

Get Smart Fast: Leveraging the Assets of Multilingual Learners

Why does this topic matter?



The proportion of public school students in the U.S. who are designated as English learners (ELs) has increased by over **25%** in the past two decades.



Nearly half of states have seen their proportion of students designated as ELs more than double since 2000 and several states, such as Kentucky, North Dakota, Mississippi, and South Carolina, are serving substantial numbers of ELs for the first time in recent history.



Multilingual learners (MLs) are a **diverse group of learners** and vary on numerous dimensions, including time in the U.S., English language proficiency, and disability status.

What does the evidence say?

Benefits for students



Multilingualism is an asset

Multilingualism brings with it cognitive, educational, economic, and sociocultural benefits. Maintaining one's home language and building multilingualism builds on existing language assets and improves social and academic outcomes.

A systems approach should be used to support MLs

Asset-based and culturally responsive instruction celebrates student strengths, expecting success and promoting multilingualism as an asset. Taking a systems view allows us to account for multiple pieces that contribute to ML success at the individual, institutional, and structural levels.

Benefits for the broader community



Multilingualism promotes equity, encourages representation, and is a human right.

Language reclamation and revitalization build individual and community identity and provide opportunities to elevate student and community voices.

What do conditions of success look like?



- Implement policies that promote multilingualism
- Utilize frameworks that identify key levers for change, including family and community partnerships and an asset orientation toward students and families



- Promote systems alignment and partnership to support ML success
- Provide access to professional learning and support implementation of high-quality instructional practices



- Understand the diverse assets MLs bring to the classroom
- Create and sustain language-rich, high-quality instructional environments



- Experience cognitive, educational, sociocultural, and economic benefits

What innovative models exist?



Hawaii's Multilingualism for Equitable Education Policy provides supports of students, their families, and educators.

Hawaii



Rhode Island's Blueprint for Multilingual Learner Success includes a vision and set of principles to strengthen policies, programs, and practices for all MLs

Rhode Island



New Mexico's Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs promote proficiency in two or more languages, including Native American languages

New Mexico



Nebraska uses data to determine and scale up best practices for supporting instruction and school improvement for their ML students.

Nebraska

How are efforts funded?

A variety of funding opportunities exist with strategies for blending and braiding funds, depending on the type of program.

- [Title III](#)
- [National Professional Development \(NPD\) Grants](#)
- [The Native American Language Grant](#)
- [The Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program](#)
- [Augustus F. Hawkins Center of Excellence Program](#)

For more information and helpful resources, visit <https://compcenternetwork.org/>