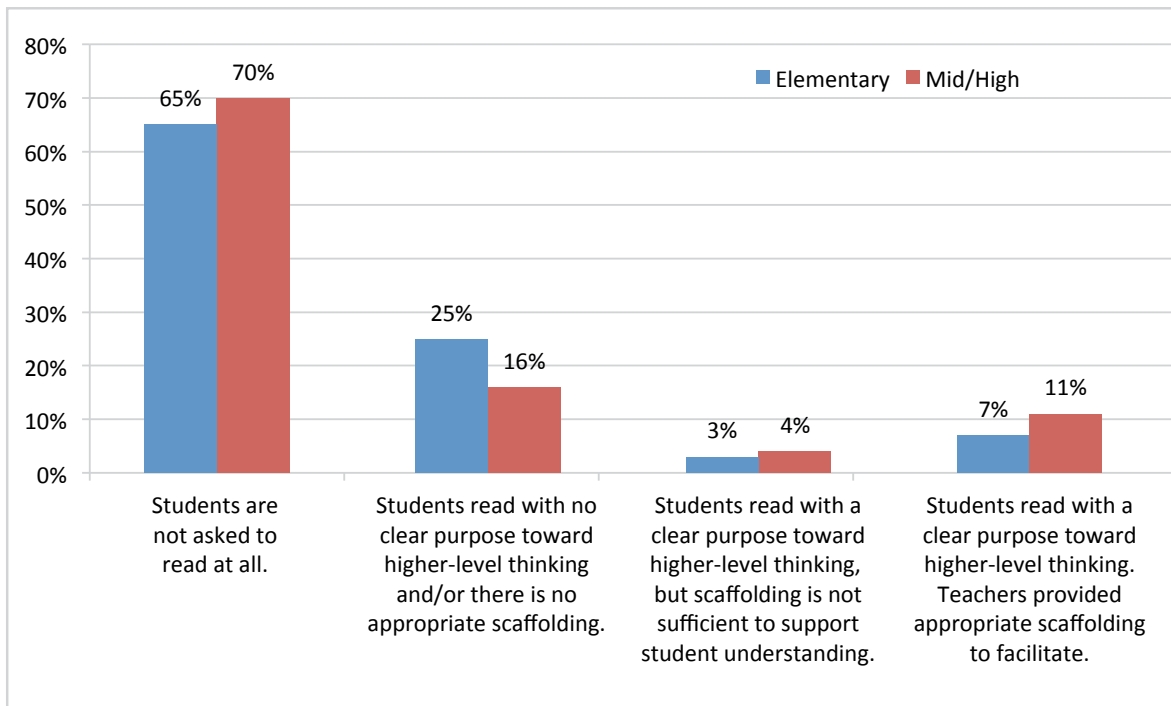
There were also many classrooms with low levels of participation (e.g., in more than a third of elementary school classrooms and almost half of secondary school classrooms, student verbal participation was between 0% and 25%). In observed classrooms where the majority of students were engaged, teachers successfully utilized engagement techniques such as calling on students with talking sticks and having students assist each other in solving problems. However, teachers need help guiding students to use English to engage in higher-order tasks (e.g., constructing arguments). The focus on Academic Discussion will require additional support, time, and resources to increase the academic and language outcomes for ELLs.



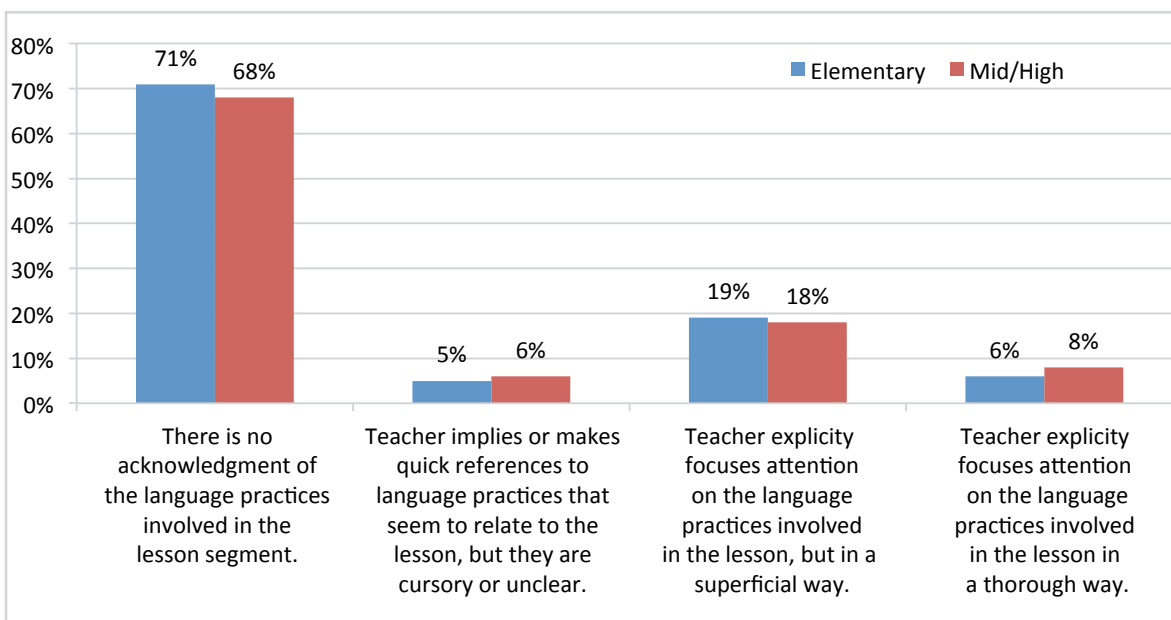
**Figure 1a: Percent of students interacting verbally**

The second instructional practice was student engagement in reading. In the majority of classes observed (65% of elementary and 70% of secondary school classes observed), students were not asked to read during the observation period, as our data show in **Figure 1b** below. A very small number of students were engaging in reading with a clear purpose toward higher-level thinking such as making claims, analyzing, synthesizing, or taking a critical stance, and

teachers providing appropriate scaffolding to facilitate this higher-level thinking (e.g., graphic organizers, annotations in the margins, peer support); a very small number of students in observed classrooms fell into this category (7% in elementary and 11% in mid/high school). To improve these outcomes, the district should enhance professional development in student reading, explicit discussion of language practices, and high-level academic discussion in classrooms.



**Figure 1b: Percent of students reading with purpose**



**Figure 1c: Percent of students experiencing explicit instruction about language practices**

**Figure 1c** displays explicit instruction about language practices occurring in the classroom. In the overwhelming majority of classes observed, teachers did not talk about language itself at any point — neither the familiar grammar and vocabulary, nor the more truly integrated language practices such as arguing and evaluating.

## Access to CCSS and NGSS

CCSS and NGSS demand greater rigor and language use in the classroom, which benefits ELLs. OUSD educators are beginning to understand the demands of the CCSS, NGSS and new English Language Proficiency Standards and require more support on integrated English language development. A major task for OUSD moving ahead is to make sure ELLs are given the proper supports to access the new, more rigorous curricula, and to provide time- and site-based professional development opportunities for teachers.

One form of teacher professional development that supports the implementation of the new standards is centered on integrating language support and content instruction. Options such as RALLI and Constructing Meaning are examples of this type of support. Some teachers adapt official curricula to support the new standards, such as Springboard or district-generated curricula, in order to better meet the needs of ELLs, adding scaffolds so all students can access rigorous content. Secondary schools with newcomer programs often have sheltered content classes. Most elementary schools offer Structured English Immersion (SEI) as a program option. District personnel reported that in the last five years, district professional development has focused on oral practice implemented through science subject areas, emphasizing the importance of vocabulary development in

context, connections with prior knowledge, and comprehensible input.

Despite these efforts, many respondents at all levels reported that they are not prepared to deliver best practices around ELL instruction; some coaches and district officials even admit they need guidance on what professional development and instructional guidance to recommend to educators. For many sites, high teacher turnover makes it difficult to develop professional expertise. Additionally, consistent attempts to integrate new initiatives tax the time and focus of school staff and can make it difficult for principals to prioritize resources. Unfortunately, the needs of ELLs can get lost in the shuffle, so OUSD should continue to support the efforts of ELLMA to build focus on ELLs.

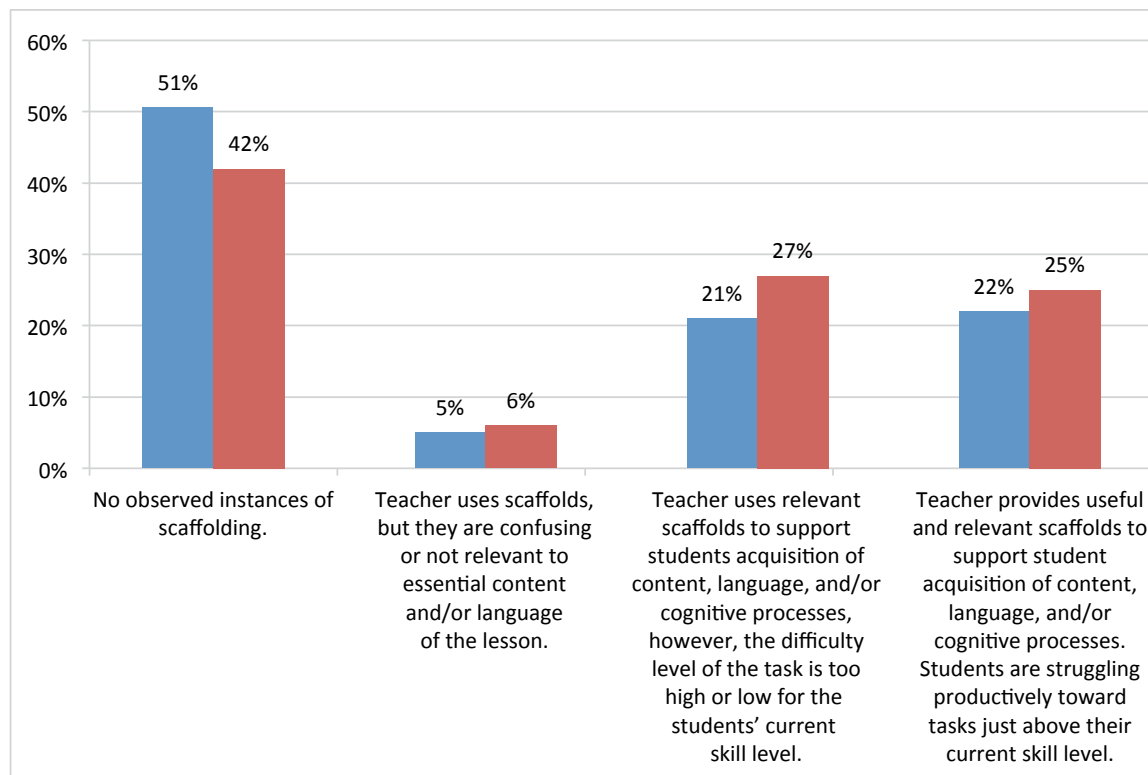
### *Scaffolding/differentiation practices in the content areas*

Scaffolding/differentiation support is a work in progress across content areas in elementary and secondary schools. One of UL's Key Principles for Effective ELL Instruction (see Appendix C) is deliberate and appropriate scaffolds. Educators within OUSD struggle to determine the appropriate amount of scaffolding, according to our focus groups and interviews. Teachers want to avoid under-scaffolding that can make the content inaccessible to ELLs, while also avoiding over-scaffolding which can reduce cognitive demands for students. Interviews with elementary and secondary teachers confirmed a need for improved scaffolding in content area classrooms, as well as a focus on classroom technique for ELLs. When asked what changes the school could make to better support ELLs, a teacher focus group at one elementary school suggested expanding classroom techniques for ELLs. An academic coach at a secondary school explained that teachers, even veteran teachers, still need professional development in this area.

Findings from the observation protocol shared in **Figure 2** show many observed classrooms did not use scaffolds, and that when scaffolds were used, they often needed improvements to their design and implementation. When teachers provide useful and relevant scaffolds to support student acquisition of content, language, and/or cognitive processes (22% of elementary and 25% of mid/high), students struggle productively toward tasks just above their current skill level.

district is pushing the importance of this strategy. Two principals, one elementary and one secondary, report that their school has been actively working to promote Academic Discussion. Despite this progress, more work is needed to ensure Academic Discussion is available and effective for ELLs.

While the district is clearly focused on implementing Academic Discussion for ELL classrooms, across secondary sites, coherent



**Figure 2: Scaffolding**

## Academic Discussion

As discussed earlier in this report, OUSD has recently begun to place increased emphasis on Academic Discussion in classrooms, aligned to the CCSS. Multiple stakeholders, especially at the middle school and district levels, view Academic Discussion as a crucial element to help ELLs gain English proficiency in content classrooms. Academic Discussion has permeated district-level structures and practices relatively thoroughly; district personnel and school staff report that the

implementation is inconsistent. Schools acknowledge the district focus on academic discussion, but some site-based staff explicitly reported that their schools lack focus and professional development on implementing academic discussion. As one district-level stakeholder acknowledged, most classroom discussions appear to remain at relatively low orders of thinking, such as taking turns sharing thoughts. This observation was supported by our findings as well. One district-level stakeholder

reported that most classroom discussions remain at relatively low orders of thinking. Other personnel reported during focus groups that there are “too many silent ELLs” in classrooms, and that ELLs are not getting as much oral practice as they should. Schools need clearer guidance and professional development on implementation.

## Use of Formative Assessment

OUSD educators are requesting professional development specific to formative assessment in the classroom for instructional purposes assessment to better serve ELLs. In elementary schools, teachers reported mixed opinions regarding the use of formative assessment. Teachers’ self-reported use of formative assessment varied; some said they use it constantly and others expressed inconsistency and the need for more support.

Data from classroom observations show that while a majority of teachers occasionally checked for understanding, only a few were consistent and authentic in their use of formative assessment. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of both elementary (78%) and mid/high classrooms (63%) had either no checks for understanding or only IRE-type checks for understanding.

At the district level, personnel reported that the ADEPT language assessment is in use in elementary schools. ADEPT is a valid and reliable oral language assessment instrument (aligned with the CELDT) that can be used to assess students across grade levels K-8. It is not, however, a formative assessment instrument; formative assessment is an informal process that occurs throughout instruction to identify levels of understanding. The misidentification of ADEPT as a formative assessment tool highlights the district need for district policy and process development, and professional development. According to a district personnel official, there still exists an old paradigm of practice with respect to assessment (i.e., test

prep), but schools are moving toward a system of formative assessment in an authentic way.

## Access to A-G Pathways

OUSD high school students are becoming more aware of the A-G courses and requirements for graduation at the different high schools. However students still lack personal advising and guidance to select their coursework and successfully complete the A-G requirements, which is especially crucial for the ELL students who are not academically prepared for such courses coming in from middle school.

The different types of A-G course advising activities reportedly taking place at the high schools in this study tended to be short term events, once or twice a year, versus sustained counseling sessions. Additionally, existing advisory activities lack the structure and individualized counseling that are necessary to support ELLs in fulfilling their A-G requirements. Although various large-scale events are in place where students are advised on A-G requirements (e.g., counselors visiting a classroom, the school website), students are not receiving enough individual counseling on their course selection, according to observations and focus groups. A focus group of teachers at a high school reported that while ELD 1, 2, 3, and 4, do not satisfy A-G, and only ELD 5 does, many students and their families are not aware of which ELD classes count, making it more difficult for students to earn their A-G credits.

## *Newcomers and A-G requirements*

In addition to the challenges that ELLs face meeting the A-G requirements, newcomers are faced with an additional layer of disadvantage — their recent arrival to this country. A high school counselor noted that although this is the first time that newcomers will be able to take an elective, it is especially challenging for newcomers to select the appropriate electives and fulfill the A-G requirements because

some of them do not understand the requirements in English, and are in need of translation services.

Teachers believe that it is important for the district to differentiate educational policies for ELLs, for newcomers, and for those with interrupted formal schooling, since they all have unique educational needs. Teachers advocate for equitable adoption of A-G requirements for newcomers, a plan for best practices for teaching ELLs, consistent educational goals for ELLs, and support for teachers as the ELL population continues to increase.

### ***Linked Learning***

Linked Learning is an educational pathway program that is based on pedagogy that is more integrated, cognitively based, group-work based, hands-on, and contextualized. Approximately 82% of Linked Learning pathway students graduate from high school compared to 58% of non-pathway students, although it could be that students more likely to graduate choose to enroll in Linked Learning, rather than an effect of the program. The program currently serves 42% of OUSD secondary students. One district administrator expressed interest in expanding use of this program to include ELLs, and create inclusive pathway classes such as “English with a medical spin, English with a computer science spin,” which would assist students who are behind in their language skills. Although Linked Learning could be beneficial to ELL students, they lack access.

One district initiative for students in remediation involves using i3 grant money to help all students create a college and community plan. This will help students see whether they are on track for college, in need of summer school enrollment, or in need of remediation courses. District personnel suggested that in order to improve ELL access to A-G pathways like Linked Learning, ELLs need representation on the Linked Learning team. There is currently not an ELL representative on the team.

Although three years of Linked Learning enrollment information is available disaggregated by subgroup, there exists a lack of monitoring of the enrollment and performance of ELL students in A-G courses. It would also be very useful for these reports to be made accessible to other district personnel such as Linked Learning staff, in order for district personnel to reflect on ELL rates of participation in Linked Learning and the effect it has on A-G course enrollment and completion for ELL students versus non-ELLs.

### **ELLs and Special Education**

Our research highlighted a clear need for district attention paid specifically to ELLs with disabilities. Support is needed to improve the identification and referral processes for ELLs in special education. Researchers have noted the importance of an effective, intervention-based referral system for distinguishing disabilities from other issues that may be affecting the performance of ELLs, including linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors (Klingner et al. 2008; Liu et al. 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2006).<sup>1</sup> Both of the district-level interviewees who discussed this issue felt there is a need for increased collaboration between ELLMA and the Program for Exceptional Children (PEC). We recommend scheduling regular meetings between the two offices specifically to analyze data around ELLs and special education referral and assessment, and to understand and implement best practices in this area.

Administrators and teachers, including resource teachers, expressed a need for development and clarity on policy guidelines around ELLs and special education referral, RTI, assessment, and eligibility determinations

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, Liu et al. (2008) and Wilkinson et al. (2006) recommended that special education assessment be based on more than just discrepancies between IQ and academic performance, including informal measures and family input; that it include all relevant data including retrospective data; and that it carefully rule out other potential explanations for the performance, i.e., cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and other factors.



(Wilkinson et al., 2006). Research-based best practices should be used to support this endeavor (Figueroa & Newsome, 2006; Klingner et al. 2008; Liu et al. 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2006). Research also supports the importance of educating and preparing assessors, teachers, and administrators on the issues surrounding ELLs and disabilities (Klingner et al. 2008; Liu et al. 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2006). Additionally, we recommend developing and administering regular professional development on issues of ELLs with disabilities for staff at all levels, including differentiating instruction and supports for these students.

Elementary and secondary teachers also expressed concerns about caseload. To address this concern, OUSD should design and finance differentiated supports for ELLs with disabilities, and hire additional resource teachers to reduce the caseload at heavy-caseload schools.

Concerns also exist about a new policy the district has instituted mandating translation of all written reports to parents around special education, including psychological assessments, occupational therapy reports, and language reports. Stakeholders feel that this practice is not affordable given current funding allocations. To implement the translation policy, the district needs to ascertain the real cost of such translations and commit fiscal resources to match the needs of school sites and centralized departments.

## **Social and Emotional Learning**

Social and Emotional Learning<sup>2</sup> (SEL) is a key area of focus for this report. In this section, we explore the implementation of district-sponsored SEL initiatives

<sup>2</sup> A definition of SEL is “the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/>

and SEL programs with particular respect to ELLs, and how the district might improve SEL outcomes for ELLs. We focus in particular on behavioral engagement, partially because there was concern voiced by district leaders that there was a lack of classroom engagement by some ELLs (particularly long-term ELLs) and because new higher standards have reinforced the importance of engagement in overall student success. Some authors have also suggested that low engagement may be prevalent among long-term ELLs (Olsen, 2010). In addition to behavioral engagement, we examine factors that experts say support school engagement and factors that may be particularly important for engagement and academic success among ELLs: self-efficacy; relationships with other students and with teachers; and the social and emotional environment and supports.

### **District SEL Initiative**

In the last few years, OUSD has strengthened its focus on SEL. According to a unanimous School Board approval of an SEL policy for students and adults, SEL competencies:

“...need to be taught and developed in our students and modeled by adults in classrooms and schools and throughout our system. Social Emotional Learning is not separate from academic learning but, in fact, is critical to the transition to and effectiveness of developing the conditions to engaging instructional practices needed to teach academic content through the Common Core State Standards.”

Efforts to educate school leaders and staff on a common definition of SEL focus on a set of competencies for adults that they should 1) embody and model for students, and 2) incorporate into academic instruction to support learning. The district has worked to draft SEL standards for students and school staff and is currently working with parents to draft standards and guidance for parents. The district SEL office also conducts trainings with

parents, school leaders, and staff, including a core group of teacher leaders, with the idea that participants will in turn train others at schools. The initiative is supported by the district's participation in an SEL collaborative with other districts organized by the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL).

District leaders acknowledge that the SEL initiative is still in early stages of implementation. They recognize several areas where improvement is needed – specifically the need for greater integration of the district SEL office with other district academic offices, and better implementation of the district SEL initiative through improved data collection and utilization. They also concede that the initiative does not include a particular focus on ELLs, except for general statements that SEL standards should be “developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate” and should integrate different social “lenses” in the OUSD community including race, class, culture, and language. One district staff member outside of the SEL office remarked that the SEL initiative should develop approaches particularly for ELLs. Teachers, administrators, and other school staff across grade levels are generally unaware of the parameters of the SEL initiative.

## SEL Programs and Practices in Schools

There is a relatively strong focus on SEL at the pre-k level. About two-thirds of pre-k staff has undergone professional development from the district in SEL core values. District staff noted that while ELL students might struggle to understand the meaning of the values, they would benefit from the improved classroom climate with other students acting in accord with the values.

SEL programs are common in elementary schools, but implementation varies at the classroom level. While all six elementary schools named a school-wide program, teachers do not actually implement

the program at five of these schools. A few teachers reported that they implement another preferred SEL-related program or practice, such as the Caring School Communities program (CSC). At three of four elementary schools participating in CSC, teachers said they liked the program; CSC solves and prevents some problems, and also gives ELLs the language they need for science and math discussions. However, teachers in lower grades at two elementary schools felt that CSC is too language-heavy for ELLs and prefer to use other approaches or programs such as Second Step's picture scaffolds. Additionally, teachers in at least two schools have reported that they struggle to find class time to implement CSC or Second Step, particularly in upper elementary grades.

At most secondary schools, SEL programs typically reach some, but not all students. A prominent school-wide program in use is Restorative Justice, but implementation varies across classrooms. As with CSC, teachers like the program, but rarely implement associated practices such as community circles due to time constraints. One teacher stated that this is true in spite of the fact that the program would likely save instructional time “in the long run” by creating a better classroom environment. More often, teachers or school administrators implement the program only when a student has committed an infraction. Some school staff felt that Joven Noble was doing well in reaching their Latino ELL boys.

There are several reasons why teachers at elementary and secondary schools do not implement SEL programs in their classrooms. As mentioned, teachers may prefer a different program in which they have experience or expertise, or feel that a different approach is more appropriate for their students. They may like a particular program, but feel they do not have time to truly implement because they are accountable for teaching other content. There is typically little accountability for teacher implementation of SEL programs or practices. A lack of funding/budget is also a



commonly reported issue. Additionally, several district personnel noted that implementation becomes much more widespread once a program has been in place at the school for a few years.

None of the schools discussed how these programs serve the needs of ELLs differently from other students, but teachers at one elementary school mentioned that they engaged in practices to specifically address the needs of ELLs. Overall, however, districts and schools do not seem systematically focused on ensuring that the social and emotional needs of their ELLs are met. Rather, individual teachers may do so independently. During classroom observations (most classrooms had a mix of ELL and non-ELL students) we observed some teacher practices that support engagement and social and emotional skills including acknowledgment of contribution in class and positive behavior management. A number of teachers are effectively utilizing SEL techniques to create a more inviting, collaborative classroom environment for their students, though practices are not consistent across classrooms.

## Social and Emotional Competencies

### *Engagement*

Students, administrative staff, and support staff generally report that ELLs want to do well in school and pay attention in class, but there are also important ELL-specific considerations. The majority of the teaching staff interviewed feel that many ELLs, particularly newcomers, are quiet and do not participate in group activities, which they attribute to students feeling “isolated,” “fearful,” “disenfranchised,” or “unsuccessful” because of their self-perception of being low-skilled or discouraged by their ability to do class work.

According to classroom observations, ELL participation is lower on average at the secondary level than the elementary level. Referring back to **Figure 1a** on page 9, there were observed classrooms with high levels of participation in terms

of the percentage of students interacting verbally on task at least once during class (e.g., approximately 75-100% of students participated verbally in about half of elementary school classrooms and more than a third of secondary classrooms), but there were also many classrooms with low levels of participation (e.g., in more than a third of elementary school classrooms and almost half of secondary school classrooms, student verbal participation was between 0% and 25%). In observed classrooms where the majority of students were engaged, teachers utilized engagement techniques such as calling on students with talking sticks and having students assist each other in solving problems. When used properly, these types of engagement techniques may be effective in ELLs’ classrooms.

### *Self-efficacy and pride in bilingualism*

Teachers and staff at two elementary schools and four secondary schools felt that many ELLs, particularly those in special education, struggled with a low sense of self-efficacy. Secondary resource teachers, elementary and secondary focus groups, and ELL students report that ELLs often fear social discrimination related to their ELL status (and potentially their special education status), which leads to a low sense of efficacy and becomes a barrier to participation for ELL students.

An interesting finding from most of the student focus groups is the expression of pride in being bilingual. Students gave a number of reasons for feeling proud of their bilingualism: the ability to translate for others, including for family members and adults; advantages for future employment; and connection with their family’s heritage and culture. Thus bilingualism seems to be a source of self-efficacy that schools could leverage to help ELLs have a stronger sense of confidence in school. The section on cultural competence below suggests that OUSD schools could do more to recognize students’ knowledge of their home language as a strength and a resource for learning.

### ***ELLs' relationships with other students***

Across schools, half to nearly all ELLs interviewed felt they belonged at school. The most common reason for this sense of belonging was attributed to having a group of friends at the school. A few high school students said they struggled with a sense of belonging as newcomers to the country or to the school, but that this improved over time. In several student focus groups at the elementary and secondary level, students' sense of lack of belonging was because they disliked the overall school climate, other students treated them poorly, or because they were from an underrepresented ethno-linguistic group. At one elementary school, the school psychologist expressed concern about students who come to school mid-year or from refugee camps being able to develop positive relationships and a sense of belonging.

There was some concern among district and school staff about de facto social segregation by language, especially between students in bilingual classes versus those not in bilingual classes. At one elementary school with a bilingual program, the principal, teachers, and counselors reported that students tended to associate mostly with others who spoke the same home language in class and at recess. District staff noted that African American parent groups have voiced concerns about de facto segregation, which is part of the reason the district is exploring dual language rather than bilingual programs; in a dual language program, as one school staff member pointed out, students are not segregated by language. Teachers expressed that a dual language program can also increase ELLs' sense of belonging, since everyone is learning a language together. In this program, ELLs do not feel stigmatized as the only language learners.

When asked about positive relationships and their sense of belonging, students often discussed the level of bullying (various types of verbal, psychological and physical peer abuse) at the school, even when the research team did not ask about the topic. At half of the elementary schools students said that bullying was

a problem and made them uncomfortable. At half of elementary schools and five of six secondary schools, ELLs reported that other students would laugh, tease, or act in a disrespectful way when they or others made mistakes in class. In several cases, particularly at the secondary level, ELLs said they stopped speaking up in class due to fear of being teased. Negative peer behavior was observed in a few of the classroom observations as well. For example, in one classroom observation a student struggled to answer a question and other students laughed at his answers.

Bullying is a salient topic for ELL students, likely because of the painful nature of the experience of peer abuse, compounded by the fact that there appears to often be a racially/ethnically discriminatory aspect to the abuse that ELLs receive. At one elementary school, students reported that some of their peers would make fun of students for their dark skin color or for speaking their home language at school. At two secondary schools, bullying is a particular problem for newcomers. One school surveyed their students and found that 90% of newcomers reported having been bullied. Despite being a common occurrence for ELLs, school staff rarely recognized bullying as a problem. In one case a secondary principal stated that kids don't make fun of the way other students speak, in direct contrast to what students reported. School staff did not mention bullying as a problem at any elementary schools, which indicates that staff are unaware of the severity of the problem.

### ***Relationships with teachers***

At most schools, ELLs reported that student-teacher relationships are usually positive with some exceptions. ELLs feel that many of their teachers care about and respect them. They said that teachers helped them when they needed it "most of the time" or at least "sometimes," though in some cases they said the teacher tried to help but was not successful. Three secondary student focus groups reported that sometimes they could not get the help they needed

or learn in certain classes due to poor classroom management and other students' disruptive behavior.

There were some troubling issues around teacher-student relationships. According to ELLs in three elementary schools and three secondary schools, they feel uncomfortable asking some teachers questions; have seen, or experienced, teachers choosing not to stop for questions; and have seen teachers get upset when students asked for help. Students thought teachers sometimes do not stop for their questions because they feel they do not have time to interrupt the lesson or, according to one high school focus group, because they rush through the lesson due to classroom management issues. One elementary student focus group reported that because teachers avoid their questions they often cannot communicate urgent information. Additionally, students reported specific examples of critical and derogatory educator actions directed toward students.

Two district personnel, one elementary school principal, and one secondary administrator say that positive student-teacher relationships depend on teachers knowing their students, particularly when there is not a linguistic/cultural match between the student and teacher. Teachers need an improved scope of understanding of ELLs' experiences in the classroom to better empathize with ELLs and ascertain their needs, according to one district staff member. Both district personnel and a few school staff members said that these positive relationships in turn lead to a better school culture and learning environment, which one district administrator said would result in a safe space for the production of developing language.

## **Social and Emotional Environment and Supports in Schools**

### ***Cultural competency, appreciation for cultures***

The district can create a better learning environment for ELLs by strengthening cultural competence. Cultural

competence is one component of the district's Quality Schools Standard of a "Safe, Supportive, and Healthy Learning Environment." The standard calls for schools where "students, their families, the community, and school staff feel safe because school relationships, routines, and programs build respect [and] value individual and cultural differences." The standards also state that "a quality school ensures over time that all students in the school demonstrate an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people from different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds."

When embraced and implemented with fidelity, cultural competence means that schools provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all—by respecting and valuing the cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented at the school, approaching home languages and cultures as an educational resource, and teaching children how to engage with people from cultures different than their own. Cultural competence is essential to helping students feel comfortable engaging in school and is an important interpersonal skill for students to learn. Several stakeholders including district staff, teachers, and administrators emphasized the need for teachers need to get to know their students' backgrounds in order to develop supportive relationships and understand their academic and SEL needs.

Our recommendations include strategic actions in continuous improvement plans to create cultures of high expectation and respect for ELLs. OUSD can build on existing practices that demonstrate cultural competence in schools including the use of Spanish in general education classrooms to "acknowledge culture and connect" (for example, one teacher has students teach the class a new word from their home language each day). Teachers should employ culturally relevant pedagogy, and engage with students around the school's "core value" of understanding backgrounds and building bridges.

One goal of district professional development on

cultural competence is teaching staff to view home language and culture as a resource for learning rather than a barrier. A second goal is helping school staff learn to relate to students and families from different backgrounds. Professional development for educators specific to ELLs, their families, and their cultures is an example of how the district can foster an appreciation of culture.

In addition to more professional development for school staff, more time and resources are needed for developing students' cultural competence skills. Teachers reported they needed more time to teach cultural pride, which would support student engagement. Some teachers see value in using books that reflect diverse cultural backgrounds to teach diversity. However, due to a lack of funding and guidance, they did not have access to books that fit the reading levels and cultural backgrounds of all their students — particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

One potential model for teaching elementary students cultural competence is the Roots of Empathy program. At one elementary school, we observed a teacher using this curriculum to have students report on what makes them “special, different, or unique from other people” in the class. The students then engaged in discussion about their ancestry and the difference between culture and ethnicity.

There is a need for more bilingual, and particularly bicultural, staff in schools to support cultural competence, according to teachers, counselors and coaches from one elementary and three secondary schools. These individuals have a greater understanding of students' home cultures and can act as role models. In addition, having adults present who speak students' home languages is a requisite for the school to be culturally competent. For example, a school's ability to welcome Arabic-speaking parents and newcomer students and get to know the needs of the Arabic-

speaking community suffers from the lack of Arabic translation services.

In order to support cultural competency, some schools need more experienced and effective teachers. Several administrators noted that teachers in their first or second years of teaching usually feel compelled to focus on the basics of teaching and may not be able to differentiate and meet the needs of ELLs from different backgrounds. Poor classroom management can also lead to a chaotic and potentially unsafe classroom environment.

## Climate for Learning and School Safety

The school climate varies across elementary and secondary schools in OUSD. Two secondary schools reported a generally positive climate. For example, one school surveyed their students and found that 98% felt safe, and the school cited high attendance and low suspension rates as further evidence of a positive climate. An interviewee from another school attributed the positive climate at their school primarily to the high expectations set by school staff and parents for how to treat students and how students treat each other. At one high-ELL elementary school, an administrator reported that improvements in reclassification rates are due to a stronger school culture, as well as stronger academic standards and increased teacher retention. Individuals at one school, however, do not feel as positive about their school climate. For example, students, parents, and school staff reported a weak learning environment. A parent of an ELL student said, “The climate is not a climate of learning, so I feel like I have to struggle against all the negative influences to keep my kid focused on learning and the future.”

A school climate is affected by perceptions of school safety, which is only partially under the school's control, and many OUSD schools are located in areas with high crime rates. Students at one high-ELL

elementary school reported feeling unsafe in large part because of threatening strangers nearby. We recommend that OUSD increase support for bilingual counselors to better support ELLs when they deal with community trauma.

Schools also sometimes engage in harsh disciplinary policies that can make students feel unsafe (e.g., at one school a security officer, at a teacher's request, engaged in disciplining a very young child). OUSD should underscore the social dangers of overly harsh or criminalizing discipline, particularly targeted at young African American and Latino boys, and take seriously all reports of abusive disciplinary practice.

At the other end of the spectrum, a lack of classroom management was problematic in the schools visited. In one elementary and three secondary focus groups, ELL students complained about other students who act out in class and upset the teacher so much it affects their instruction. Classroom observations also show that some teachers struggle with classroom management. In most of the observed classrooms, a low proportion of students engaged in off-task or disruptive behavior, but there were classrooms where half or more of the students engaged in this type of behavior.

In many cases, teachers responded appropriately to disruptive behavior in terms of firmness/gentleness; however, in some cases, the teacher's response did not cease the behavior. In some classrooms, teachers did not respond at all to disruptive behavior. Only very rarely did teachers respond too harshly. Elementary school classrooms performed better on this measure than did middle/high school classrooms. Elementary teachers were less likely (17%) than secondary teachers (34%) to not respond at all to disruptive/off-task behavior. Elementary teachers were more likely (44%) to respond appropriately with the student ceasing behavior than secondary teachers (30%). We recommend that OUSD identify and promote

cutting-edge practices for classroom management, especially in high-poverty urban schools.

### ***Need for counseling and other support outside of class***

District staff, teachers, administrators, and school staff in elementary and secondary schools reported a need for more Spanish-speaking and, in some cases, Arabic-speaking psychologists as well as more general support for kids who are dealing with fallout from family stresses (e.g., being refugees, parents being sent back to the home country). At least one secondary school lacks any bilingual counselor, and a stakeholder identified this as an issue of concern. According to one school psychologist, ELLs who are referred to counseling by school staff sometimes do not receive it because their parents do not agree. Parents of ELLs may not agree due to a perceived stigma around children receiving mental health services or perhaps out of fear that their children could be reported to Child Protective Services. However, the psychologist felt that many of these parents can be convinced if the teacher reaches out and explains the need for counseling to them. Some teachers do not refer many students, or do not recognize when counseling might be beneficial. This indicates a need for better understanding by teachers of the types of stresses or trauma that students face and how counseling can help. Parents may also need counseling due to the stresses they face, which in turn can really help the students since their home environment becomes less stressful.

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## **Family Engagement**

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Engaging families in fostering academic achievement is a major theme in the research and practice of educational reform over the past decades. The active involvement of parents may help narrow the achievement gap and increase the acquisition of English by ELLs. This concept is reinforced by many educators in OUSD and the parents that participated in this study.



Rooted in a vision of educational pragmatism and social justice, we found an almost unanimous desire to build better school-home bridges.

ELLs and their families suffer the consequences of marginalization due to socio-economic status, estrangement from a culturally-distinct educational system, and a lack of power and isolation due to linguistic barriers. Serving ELLs necessitates effectively addressing these ills as determined by the current educational framework and beyond: duly informing parents, empowering them to act and interact, and providing the leadership structures that allow them to voice their aspirations and perspectives. The themes in this section reflect the analysis of all district stakeholders' input on how to better engage ELL families in a unified manner under the auspices of OUSD.

## Communication with Families

### *Communication systems*

All schools in this study had some systems of communication with parents in place, though diverse stakeholders from elementary and secondary schools alike expressed the need to improve these systems. All schools use traditional means such as a weekly newsletter or parent-teacher conferences, and three schools mentioned enhancing communications with technology, such as bilingual automated calls, software translation of progress reports, or text messages that incorporate automatic translation. Such measures represent a timely and sustainable means of mass communication, but they put the onus on parents' own access to technology, which cannot be fully guaranteed.

The solution to better engagement with parents lies in site capacity-building and the acknowledgment of parents as equal partners. Schools are in different places in terms of how successfully they engage parents, according to parents as well as school and central office staff. Stakeholders tended to perceive

significantly higher levels of parental engagement and satisfaction in sites with dedicated parent engagement staff. A myriad of stakeholders at those sites praised the school for its ability to involve more people and create an integrative atmosphere. However, some administrators at the elementary level report that they face challenges finding sufficient funding for parent resource centers.

### *Interpreting and translation services*

A recurring need voiced across schools at all levels and with different proportions of ELLs is for improved interpreting/translation services. Currently, interpreting is often performed by ad hoc interpreters without formal training, such as school secretaries, parents' acquaintances, or by students themselves. Interpreting performed by non-trained individuals may alter the nature of parent-school relationships or fail to accurately convey all necessary information. A number of interviewees were concerned that vital information was being lost in translation, particularly with home languages other than Spanish. Staff members in various schools were concerned about the reliability of interpretation, its capacity to reach parents who may have limited schooling themselves, and the effective transmission of complex messages, as in the case of special education meetings.

Translation of school documents is a related concern. For example, some principals and teachers in elementary settings mentioned the need for translating documents such as behavioral plans or site plans. Since access to interpreting/translation services entails an often overburdened bureaucratic procedure, meetings to discuss Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) get delayed. While the Exceptional Children Department of OUSD hires external resources and agencies to help with the translation/interpretation needs of the office, there still exists a pronounced and widespread lack of available resources for interpretation/translation for IEP meetings at the site level, particularly with minority languages such as Tongan, Hmong, Farsi,

or Vietnamese. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity among some stakeholders with regard to the process of obtaining interpretation/translation services, and different perceptions of the turnaround time. Overall, access to translation services across schools is extremely uneven. Parents in various schools declared that these linguistic barriers would discourage them from engaging in school activities.

Interviews and focus groups revealed creative ways in which different staff or community members communicate with Spanish-speaking families, such as having students, family members, family friends, or office staff interpret when necessary. Most schools would like to have one or more front office staff members capable of communicating in Spanish. However, shifts in student populations toward other home languages such as Arabic necessitate more strategies to reach families. In addition to minority languages, communication in minority dialects should be considered as well.

Many stakeholders from all groups and across all educational levels request a reliable language translation service and deem it a critical factor to promote parent engagement. Satisfying this demand entails both the provision of services matched to the demographics of the schools and clarification about the procedures to obtain such support. The district needs to anticipate linguistic needs and consider the diversity of languages involved. In light of the considerable expense of these services, the district would benefit from a cost analysis to determine whether these needs would be more efficiently met by district staff or by outsourced services. To complement this analysis, the district should disseminate information about current interpreting services, and streamline the process for requesting such services.

### ***English classes for parents***

Many staff and family stakeholders were very hopeful about the potential of implementing English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for parents. Offering ESL classes would allow for greater communication

among staff and families and foment discussion of the procedures and dynamics prevalent in U.S. schools. In one instance, language classes for parents were able to incorporate Arabic speaking families in conjunction with their regular Latino participants. Offering ESL classes for parents at some schools but not others begets resentment among parents. The district can make an effort to proactively engage the growing number of ELL families, particularly those from non-Hispanic backgrounds, by developing a structure to provide ESL classes for parents.

## **System Knowledge and Awareness**

The district fulfills its mission and complies with federal and state requirements to provide representation opportunities for parents, both at the site and district level. District personnel stated that they try to facilitate parent participation in these meetings. Much of the spirit and drive for these meetings at the site level is linked to the personality and disposition of the leadership. Accordingly, in three schools where these bodies are thriving, the administrators had a clear vision to use the School Site Council (SSC) and English Language Acquisition Committee (ELAC) meetings to educate parents about their own leadership or academic matters such as reclassification or budgeting. In the remaining schools we found considerable variability in the awareness and subsequent response from parents.

### ***Parental leadership***

The parents of ELLs and the district community as a whole would benefit from a unified definition and purpose of parent representation bodies. While school leadership is fundamental to success, the mission of these bodies and their capacity to engage should not rest on the efforts of school leaders alone. Clarifying the intended impact of these bodies on student success, and aligning resources to support parent attendance can create sustainability.

### ***Parent knowledge and bilingual education***

District personnel, school administrators, and teachers expressed concerns about the lack of information for parents about the system in which their children are enrolled. Even in places with vibrant parent involvement, there is a lack of deeper engagement in decision making. For example, in one high school parents were not involved in student course assignment, and were routinely asked to trust the school's decision. Some elementary parents said that they were not given any program option when they enroll their children, and parents are given little information that can help them determine the advantages and disadvantages or expected outcomes of each program. At the heart of this issue is the goal of treating parents as equal partners in education.

Just as information was critical for the bodies of representation, information is also critical with respect to language of instruction for ELLs. Right from the beginning parents need to be aware of the rationale and implication for the educational choices for their children. Accordingly, parents may continue to engage when they keep a specific target in focus — namely bi-literacy or reclassification. Both educators and parents would unequivocally benefit from a clear definition of the purpose, milestones, consequences and roles in the reclassification process to ensure that progress is being made. Additionally, many misconceptions about bilingual education would dissipate if current research and practices on bilingual education were intentionally shared among community members beyond the limited information provided in the Parent Notification Letter (PNL).

It is noteworthy that parents must be informed of reclassification requirements and procedures. Some of the confusion among parents may be worsened by the lack of clarity among school staff. In one instance a principal stated that parents do not play a role in reclassification, but rather that it was an exclusively data-based decision. In fact, it is

necessary to involve parents in discussions about reclassification by notifying them of their child's status and progress, as expressed by both central offices and school administrators.

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## **Staffing and Resources**

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### **Support for Teachers**

While OUSD has made teacher supports and development a priority, competing priorities make this a challenge, as does the significant turnover of teachers, and limited fiscal resources. As a result, school personnel often have limited access to supports. For example, administrators, teachers and support staff from six different schools feel that their demanding schedules do not allow for adequate opportunities to collaborate with other teachers and staff during the school day. Of particular note is the desire to secure funds for site-based coaches to support implementation of practice shifts. Administration, support, and teaching personnel from half of all schools interviewed expressed frustration with the multi-site academic coach system, including accessibility, experience with OUSD's classroom environments, and individual contact time. One district office notes that school-based coaches are the "strongest model" available, and The Norm Gold Associates report on OUSD ELL Identification and Reclassification (2014:7) underscores this finding. We recommend OUSD "establish site ELL specialist positions" with expertise in the integration of language, literacy, and content.

### ***Professional Development***

Professional development (PD) represents an area with much potential for growth in OUSD, particularly with respect to ELLs. Most teachers and administrators across all grade levels said that they had experienced some level of PD for ELLs. PD for



ELLs is currently viewed as an area of great need at a majority of schools across grade levels (with various staff at 8 of the 12 schools) as an area of great need. This finding substantiates finding D.1.d. of the Norm Gold Associates report (2014:6), which states that, “The district should plan for a major roll-out and PD effort on the new plan [for ELLs] that will reach all teachers, counselors, administrators, clerks (and others).” Secondary-level focus groups reported that PD is needed to offer highly-rigorous instruction for students. Current PD is not in line with the needs of OUSD students. Additionally, teachers at an elementary school and a middle school felt well-prepared to support ELLs, although they did communicate a need for classroom support to break students into smaller groups.

Professional development-specific topics requested by stakeholders at least once during interviews fall into two categories, ELL-related and Beyond ELL. For ELL-related PD, requested topics include scaffolding/differentiation for ELLs (traditional ELLs, newcomers, students with learning disabilities); cultural issues (i.e., cultural competence, community stress’ relationship to mental health); grouping students of different ELP levels; CCSS/NGSS; special education; PD for administrators on ELLs; and transferring skills from the home language to English. For the beyond ELL PD the following topics were requested: classroom climate/management; academic discussion; reading; identifying appropriate texts for students; and technology.

Overall, stakeholders called for more PD for ELLs, especially PD that is more aligned to site needs and priorities. Given the complex shifts in practice demands of the CCSS, NGSS, and the new ELP Standards, schools would benefit from sustained funding for on-site coaches that can support the implementation of integrated language, literacy, and content development. As the district builds an on-site coaching model, it must evaluate the roles of the centralized specialists and consider how they will support the capacity and leadership development of coaches in the areas of

integrated language, literacy and content development, scaffolding for ELLs, home language and culture integration, and support. Teachers would also benefit from a more formal time allotted for collaboration.

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## Conclusion

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The recommendations contained in this report are built upon evidence from OUSD practices in teaching and learning, parent and community engagement, professional capacity, and site and district leadership. Yet improvement of education for ELLs — as is the case for all students — can only be accomplished by viewing them as part of the complex district system.

The education literature suggests the failures of approaches to improvement look for isolated “silver bullets.” Rather, as Anthony Bryk and his colleagues observed in their extensive seven-year study of the organizational structure of the Chicago Public Schools, “The evidence...attests that these systems stand in strong interaction with one another. As a consequence of this interactivity, meaningful improvement typically entails orchestrated initiatives across multiple domains” (p. 197). In short, strength in one or more of these subsystems is not a recipe for success if there is weakness in any other. The importance of building commitment and capacity at all levels is widely recognized in school systems as diverse as Union City, New Jersey (Kirp, 2103) and Sanger, California (David and Talbert, 2013).

Clearly there is nothing that effective schools do that Oakland Unified School District schools cannot do. OUSD is perfectly poised to take the lessons gleaned from this study and others to produce generations of ELL students well-equipped for success. It may not happen overnight, but with the strong, focused, and consistent efforts of district and school leaders, teachers, and the community, great things will happen. We hope this report provides action steps that cohere with the district vision for ELL success.

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## Appendix

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### A: Observation Protocol

#### OUSD ELL Review Observation Protocol

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time in \_\_\_\_\_ Time out \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning or end of class \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Subject area \_\_\_\_\_ Total # of students \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Seating arrangement (circle all that apply):    Rows    Groups    Horseshoe    Circle    Rug

#### Dimension 1 – Student Engagement

***What percentage of students appear to be interacting verbally on task at least once during the class? (Choose the percentage closest to your response.)***

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

***What percentage of students appear to be off task/participating in disruptive behavior at least once during the class? (Choose the percentage closest to your response.)***

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

***If students are disruptive or off task:***

- 4) Teacher responds with appropriate firmness or gentleness to the severity of the behavior, and student ceases behavior.
- 3) Teacher responds with appropriate firmness or gentleness to the severity of the behavior, but student does not cease behavior.
- 2) Teacher does not respond at all to off task or disruptive behavior, or responds too gently.
- 1) Teacher responds too harshly to disruptive or off task behavior (e.g., uses shaming or inappropriately angry tone of voice).

N/A

#### Dimension 2 – Targeted Knowledge and Skills

***If you can identify the learning (and/or language) objectives, what were they?***

\_\_\_\_\_

***How clear are the learning objectives?***

- 4) Very clear, the objective(s) were explicitly articulated
- 3) Reasonably clear, the objective(s) were mentioned or referred to
- 2) Somewhat clear, the objective(s) were somewhat implied
- 1) I am not sure what the lesson objectives actually were or if there were objectives

**Dimension 3 – Participation Structures & Collaboration*****What type(s) of participant structures did you witness during the observation? Circle all that apply.***

- 1) Teacher talk
  - a. Whole class
  - b. Small group/One-on-one
- 2) Teacher-student IRE interactions (i.e., teacher initiation, student response, teacher evaluation)
  - a. Whole class
  - b. Small group/One-on-one
- 3) Teacher-student discussions (beyond IRE interactions)
  - a. Whole class
  - b. Small group/One-on-one
- 4) Student small group/pair work
- 5) Students working independently on seat work

**Dimension 4 – Instructional Supports (for ELLs)*****Explicit discussion of language demands or practices***

*Examples of language practices: constructing an argument from evidence, analyzing an author's intent, challenging others' reasoning*

- 4) Teacher explicitly focuses attention on the language practices involved in the lesson in a thorough way, going beyond just vocabulary and/or grammar.
- 3) Teacher explicitly focuses attention on the language practices involved in the lesson, but in a superficial way, staying at the level of identifying vocabulary or grammar.
- 2) Teacher implies or makes quick references to language practices that seem to relate to the lesson, but these references are cursory or unclear.
- 1) There is no acknowledgement of the language practices involved in the lesson segment.

Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?

Yes

No

### **Scaffolding**

*Examples of scaffolding: referencing previous knowledge or lessons, or posters on wall; providing students with graphic organizers or annotations in text margins for reading; peer support; modeling step-by-step how to do some task*

4) Teacher provides useful and relevant scaffolds to support student acquisition of content, language, and/or cognitive processes. Students are struggling productively toward tasks that are just above their current skill level.

3) Teacher uses relevant scaffolds to support student acquisition of content, language, and/or cognitive processes. However, the difficulty level of the task is too high or low for the students' current skill level.

2) Teacher uses scaffolds, but they are confusing, or not relevant to essential content and/or language of the lesson.

1) There are no instances of scaffolding observed.

Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?

Yes

No

### **Checks for understanding**

*Examples of instructional supports for checking understanding: pre-assessments, exit-tickets or post-assessments, quick writes, clickers*

4) Teacher consistently checks for students' understanding through instructional supports. These checks for understanding are authentic (similar to the task).

3) Teacher occasionally does authentic checks for understanding and these checks allow him or her to reasonably gauge understanding.

2) Teacher occasionally checks for understanding, but only through IRE question-answer-evaluation sequences and display questions.

1) Teacher does not check for understanding.

Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?

Yes

No

***[For Math only] Multiple representations to convey information***

*Examples of representations/modalities: pictures, words, fractions, decimals, expressions/equations, tables*

4) Students convey information essential to the content or language of lessons through three or more representations and/or modalities.

3) Students convey information essential to the content or language of lessons through two different representations and/or modalities.

2) Students do not convey information essential to the content or language of lessons through a range of representations and/or modalities but the teacher did use some varying representations.

1) There are no instances of students or teachers conveying information through multiple representations.

N/A

*Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?*

Yes

No

**Dimension 5 – Classroom Interaction & Discussion*****Opportunities for discussion in which students build on others' ideas***

4) Students successfully build on other students' turns-at-talk to clarify, elaborate, challenge, or build an idea related to key concepts, or solve a problem.

3) Students build on each other's turns-at-talk, but it is not apparent that this resulted in clarifying, elaborating, challenging, or building an idea related to key concepts or solving a problem.

2) Student-to-student discussions do not involve students building on, elaborating, challenging, problem solving or clarifying each other's turns-at-talk or ideas.

1) There are no opportunities for students to engage in discussion.

*Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?*

Yes

No

**Dimension 6 – (Written or Oral) Reasoning from Evidence**

***Students' use of (written or oral) evidence to support reasoning or construct arguments*** *Examples of evidence: textual evidence, evidence from personal experience, visual evidence*

4) Students use a wide range of relevant evidence to support their reasoning or construct arguments.

3) Students use some relevant evidence to support their reasoning or construct arguments.

2) Students use evidence to support their reasoning or construct arguments, but it is not relevant.

1) There were no opportunities for students to express their reasoning or construct arguments.

*Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?*

Yes

No

### **Dimension 7 – Transacting with Texts**

#### ***Students' reading with a clear purpose toward higher-level thinking***

4) Students read with a clear purpose toward higher-level thinking, such as making claims, analyzing, synthesizing or taking a critical stance. Teachers provided appropriate scaffolding to facilitate this (e.g., graphic organizers, annotations in the margins, peer support).

3) Students read with a clear purpose toward higher-level thinking, but scaffolding is not sufficient to support student understanding.

2) Students read with no clear purpose toward higher-level thinking (e.g., they are asked to read just for answering comprehension questions), and/or there is no appropriate scaffolding.

1) Students are not asked to read at all.

*Is this true for more than half of the students in the class?*

Yes

No

#### ***Are the texts students are reading complex and challenging (i.e., texts with rich and/or descriptive language, complex sentences)?***

- Yes
- No
- I can't tell
- N/A (no reading occurred)

#### ***Are the texts students are reading nonfiction/informational?***

- Yes
- No
- I can't tell
- N/A (no reading occurred)

***What specifically happened? Please upload a including bullets points or a short narrative of what specifically happened during the lesson. (i.e., What were students and the teacher specifically doing during this observation?)***

## B: Most Frequently Used Interview/Focus Group Instruments

### *Parent Focus Group – English*

#### Parent Focus Group Instrument

School \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for making time to meet today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am with the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. We've been asked by the Oakland Unified School District to conduct a review of some services that they provide to students who are English Language Learners. The purpose of our review is to give the district feedback on how they are doing and what they might do to improve. As part of this work, we are interviewing parents.*

*Our work is not an evaluation of particular schools nor individuals. All of your responses will be kept confidential. We will never reveal what you specifically reported to us. We ask you to be as honest as possible in your responses as the information you provide will help the school district in serving its ELL population.*

*Some of the topics I'm going to ask you about today include the program choices that you were offered by the district when your child or children first enrolled, ways in which the school shares information with parents, and your opinion on how the school might get more parents involved in school-related events and activities.*

*If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form.*

*[Distribute consent forms and allow parents to read them and ask questions. If necessary, summarize the contents of the consent form.]*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

*Great. Let's get started.*

#### **English Language Acquisition and School Programs**

[First we're going to talk about your children's experiences learning English.]

What do you feel the school is **doing to help your child learn English?**

How satisfied are you with their progress?

Now I'd like to talk for a bit about the various program types that exists for English Language Learners. There are transitional bilingual programs, there are dual immersion programs and there are structured English immersion programs. Think back to when you were enrolling your children in school.

**How did you choose** the program you chose? **What options** did the school give you when you enrolled? Do you feel like the options were **explained well?**

**How do you feel** about the program? Do you **wish you had chosen a different** program? What would you like to see **improved?**

**Parent Engagement**

How does the school **share information** with you [give examples if necessary, such as letters or emails]? Do you receive them in a **language that you can understand**? What are any ways that that the school could **communicate better** with you as a parent?

[Verify that school has an ELAC] [Explain English Language Advisory Committee (**ELAC**)] [Ask in nonjudgmental tone] Have you **heard anything** about this group? Have you ever **considered participating** in it? **Why** or why not? [If yes] How do you think it could be **improved** to help serve the needs of ELLs better?

[Explain School Site Council (**SSC**)] [Ask in nonjudgmental tone] Have you **heard anything** about this group? Have you ever **considered participating** in it? **Why** or why not? [If yes] How do you think it could be **improved** to help serve the needs of ELLs better?

[Explain **DELAC**] [Ask in nonjudgmental tone] Have you **heard anything** about this group? Have you ever **considered participating** in it? **Why** or why not? [If yes] How do you think it could be **improved** to help serve the needs of ELLs better?

[Explain **DAC**] [Ask in nonjudgmental tone] Have you **heard anything** about this group? Have you ever **considered participating** in it? **Why** or why not? [If yes] How do you think it could be **improved** to help serve the needs of ELLs better?

What would be some ways that the school could **get more parents involved** in school activities?

**Other**

**What else** do you want us to know that could help improve your child’s school?

*Principal Interview*

**Principal Interview**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: elem., middle, high school, other

(If other, specify \_\_\_\_\_)

*Thank you for making time to meet today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am with the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. We’ve been **asked** by the Oakland Unified School District to conduct a review of some services that they provide to students who are English Language Learners. **The purpose of our review is to give the district feedback** on how they are doing and what they might do to improve. As part of this work, we are interviewing principals.*

*Our work is **not an evaluation** of particular schools nor individuals. All of your responses will be kept **confidential**. We will never reveal what you specifically reported to us. We ask you to be as **honest** as possible*



*in your responses as the information you provide will help the school district in serving its ELL population.*

*I'm **going to ask you** a variety of questions about **instructional programs and practices** for ELLs at your school and the **role of district policies and supports** as well as **parent engagement**.*

*If you agree to this interview, please sign the consent form.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

*Great. Let's get started.*

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## Section 1: Instruction / ELD / CCSS and NGSS

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**1a. Programs and language** We are here to learn more about the programs and practices that focus on English learners at this school. I'd like to start by asking you to **describe** the different academic **programs** that serve ELLs at this school. Could you talk about their strengths? What about areas for improvement?

What **guidance**, if any, do you or the district provide teachers about **using students' home languages**? To your knowledge, do teachers at your school **use or allow students to use their home languages** in instruction?

**1b. ELD** [For middle and high school] What kind of guidance, if any, do you offer teachers on **collaboration** between ELD and subject area specialists?

[For elementary] How much does **subject-area content influence ELD**—when teachers plan ELD, do they take into account what's happening in ELA, math, social studies, science? Do people collaborate about each other's kids?

**1c. Common Core Standards** To what extent are ELLs at your school provided instruction that is **aligned to the new Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards**? What makes you say that? If greater alignment is needed, what needs to happen to support that?

What is the **district doing to support** teachers in **aligning** instruction with the new **Common Core State Standards**? Do you think this is true for ELLs?

**1d. Placement and reclassification** [for middle school] How are **Long Term English Learners** placed at your school?

**How and when are ELLs reclassified** at your school? How well does the reclassification process work? How could it be improved?

**1e. Professional development** Have you been able to participate in any **professional development** that focused on ELLs? What kind/how many? How would you say the quality of these PDs was?

What kind of **additional professional development** or guidance do you think would help you support ELLs? How do you think that might help?

**Section 2: SEL**

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What socio-emotional learning **programs or practices** are in place in your school, if any? To what extent are these programs and practices meeting the social and emotional needs of ELLs and why?

**Section 3: Parent Engagement**

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How well does your school **engage with parents** of ELLs and how could your school improve?

What **language(s)** does the school **use to communicate with parents** of ELLs? What determines which language(s) is/are used?

What kind of **guidance**, if any, does **school leadership** give to teachers about how to engage parents of ELLs?

How well does the **SSC** function? What are its main successes and struggles? What could be done to help it serve ELLs better?

[If school has ELAC] How well does the **ELAC** function? What are its main successes and struggles? What could be done to help it serve ELLs better?

**Section 4: Anything we missed?**

=====

Is there **any other information about the topics** we have discussed today that **you think would be helpful for the district?**

Is there anything else **you would like from the district in terms of support for ELLs?**

*Student Interview – Mid/High*

**Focus Group Questions for Students at Middle School and High School**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am with the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. We’ve been asked by the Oakland Unified School District to review of some services that they provide to students who are English Language Learners. The purpose of our review is to give the district feedback on how they are doing and what they might do to improve. As part of this work, we are interviewing students.*

*This is NOT a test. There are NO wrong answers. We want to talk to you in a group along with other students at your school to find out more about what you think about your classes and your school experiences.*

*Your answers are confidential. We will not share your responses with anyone. We also ask you not to share what other students say in this group. Your answers will be combined with those of other students in your school and other schools across the city to describe what Oakland Unified students think, do, and experience.*

*If you agree to participate, please sign the assent form.*

*Some of the topics I'm going to ask you about today include what you like and don't like about school, and how people treat each other at this school.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

*Great. Let's get started.*

## **SECTION 1- COURSE SELECTION AND A-G**

We are interested in how students choose their classes—how they know what classes to sign up for next semester or next year.

Could you tell me a little bit about **how do you choose your classes?**

**How do you know what classes to take?**

- a) **Who** do you talk to about it?
- b) If you **needed to find out** something about classes, what could you do to get the information? **Who** could you ask?
- c) Can you see a **counselor** about it?
- d) **How often** do you get to talk about classes with an adult at your school?
- e) [High school only] What do you know about what you need to do to **qualify for a four-year public university** in California like Cal State or University of California - Berkeley?
- f) [High school only] What do you know about the **A-G requirements?**

**[Notes on course selection]**

## **SECTION 2 – SEL / ACADEMIC CLASSES AND ELD**

Let's talk a little bit about your experiences in school.

--EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- a) How much **do you like your school?** What are the main things you like (don't like) about it?

--TEACHER EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

I am going to ask you a few questions about your classes.

Do you feel like ... ?:

- a) Your **teachers help you** when you need it.

*Explain **why** you gave that answer. Can you give any **examples** of how they have helped you or not helped you when you needed help? Would you answer this question differently for different classes and, if so, which classes and why?*

- b) How **comfortable** do you feel **asking your teacher questions**?

*Explain **why** you gave that answer. Can you give any **examples** of what they say or do when you or other students ask questions? Would you answer this question differently for different classes and, if so, which classes and why?*

Do you feel like ... ?:

- c) Your **teachers** treat you with **respect**.

*Explain **why** you gave that answer. Can you give any **examples** of what they say or do? Would you answer this question differently for different classes and, if so, which classes and why?*

Do you feel like ... ?:

- d) Your **teachers are respectful** when you make **mistakes with English**.

*Explain **why** you gave that answer. Can you give any **examples** of what they say or do? Would you answer this question differently for different classes and, if so, which classes and why?*

Do you feel like ... ?:

- e) The **students** in your classes treat you with respect and are respectful when you make **mistakes with English**

*Explain **why** you gave that answer. Can you give any **examples** of what other students say?*

*Does your answer describe **most students** or **just a few**? Are these students who speak **your language also**, or students who **only speak English**, or both?*

*Would you answer this question differently for different classes and, if so, which classes and why?*

**--ELD**

How **helpful** is your **ELD class** in preparing you for **success in the future**?

- Explain **why** you gave that answer.
- How helpful is it for preparing you for **success in school**?
- For **future work** outside of school?

**--Positive relationships/sense of belonging**

- a) How much do you feel like you **fit in or belong** at your school? *Explain **why** you gave that answer. Can you give any **examples**?*

**--Linguistic climate for participation and positive language attitudes**

A “home language” is the language that someone usually speaks at home with their family, and is often the one they first learned as a little kid. For example, my home language is XX because that’s what I speak with my children/spoke with my family when I was a kid, but my friend BB’s home language is YY because that’s what s/he speaks at home. What is your home language? Let’s talk a little about how you use that language at school.

- a) Do you feel **proud** that to be able to use a **language other than English**? *How come?*
- b) Are there any of your **teachers** who **use your home language in class**, or who encourage **students to use your home language** in class or on homework assignments?
- c) Are there are times when you feel like **don’t understand** what is going on **in class** because **you don’t understand the English** people are using?
- a. When and **which classes**?
  - b. What do you do?
- d) Do adults at this school ever make you feel uncomfortable about speaking a language other than English?
- a. *Explain **why** you gave that answer.*
  - b. **Which adults** are you thinking of?
  - c. *Can you give any **examples** of what adults say?*
  - d. *Are these **adults** who **speak your language also**, or adults who **only speak English**, or both?*
  - e. *Does this occur **in class or outside of class**?*
  - f. *And if so, **where/which classes**?*
- e) Do other students ever make you feel **uncomfortable** about **speaking a language other than English** at this school?
- a. *Explain **why** you gave that answer.*
  - b. *Can you give any **examples** of what other students say?*
  - c. *Are these students who **speak your home language also**, or students who **only speak English**, or both?*
  - d. *Does this occur **in class or outside of class**?*
  - e. *and if so, **where/which classes**?*
- f) How **important** is it to you to be **really good at English**? Why is that?
- g) Do you **try to get better** at English? **What do you do** to get better?

**SECTION 3 - FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

- a) What kind of feedback do your teachers give you on **how you're doing** in your classes or **how you could do better**?
  - o [If they focus on major texts:] What about other than tests, or **in between tests and quizzes**?
  - o [If they are unclear: Feedback is when someone tells you what you're doing well and how you could do better.]

*Teacher Focus Group*

**Questions for Teacher Focus Group**

School \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: elem., middle school, high school, other

(If other, please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_)

*Thank you for making time to meet today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am with the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. We've been asked by the Oakland Unified School District to conduct a review of some services that they provide to students who are English Language Learners. The purpose of our review is to give the district feedback on how they are doing and what they might do to improve. As part of this work, we are interviewing teachers.*

*Our work is not an evaluation of particular schools nor individuals. All of your responses will be kept confidential. We will never reveal what you specifically reported to us. We ask you to be as honest as possible in your responses as the information you provide will help the school district in serving its ELL population.*

*Some of the topics I'm going to ask you about today include your training to work with ELLs, how ELLs are doing in the classroom, and engagement with parents of ELLs.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

*Great. Let's get started.*

**Professional Experience and Training**

**How long** have all of you been working with English learners?

Can you discuss the **professional development** that you have attended that focused on ELLs? How did you feel about the quality of these experiences? What was the impact of those PDs in your practice?

What kind of **additional professional development or supports** do you think would help you support ELLs?



### **Classroom Instruction and Assessment**

[IF SCHOOL HAS MORE THAN 1 PROGRAM TYPE FOR ELLS] How would you rate the various program types in terms of their quality? What **role does the principal play** in fostering/supporting quality programs for ELLs?

What are some ways that you **formatively assess** students in your class to make sure that they are on the right track? What do you do with the results from formative assessment?

How are students' **home languages** used in class, or on homework assignments, if they are at all?

How do you handle **grouping students** of different proficiency levels in English, in terms of collaborative group work and academic discussions in your classes? How do you encourage ELL participation and learning in group work and discussions?

### **Social Emotional Learning**

What kind of **SEL policies and practices** does the school have? Could you give examples of how they have been helpful or what else you think would be helpful, particularly in addressing the SEL needs of ELLs?

Have you had any **training on socio-emotional learning**? Could you give examples of how they have been helpful or what else you think would be helpful in terms of training or supports, particularly in addressing the SEL needs of ELLs?

How would you describe ELL students in terms of their **engagement in class**, such as participation, paying attention and positive conduct? Do ELLs tend to be more or less engaged in particular classes such as math, ELA, science, Social Studies, ELD, or other classes? What kind of improvements could the school make to better support student engagement?

### **English Language Development**

How much **collaboration is there at your school between ELD and subject area teachers**? To what extent do you participate in that? Why? If you do, to what extent do you find it useful? Why?

How is the **content of ELD** classes decided? How is ELD organized with regards to groups, curriculum, specific content, etc.? What is working well in terms of ELD at your school and what could be improved?

## C: Understanding Language's 6 Key Principles for ELL Instruction

1. **Instruction focuses on providing ELLs with opportunities to engage in discipline- specific practices which are designed to build conceptual understanding and language competence in tandem.**

Learning is a social process that requires teachers to intentionally design learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the practices of each discipline.

2. **Instruction leverages ELLs' home language(s), cultural assets, and prior knowledge.** ELLs' home language(s) and culture(s) are regarded as assets and are used by the teacher in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge, and in making content meaningful and comprehensible.

3. **Standards-aligned instruction for ELLs is rigorous, grade-level appropriate, and provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds.** Instruction that is rigorous and standards-aligned reflects the key shifts in the CCSS and NGSS. Such shifts require that teachers provide students with opportunities to describe their reasoning, share explanations, make conjectures, justify conclusions, argue from evidence, and negotiate meaning from complex texts. Students with developing levels of English proficiency will require instruction that carefully supports their understanding and use of emerging language as they participate in these activities.

4. **Instruction moves ELLs forward by taking into account their English proficiency level(s) and prior schooling experiences.** ELLs within a single classroom can be heterogeneous in terms of home language(s) proficiency, proficiency in English, literacy levels in English and student's home language(s), previous experiences in schools, and time in the U.S. Teachers must be attentive to these differences and design instruction accordingly.

5. **Instruction fosters ELLs' autonomy by equipping them with the strategies necessary to comprehend and use language in a variety of academic settings.** ELLs must learn to use a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic talk and complex text, to participate in academic discussions, and to express themselves in writing across a variety of academic situations. Tasks must be designed to ultimately foster student independence.

6. **Diagnostic tools and formative assessment practices are employed to measure students' content knowledge, academic language competence, and participation in disciplinary practices.** These assessment practices allow teachers to monitor students' learning so that they may adjust instruction accordingly, provide students with timely and useful feedback, and encourage students to reflect on their own thinking and learning.

## D: OUSD's Essential Practices for ELL and Multilingual Achievement

### Essential Practices for ELL and Multilingual Achievement

The mission and vision of the Office of English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement (ELLMA) is to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide English Language Learners (ELLs) with equity and access to an excellent education, ensuring that all ELLs achieve at high levels in one or more languages and ultimately graduate college, career and community ready.

OUSD provides two pathways for our ELLs to reach this goal:

- A PK-12 **Bilingual / Dual Language pathway** supporting students to develop academic and linguistic proficiency in two or more languages and earn the California Seal of Biliteracy upon high school graduation.
- **Integrated English Pathway:** A Language-rich core curriculum plus content-integrated English Language Development courses

In the current context of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), our ELLs are expected to meet the same academic demands as their peers, with a new emphasis on using sophisticated language to articulate thinking and reasoning in ways that are specific to each subject area. The challenges are great; but so are the opportunities. The following essential practices are designed to both guide and hold accountable all OUSD educators as we take collective responsibility for the academic, linguistic, and socio-emotional needs of our ELLs.

#### 1. DESIGNATED AND INTEGRATED ELD: ELLs receive daily Designated ELD and Integrated ELD in every content area.

- Provide Integrated ELD that
  - o has clear articulation, instruction, and assessment of **content and language** objectives.
  - o provides students appropriate levels of language-focused scaffolds in content area instruction.
  - o focuses on the academic language and literacies specific to that discipline (language of math, science, history, etc.).
- Provide daily Designated English Language Development that:
  - o is aligned to the new ELD standards.
  - o is embedded in or explicitly connected to grade-level content or topics.
  - o emphasizes **focused language study** to help students understand how language works in meaningful contexts.
  - o includes systematic development of academic vocabulary.

- o requires students to spend at least 50% of instructional time producing oral and written language.
- Provide ALL teachers school-wide professional development on language and content integrated ELD (e.g., new [ELD standards](#) with a focus on Part I. Interacting in Meaningful Ways, [Constructing Meaning, Content Area Language and Literacy, Quality Teaching for English Learners](#)).

**2. ACCESS & RIGOR:** All English Language Learners have full access to and engagement in the academic demands of Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and California’s 2012 English Language Development Proficiency Standards.

- Ensure instruction for all ELLs is aligned to grade-level standards in all content areas.
- Provide complex texts and tasks for ELLs in all content areas. Enrich and amplify instruction so that all students are supported with appropriate levels of scaffolding and rich, multiple entry points into a curriculum that emphasizes depth over breadth.
- Ensure ELLs, excepting newcomers with less than 12 months in the country, receive both ELA and ELD.
- Use the ELD standards to inform Designated and Integrated ELD.
- Minimize isolation of ELLs; maximize inclusion in mixed fluency-level settings.
- At the high school level, ensure ELLs have full access to A-G credit bearing classes.
- Provide high-quality instructional and support services to ELLs with disabilities in alignment with their IEPs.

**3. DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS:** Programmatic, placement, and instructional decisions for English Language Learners are grounded in regular analysis of evidence.

- Ensure ELLs are placed in courses based on **multiple** factors – including CELDT, SRI, years in US schools, and ELL subgroup (newcomer, at-risk, progressing, Long-term ELL).
- Offer courses that reflect the specific needs of subgroups of English Language Learners such as Academic Language and Literacy for LTELs, Intensive language and literacy for newcomers, and Foundational literacy for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE).
- Engage all ELLs and their families in reflection and goal-setting using the [ELL Student Snapshot](#) at least 2x/year.
- Monitor progress of recently reclassified students (within last two years) to ensure they continue to progress. Provide targeted support and intervention as appropriate.

**4. ASSET-BASED:** Recognize that bilingualism and biliteracy are assets, and provide opportunities for students to work toward earning a Seal of Biliteracy upon high school graduation.

- Provide opportunities to use and develop academic language and content knowledge in both English and the home language.

- Provide rigorous bilingual education programs for ELLs aimed at fostering biliteracy (e.g., One-way or Two-way Dual Language).
- Provide alternate pathways to bilingualism and biliteracy for those students not enrolled in a bilingual program.
- Educate the community on the merits of and criteria for the [Seal of Biliteracy](#) and the Biliteracy Pathway Awards. Encourage ELLs to set a goal for the attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy (e.g. 9th grade plan).
- Increase offerings of **World Language AP courses**. Offer heritage language classes such as **EPH** (Español para Hispanos) as a bridge to AP courses.

**5. STUDENT INTERACTION:** Instruction ensures all ELLs are active and productive contributors to collaborative group work and academic discussions.

- Incorporate collaborative group work and academic discussion into daily instruction.
- Self-assess level of teacher practice by using the [Academic Discussion Continuum of Teacher Practice](#). Identify one or two school-wide strategies to foster academic discussion.
- Provide ongoing and high quality professional learning and coaching on fortifying output, fostering student interaction, facilitating whole and small group discussion, designing meaningful prompts and tasks, and using appropriate levels of scaffolding.
- Use student-focused observation protocols such as the 5x8 cards or [ELL Shadowing](#) to monitor participation and language use of ELLs.
- Ensure that students are engaged in producing language through talk or writing no less than 50% of instructional time.

**6. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:** Families of ELLs are welcomed, and empowered as partners in the academic and social development of their children.

- Engage parents as active participants, contributors and cultural liaisons to the school community.
- Provide families accessible and thorough information that enable them to make informed choices about their children's education.
- Ensure community resources are reflective of cultural and language groups of community.
- Ensure families understand the reclassification criteria and are engaged in their child's goal-setting using the ELL Student Snapshot.
- Ensure families, especially newcomer families, are aware of resources available for them and are connected with the Family Resource Centers at your site.

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