Office of the Superintendent
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

January 19, 2023

<u>MEMORANDUM</u>

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: English Language Development Program Evaluation Report

On July 14, 2020, the Montgomery County Board of Education directed the superintendent to hire an outside expert and convene a commission of stakeholders to examine student achievement data for students receiving English Language Development (ELD) services and Hispanic/Latino Students (Resolution No. 381-20). The Board called for a review of all aspects of the current ELD model, including student achievement outcomes and the findings and recommendations of the workgroups. The Board requested a final report and recommendations by March 31, 2021 (which could be extended or delayed, if necessary, due to ongoing COVID-19 health concerns).

The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) submitted a Request for Proposal (RFP) in the fall of 2020; however, the cost of consultant services far exceeded the initial budget, resulting in no applicants. After approval to increase the funding, a second RFP was submitted on August 30, 2021, and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) was selected as an external evaluator to collaborate with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) stakeholders to conduct research into current MCPS practices.

As part of this work, CAL analyzed data, reviewed documents, convened focus groups, collected survey data, and conducted observations of classrooms that included Emergent Multilingual Learners and/or Hispanic/Latino students.

OCIP received the final evaluation report on December 20, 2022. A copy of the report is attached. The report provides MCPS with recommendations related to instructional methods and models; communication and parent outreach; staffing; preparation for college and career readiness; support for students with limited and interrupted formal education; and professional development for MCPS staff.

This report initially will be discussed with the members of the Special Populations Committee at its meeting on January 26, 2023. A response plan will be shared with the full Board on March 7, 2023.

If you have questions, please contact Ms. Niki T. Hazel, associate superintendent of curriculum and instructional programs, via email or Ms. Vicky Lake-Parcan, acting director, Department of English Learners and Multilingual Education, via email.

MBM:PKM:PAP:NTH:ds

Attachment

Copy to:
  Executive Staff
  Ms. Lake-Parcan
  Ms. Webb

Report of the Center for Applied Linguistics Commission on ELD Instruction and Latina/o Student Achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools

December 15, 2022

Acknowledgements

Members of the Stakeholder Commission

The Center for Applied Linguistics extends our utmost appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Stakeholder Commission who contributed time, energy, passion, and knowledge to this effort. The gracious contributions of these individuals supported our understanding of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) contexts, assets, and challenges.

CAL Personnel

The following CAL personnel contributed to this report:

About CAL

The Center for Applied Linguistics is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to the study of language and culture and the application of research on language and culture to educational and societal concerns, with internationally recognized excellence in and understanding of effective instruction of English learner (EL) students from a range of languages and cultures. Since its founding in 1959, CAL has been active in educational research, technical assistance, professional development, information collection and dissemination, policy analysis, language assessment, and program evaluation. CAL was the first organization of its kind to focus on the development of research-based materials for English as a second language, bilingual, and world language instruction. The organization continues to play a leading role in articulating language- and culture-related issues that affect instruction of EL students in all classroom contexts, including mainstream, sheltered, English as a second language (ESL), and bilingual settings, and translating research into practical applications that enable EL students to succeed, as well as developing solutions to support successful world language programs for learners at all levels of instruction.

CAL has conducted language educational program evaluations for over 40 years.

Our approach to program evaluation begins with CAL's [mission and values](). We believe that all languages, dialects, and cultures deserve to be respected and cultivated and that multilingual learners bring rich assets to the classroom.

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Executive Summary

Project Purpose

To examine EML and Latina/o student engagement and achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools to understand:

      (i)   instructional practices,

      (ii)   accountability and program models, and

      (iii)   racial and linguistic equity.

Stakeholder Commission

Our work was guided by our Stakeholder Commission, a group of 26 individuals, representing a diversity of voices from across MCPS, including elementary general education and ELD teachers, secondary content and ELD teachers, principals, psychologists, social workers or guidance counselors, paraeducators, district level administrators, and family or community members.

The Stakeholder Commission met four times.

- At meeting 1, stakeholders provided input for the creation of a data collection plan.
- At meeting 2, they reviewed and refined the data collection plan.
- At meeting 3, they reviewed initial recommendations.
- At meeting 4, they reviewed and prioritized final key findings and recommendations.

Feedback from each Stakeholder Commission meeting was incorporated into the next stage of the work throughout the project.

Guiding Framework

Our work was informed by CAL's scope of work and by the *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies* (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017) and *Monitoring Educational Equity* (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

Based on these documents, we organize our work around eight key areas of inquiry:

1. Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities
2. Methods and Models for Instructing Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs), including Two-way immersion (TWI) programs
3. Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students
4. Educator Assets and Supports
5. College and Career Readiness, including the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA)
6. Newcomer Students, including students denied educational opportunities, i.e., students with limited or interrupted formal education, and including the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) program
7. Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) with Disabilities
8. Family Engagement

Summary of data collection

Our mixed methods data collection included a variety of data collection elements.

- *Focus groups* – CAL conducted 18 separate focus groups in the period May 2022 through October 2022, including 99 total educators, administrators, students, and family and community members.
- *Educator survey* – a total of 888 participants responded to our survey of educators. Participants included classroom teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators.
- *Family and community survey* – 436 individuals responded to CAL's family and community survey, which was provided in paper format (and distributed at the August 27 Back to School fair) and in electronic format.
- *Classroom observations* – we conducted a total of 358 classroom observations across 60 schools, including 43 elementary, 9 middle schools, 7 high schools, and one special school.
- *Conversations and interviews* – with MCPS central office staff.
- *Document review* – extensive review of internal and external MCPS documents, websites, and handbooks.
- *Quantitative data review* – review of data provided by MCPS as well as publicly available data.

Synthesis of central findings

Our full list of findings and recommendations is presented below. For ease of summary review, we synthesize our key findings around four critical themes: (i) nurturing relationships and a welcoming environment; (i) system-wide shared responsibility; (iii) sufficient resources; and (iv) feedback loops for accountability. Before we provide the synthesis, we present a background sketch of the EML and Latino/a students in MCPS.

EML and Latino/a Students in MCPS – Backgrounds and Contexts

There are more than 28,000 Emergent multilingual (EML) students in MCPS, constituting 18% of the total MCPS population. Latino/a students comprise one-third of all MCPS students, at more than 52,000 students. Most EML students (73.7%) are Latino/a.

Table 1: Numbers and proportions of MPCS students who are EML or Latino/a by school level, SY 2021-22

	Elementary	Middle	High	Special	Total
Number of students	71,090	36,307	50,434	401	158,232
Number of EML students	18,207	4,626	5,568	88	28,489
Percentage of EML students	26%	13%	11%	22%	18%
Number of Latino/a students	24,741	11,865	16,132	116	52,854
Percentage of Latino/a students	35%	33%	32%	29%	33%

While Latino/a students are evenly distributed across schooling levels (elementary, middle, and high schools), the proportion of EML students decreases across grade levels, as students exit EML status.

Students exit EML status when they meet the Maryland English language proficiency level of 4.5 on the ACCESS assessment. Figure 1 shows the distribution of EML students by their English language proficiency (ELP) levels 1-4, in elementary, middle, and high school.

Figure 1: EML Students' ELP Level Distribution, by School Type
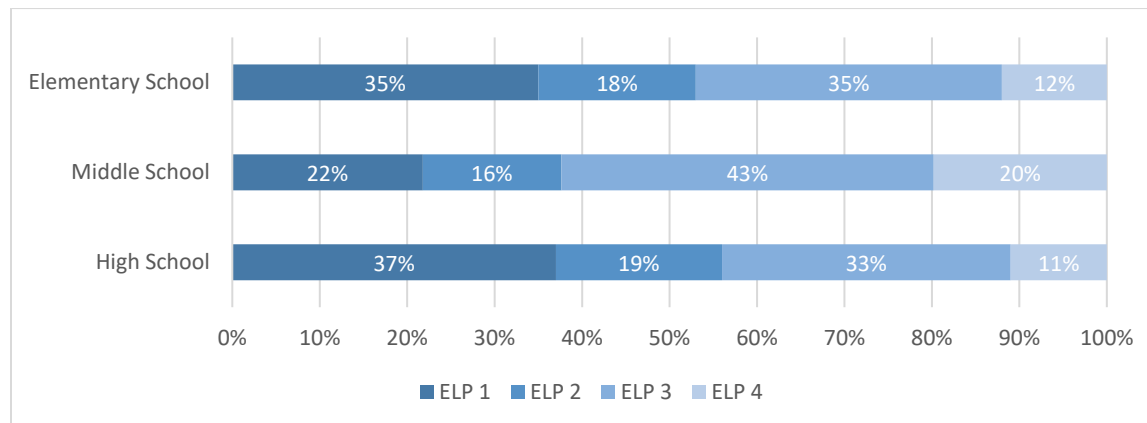
Recent data on academic performance should be interpreted with an understanding of the impact of COVID on assessment data. Notwithstanding these nuances, the data are clear:

- Latino/a and EML students are consistently performing less well on standardized assessments of ELA and mathematics than all students.
- Latino/a students tend to perform around 20 percentage points below average.
- EML students tend to perform around 30 percentage points below average.

COVID impacts can be seen in EML students' English language proficiency growth metrics.

- Between 2020 and 2022, the number of students who achieved EML proficiency sufficient to exit EML services declined by 2.3 percentage points.
- The number of students achieving year-on-year growth in their English language proficiency, as defined by Maryland state metrics, fell by 6%, despite the fact that for 2022, this measure included two years of growth rather than one, because of interruptions in assessment due to COVID.
- The most precipitous declines were at seventh grade (18% decline), eighth grade (17% decline), and ninth grade (19% decline).

Graduation data for EML and Latino/a students are sobering.

- Almost half of EML students and almost one-quarter of Latino/a students do not graduate in four years.
- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino/a students lags 12 percentage points below the overall MCPS average, and 17 percentage points below White students.
- The four-year graduation rate for EML students lags 35 percentage points below the overall MCPS average and 41 percentage points below White students.
- EML and Latino/a students in MCPS graduate at lower rates than the national averages for these subgroups, and the gap between EML and Latino/a students and all students is wider than the national average.

- When given an additional year to graduate, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino/a students graduating rises by an average of 4%, and the percentage of EML students graduating rises by 8%.

Attendance data indicates that Latino/a and EML students face barriers to consistent attendance. MCPS tracks rates of students with unexcused absences of more than 20 days.

- 13% of the total population (19,943 students) had more than 20 days of unexcused absences.
- 23% of Latino/a students (12,163 students) had more than 20 days of unexcused absences.
- 23% of EML students (6,583 students) had more than 20 days of unexcused absences.
- The rate of Latino/a students in this category (23%) closely tracks the rate of Latino/a students who do not graduate within four years (23%-24%).

Nurturing relationships and a welcoming environment are critical for student engagement and academic success

We saw evidence of a warm and nurturing environment with dedicated educators supporting EML and Latino/a students. We also saw evidence of concern around biases and deficit perspectives, focusing on what students lack rather than on their assets.

Student engagement can be a challenging construct to measure, but one easily measurable aspect of student engagement is attendance or absenteeism data – "Chronic absence is a powerful predictor of achievement because it means students have missed a substantial portion of instructional time over the course of the school year" (National Academy of Sciences, 2019, p.60).

> *We saw mixed perspectives on welcoming attitudes to culturally diverse students*
>
> "I love being here. My family and I love this country and this district, all the opportunities we are given. The teachers care and always help." – an MCPS student
>
> "EMLs are not seen as assets, and until the deficit point of view is eliminated, we won't see this school system progress." – an MCPS educator

Absenteeism is a risk factor for dropout; an additional risk factor is behavioral problems (Child Trends, 2013; Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). Students who are less engaged and do not feel successful in academic contexts, in turn, are more likely to exhibit problem behaviors. We find that EML and Latino/a students face discipline disparities. We note that disciplinary measures have subjective elements, and we should not discount potential impacts of bias in the implementation of disciplinary measures.

- In MCPS, Latino/a and EML students are suspended **more than twice** as often as White students, and the rates in middle school are **more than three times** the rate of White students.
- EML students with disabilities are **more than three times** likelier to face suspension than White students in elementary, middle, and high school.

For Latino/a students, strong and affirming relationships in a school community support engagement, achievement, and graduation success (Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn, 2009; Cooper 2012; for similar findings for all students, see also Bridgeland, Balfanz, Moore & Friant, 2010; Child Trends, 2013; Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). Strong relationships are built upon respect and acknowledgement of the assets that students bring, including "the benefits of multilingualism and a positive orientation toward the language and culture students bring to school" (Arias, 2022), as well as attention to students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and to students' cultural and linguistic identities (Bucholtz, 1999; Rymes

& Pash, 2004; Wortham, 2006). We provide recommendations around the need to continue the socio-emotional interventions currently in place in MCPS, and to shore up the resources available to support multicultural and multilingual students' mental and socio-emotional health.

Two-way immersion programs, which have the goal of nurturing bilingualism and biliteracy, are particularly supportive for EML students. Research has shown that, when carefully designed and implemented with fidelity, dual language programs benefit both EML students and their English-fluent peers, and lead to achievement (measured in English) that is similar to or higher than that of matched groups in English-only programs (Genesee et al., 2006; Steele et al., 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Currently, these programs serve only a small proportion of EML students. Careful expansion of these programs, with appropriate resources allocated to ensure that programs are of high quality, represents an area of promise for MCPS.

There is evidence that students see more optimal educational outcomes—including test scores, academic attitude, fewer disciplinary incidents, and dropout protection—when there is a racial/ethnic match between students and teachers (National Academy of Sciences, 2019). Latino/a students do not see themselves proportionally reflected in the MCPS corps of educators – while 33% of students in MCPS are Hispanic or Latino/a, only 7% of educators are. The corps of paraprofessionals are more racially and ethnically diverse than the general pool of educators, and more likely to be multilingual. This group represents a pool of talented and dedicated professionals who could be recruited to become teachers.

A welcoming environment also includes the need to welcome families. We find that access to interpretation and translation services for families is not sufficient and impacts parental involvement, understanding of graduation requirements, and the evaluation, identification, placement and services for EML students with disabilities.

Responsibility for EML students must be shared across <u>all</u> MCPS educators

Too often, responsibility for EML students is assumed to lie with ELD educators and the central office which supports them. It is critical that content area and general education educators and administrators also attend to EML students in order to support students' achievement in content areas alongside their growth in English language proficiency. The U.S. Department of Education, in its guidance to district and state education agencies, affirms the importance of both language and content for students.

> Appropriate EL services and programs enable ELs to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable amount of time.
> (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition 2017, Ch. 2, p. 1)

Respondents to our recruitment of survey and focus group participants were disproportionately ELD educators, and we consistently heard that the work of supporting EML students fell disproportionately on these educators. More work is needed to ensure that <u>all teachers</u> feel the same sense of responsibility toward EML students.

Content area educators need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to support EML students, including knowledge of pedagogical techniques in general, knowledge of pedagogical techniques specific to their content area, and knowledge of pedagogical techniques specific to <u>the language of their content area</u> (Bunch, 2013). Content area educators require appropriate professional development in these

areas in order to best support EML students. We find this is a particular area of need for high school content educators.

Our recommendations include attention to enhancing professional development around pedagogical language knowledge for content area and general educators (i.e., for those other than ELD educators). This also includes competence around culturally responsive practices. We recommend this for educators in the core content areas (i.e., math, science, social studies and language arts) and also for educators in non-core areas such as art, music, or technology.

Sufficient resources must be allocated to support EML students' language acquisition, content learning, and socio-emotional needs

Survey and focus group participants clearly and consistently articulated their concerns with the level of workload taken on by ELD instructors to support EML students.

While high schools have a dedicated "ESOL Resource Teacher" whose role is to support activities and administrative work across teachers, there is no parallel role at the middle or elementary level, and we recommend a clearly identified EML coordinator position at middle and elementary school levels to support professional learning, mentoring, and the administrative work pertaining to EML students. Based on FY 23 staffing formulas, ratios for EML students to ELD educators range from 1:20 to 1:88, well above the national average of 1:12 (U.S. Department of Education, 2021, p. 61, p.108). We recommend increasing the ratio of EML students to ELD educators.

Ensuring that a nurturing and welcoming climate is in place requires investment in staff with multilingual and multicultural competencies, including counselors who can support students' social and emotional needs. We recommend adding additional multilingual and culturally competent counselors to support students toward successful graduation.

In out work to understand family engagement, we find that translation and interpretation services are not sufficient for the needs of MCPS families. In particular, there are challenges with the number of translators and interpreters trained and available to support and communicate with families around special education identification, evaluation, and implementation. Additional investment is needed to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of trained translators and interpreters to meet the needs of families.

Finally, our accountability recommendations, below, requires appropriate staffing levels in the MCPS central office to monitor and evaluate accountability data, and to provide any needed supports which emerge from evaluation of this data.

Transparent accountability feedback loops are needed to ensure that resources are allocated and policies are implemented

At the elementary school level, outside of TWI programs, schools have flexibility to implement one or more of several programs for EML students as documented in the elementary handbook. We find that the models available are appropriate. Our observation of elementary classroom instruction, in both general education and standalone (pullout) ELD classes, indicates that on average, instructional practices are responsive to the needs of EML students. However, we see sufficient variability in these practices

that we recommend strengthening accountability feedback to ensure that program model guidelines are consistently implemented in every school for every student.

For secondary students, MCPS provides scheduling guidelines tailored to students' level (middle or high school) and English language proficiency level. When followed with fidelity, these guidelines are intended to ensure that students receive an appropriate course of study to meet both language and content needs. We heard concerns from research participants that scheduling guidelines are not always implemented. We recommend implementing systematic accountability practices around scheduling guidelines for students, and in particular, we recommend increased attention to scheduling and supporting high school EML students to ensure that students are on-track for graduation requirements.

In our review of processes and procedures for EML students with disabilities, we find that there are inconsistencies in services to these students. We were not able to identify clear guidelines for consistent evaluation processes to be used across schools, and we heard from research participants that they see widespread variability among schools in how they evaluate, place and serve EMLs with disabilities. We heard from educators that they had not received training in how best to support this population of students. Perhaps most concerningly, we heard mistaken beliefs that special education services trump English language development service and that ELD services are dropped once a child is diagnosed with a disability. In this area, we recommend developing clear guidelines for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities, and also conducting periodic monitoring visits to ensure that schools are implementing policies with fidelity.

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

1: Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities

We combine our analysis of achievement outcomes with an analysis of opportunities to learn, stemming from our understanding that students cannot pursue high levels of achievement without strong access to the opportunities for engagement and advanced instruction.

For this area, we investigate current outcome data in MCPS (for example, assessment and graduation data), as well as looking to see where opportunities are afforded to diverse students and areas in which those opportunities may not be presented.

Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities: Key Findings

What are achievement outcomes for EML students and Latino/a students, and how do they compare to outcomes for the total population of students?

Academic Achievement on the MCAP assessments of English language arts and mathematics (based on 2019 and 2021 data)

- Latino/a students tend to perform around 20 percentage points below average.
- EML students tend to perform around 30 percentage points below average.
- Rates of proficiency for EML students with disabilities typically stand below 5% of students at or above proficiency.

English Language Proficiency assessment

- We find a marked decline in students' English language proficiency growth in 2022 data, as compared to 2019 and 2020 data.
- The number of students who achieved EML proficiency sufficient to exit EML services declined by 2.3 percentage points.
- The number of students achieving year-on-year growth in their English language proficiency, as defined by Maryland state metrics, fell by 6%, despite the fact that for 2022, this measure included two years of growth rather than because of interruptions in assessment due to COVID. The most precipitous declines were at seventh grade (18% decline), eighth grade (17% decline), and ninth grade (19% decline).

Graduation Rates (see also "College and Career Transitions" – we repeat our findings here)

- Almost half of EML students and almost one-quarter of Latino/a students do not graduate in four years.
- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino/a students lags 12 percentage points below the overall MCPS average, and 17 percentage points below White students.
- The four-year graduation rate for EML students lags 35 percentage points below the overall MCPS average and 41 percentage points below White students.
- EML and Latino/a students in MCPS graduate at lower rates than the national averages for these subgroups, and the gap between EML and Latino/a students and all students is wider than the national average.

- When given an additional year to graduate, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino/a students graduating rises by an average of 4%, and the percentage of EML students graduating rises by 8%.

Are EML and Latino/a students engaged in schooling? Are students consistently attending school?

Attendance

- MCPS tracks rates of students with unexcused absences of more than 20 days.
  - 13% of the total population (19,943 students) had more than 20 days of unexcused absences.
  - 23% of Latino/a students (12,163 students) had more than 20 days of unexcused absences.
  - 23% of EML students (6,583 students) had more than 20 days of unexcused absences.
  - The rate of Latino/a students in this category (23%) closely tracks the rate of Latino/a students who do not graduate within four years (23%-24%).

Academic Engagement as measured by advanced course taking patterns

- Latino/a students comprise 31% of the high school students in MCPS but only 25% of SAT course-takers.
- EML students comprise 12% of the high school students in MCPS but only 8% of SAT course-takers.
- EML students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB or SAT courses.
- EML students are, however, more likely than their peers to succeed in AP language examinations in Chinese, French, and Spanish.

Gifted and Talented programs

- Research participants expressed concern that Latino/a and EML students are underrepresented in Gifted and Talented programs.
- 2022 data indicate that fewer than 1% of students identified as gifted are EML students, which is a severe underrepresentation.

Are schools able to access and use these data, especially the equity/accountability data?

- We did not find widespread challenges or concerns from educators around accessing or using data.
- One exception is the timing of students' ELP data, which drives staffing and planning at the onset of a school year; however, this is outside of MCPS control.
- We observe challenges with the use of data-driven metrics at the district level, including public-facing accountability data, home language data, and data on gifted and talented students.
  - The public-facing metrics for EML students focus only English language proficiency and thus minimizes accountability for students' performance in content areas.
  - Home language data for EML students as extracted from MCPS data systems is challenging to interpret. Data show 31% of students classified as EML have *English* recorded as their home language, likely due to how data from the Home Language Survey is interpreted.

- - - o   Disaggregated data for student subgroups in the Gifted and Talented program were not available.
  - One data enhancement recommended by research is to track exited EML students to understand the long-term impact of ELD services on students' educational trajectories.

Additional Finding: Variation in parental refusal of ELD services

- Federal law requires that school districts allow families to refuse ELD services for their students.
- Nationally, the rate of refusal of services stands at around 3%-4%.
- In MCPS the rate of refusal is 7% district-wide.
- There are 15 MCPS schools with a refusal rate that exceeds 20%.

Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities: Recommendations

1.1. Draft and implement an absenteeism response plan centering on Latino/a students, that examines potential barriers to school attendance for this group of students in MCPS.
1.2. Provide annual data reports to the DELME office and the public that detail the:
   - Proportion of exited EML students at or above proficient on ELA and mathematics assessments, by grade level.
   - Proportion of EML students with disabilities at or above proficient on ELA and mathematics assessments, by grade level.
1.3. Review and revise criteria for outreach, identification, and inclusion in Gifted and Talented programs to ensure that Latino/a and EML students have access to these programs.
1.4. Examine the way in which home language data is populated into central data systems, especially in cases where the home language of EML students is identified as English.
1.5. Routinely monitor across schools for high rates of parental refusal of EML services and engage with families to understand why they are refusing services.

2: Instructional Methods and Models

MCPS uses a variety of methods and models for ELD instruction. This area focuses on understanding the span of the methods and models, and looking into whether they meet the current needs of MCPS EML students. We include a special focus on Two-way Immersion (TWI) in this section. For a focus on the Multidisciplinary Educational training and Support (METS) programs, see section 6, on newcomer students and students with limited formal education; for a focus on the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) program, see section 5 on college and career transitions.

Instructional Methods and Models: Key Findings

Are current classroom methods and models tailored to suit the needs of the current EML population?

- Our observation of classrooms indicates that overall, classroom instruction is responsive to the needs of EML students, with average ratings of 2.8 (elementary school), 3.1 (middle school), and 2.3 (high school). (Ratings range from 0-4, with ratings less than 2.0 considered areas for growth, and areas greater than 3.0 considered areas of strength.)
- Middle school instruction is an area of strength overall, with overall average ratings above 3.0, and average ratings above 3.0 for both standalone ELD and mainstream content classes.

- METS instruction is an area of strength, with average classroom ratings greater than 3.0.
- Secondary standalone ELD classes are an area of strength.
- An area for growth is high school mainstream content classes, with an average classroom rating of 1.7.
- Our examination of documented program models indicates that available elementary program models are appropriate for EML students. We note that schools do not provide feedback to MCPS central office on the particular program models that they implement. At the secondary level, programs are implemented via scheduling guidelines that route EML students through particular instructional pathways. Likewise, there is no systemic review to ensure that these guidelines are consistently implemented for every student.

Are current methods and models appropriate within Two-Way Immersion TWI programs?

- TWI programs are currently growing in MCPS. Our findings should be interpreted as a snapshot in time during the trajectory of that growth.
- An area of current change is the move to embedded language arts into other core content areas, rather than in a standalone language arts block.
- While this approach can be effective, it is important to carefully manage the change as it can present challenges for educators.
- A second area of change is that in the future, all core content areas will not be taught in both languages. While we do not have concerns with this approach, we found that educators expressed some qualms at this change, and so again the change will need to be managed for educator buy-in.
- In observation of classroom instruction, we observed that educators consistently used the target language and occasionally employed translanguaging practices.
- Instructional strengths that were observed included facilitating access to content concepts, including productive use of technology, consistently checking for understanding, providing feedback, and appropriate wait time for students' oral production.
- Areas for growth included language-embedded supports in upper grades during Spanish instruction, and building cross-linguistic connections.

How are content areas well-supported for EML students by the current methods, models, and curriculum areas, and are there grade-level/content areas that could use additional support?

- Average ratings in classroom observations were within acceptable ranges for elementary general education (2.8) and secondary mainstream content classes (2.6).
- Areas of instructional strength (average ratings higher than 3.0) in these settings included presenting appropriate content concepts, providing comprehensible input, sufficient wait time, pacing, and feedback to students.
- Areas for growth include at the elementary level, connecting concepts to background experiences (below 2.0), and at the secondary level, grouping configurations that support the language and content objectives (below 2.0).
- Middle school content classes were an area of strength, with an average rating above 3.0; secondary math classes also had an average rating above 3.0.

- High school mainstream content classes (i.e., non-sheltered) were an area for growth, with an average rating of 1.7. Areas for additional attention included building background context for lessons, fewer observed strategies such as scaffolding or creating opportunities for higher order thinking skills, and fewer opportunities for practice and application of the lessons.
- Secondary program models are implemented via recommended scheduling guides.
- At the high school level, EML students are scheduled to take ELD classes which are aligned to grade-level ELA standards. This practice allows for students to accrue credits for graduation (up to two sheltered classes can be counted toward graduation credit).
- In high school, EML students at levels 1 and 2 take sheltered classes in science, social studies, and math. Work is in progress to align science and social studies classes to grade-level standards so that students can accrue graduation credits.
- EML students at all levels in middle school are placed in mainstream math, science, and social studies classrooms. Scheduling guidelines recommend an ELD co-teacher for students at ELP level 1, in math, but not in other areas or for students at higher ELP levels.
- Study participants expressed a need for more diverse representation across curricular materials.
- Study participants expressed concerns that curricular materials were overly challenging for EML students, especially at the secondary level.

Do models ensure that EML students have ample opportunity to engage with their peers?

- At the elementary level, we see no concern over segregation of EML students. However, we are unable to gauge how much time students spend in standalone pullout ELD classes.
- We find that MCPS is attentive to and has implemented programs in which EML students experience minimal within-school segregation from fluent-English peers at the secondary level.
- In classroom observations, we find that students are consistently afforded opportunities for peer interaction, except that in secondary mainstream content classrooms (for more proficient EML students), we find that this is an area for growth.
- TWI classroom observations showed that structured peer interaction and purposeful grouping was an area for growth.

Are EML students afforded the opportunity to access curricular and extracurricular activities, comparable to their peers, such as access to the arts, technology, and physical education?

- EML students are consistently included in non-core curricular classes, such as arts, technology, and physical education.
- One observation from secondary scheduling recommendation is that students in middle school at ELP level 3 do not have a world language class on the recommended schedule.
- Students in focus groups expressed concerns about inclusion in afterschool activities, particularly activities that conflict with paid or caregiving work.

Are staffing models and structures appropriate to support EML students and student growth? How are schools translating their staffing allocations into individualized programs of instruction?

- A persistent challenge is that while staffing ratios are based on ELP levels of students, the ELP levels of returning students are not known until close to the onset of the new school year.

- Educators pointed to the need for additional staffing resources, in particular for dedicated time for co-planning, as well as the need for more bilingual staff and particularly more bilingual counselors.
- Our examination of recommended schedules for secondary pathways indicates that for content classes in middle school and for non-sheltered (i.e., mainstream) content classes for students at higher ELP levels in high school, ELD instructor support is not available to support content learning.

Are staffing models and structures appropriate within TWI programs?

- Educators express a continuing need for qualified bilingual educators, especially reading specialists, special education teachers, and paraeducators.
- TWI educators were engaged with professional learning and took advantage of professional learning opportunities.
- TWI educators could benefit from further professional learning in pedagogical language knowledge, bilingual reading expertise and translanguaging pedagogical practices.
- Expansion of TWI programs is desirable and research shows that it has beneficial impacts on EML students. As MCPS considers both expansion in the elementary setting and expansion into middle school, it is imperative to continue efforts to maintain consistency and fidelity to the model, to recruit and retain qualified bilingual staff, and to streamline the process of acquiring materials in Spanish.

Are staff members who are responsible for ELD programs sufficiently supported? Is their role diluted with too many responsibilities?

- This is an area of concern – please see Section 5 for additional information.

Instructional Methods and Models: Recommendations

2.1. Increase support from MCPS central office to elementary schools to ensure that appropriate program models are in place in elementary schools.
- While we did not find evidence that schools are not implementing appropriate models, we recommend increasing accountability to ensure that all schools are appropriately implementing MCPS's program models in elementary schools.
- MCPS central office should consider periodic and regular reviews of samples of elementary schools to confirm that schools are implementing program models appropriately. Appropriate resources should be provided to ensure that this can be executed effectively.
2.2. Increase support from MCPS central office to secondary schools to ensure that EML students are being appropriately scheduled.
- Institute a scheduling review process and ensure that processes are in place to reschedule any students who are not in appropriate classes. Ensure that adequate staffing resources are available to support this effort.
- Create an accountability feedback loop to ensure that schools are staffed to support recommended levels of ELD support.
2.3. At the secondary level, continue efforts to align sheltered classes in core content areas (science, social studies, and math) to grade-level standards so that students can receive graduation credits from these classes.

2.4. To support a model in which EML students are instructed in mainstream classes in secondary schools, increase ELD instructional supports in mainstream content classes in middle and high school.
- Provide support from qualified ELD instructors in middle and high school mainstream content classes.
- Ensure that mainstream content educators receive regular opportunities to engage in PD around instructional practices for EML students.

2.5. Engage content area educators to enhance diverse cultural connections in content area curricula.

2.6. Ensure that content area educators in non-core curriculum areas (e.g., arts, music, physical education) receive support on instructional methods for EML students.

Recommendations: Two-Way Immersion Programs

There are many promising practices that MCPS and school staff can build on, as well as some areas for growth that, if pursued, would strengthen its TWI program and enhanced its ability to achieve its goals of educating bilingual, biliterate and socio-culturally competent individuals who are college and career ready. Recommendations for the improvement of the TWI program are described below under the pertinent strand of the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard et al., 2018):

2.7. Enhance TWI program structures
- Continue the efforts towards achieving consistency across elementary school campuses and clearly communicate those efforts and the rationale behind them to the various stakeholders.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are made available in order to incorporate the language arts standards into the curriculum of the other three core content areas and teachers have received training around the new language and content allocation plan and have a good understanding of how to execute it with fidelity before implementation begins.
- Monitor the implementation of the new language and content allocation plan to ascertain that foundational language and literacy skills in the two languages are being taught and that students have the opportunity to engage with literary and informational texts in all content areas.
- Include specials in the language allocation plan to ensure that 50% of total instructional time is facilitated in Spanish.
- Continue the progressive expansion of the program by adding elementary programs, continuing to expand into middle schools and eventually offering a PreK-12 pathway for TWI students.

2.8. Enhance TWI Instruction:
- Provide carefully planned and structured opportunities for students to engage in extended oral discourse with peers in pairs or small groups strategically created in such a way that students must work interdependently, with individual and group accountability for all group members and social equity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).
- Carefully consider the language demands of academic content during lesson preparation and incorporate differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use.
- Seek opportunities to bring the two program languages together to point out similarities and differences between them at different dimensions of language (sound/letter, word/phrase, sentence, and discourse) to promote cross-linguistic transfer and the development of

metalinguistic awareness in EML students in all content areas. This practice will be even more important when the new language allocation plan starts being implemented and content areas are taught in one program language only by grade level and should take place in addition to end of the unit Bridge lessons.

2.9. Enhance staff quality and professional development in TWI programs

- Continue to provide professional learning opportunities for TWI staff that focuses on moving away from approaching instruction, assessments, and support services through a monolingual lens, and toward adopting a holistic approach to language and literacy development that considers students' whole linguistic repertoires.

- Provide PD and job-embedded coaching to TWI teachers and support staff that focuses on purposefully enacting opportunities for the development of language and literacy in and through teaching the core curricular content to enhance their pedagogical language knowledge (Galguera, 2011) with an emphasis on the following areas:
    - Promoting structured peer-to-peer interaction that incorporates differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use;
    - Fostering cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in EML students to facilitate the use of their whole linguistic repertoire; and
    - Translanguaging practices at different grade levels (an area teachers identified as needed).

2.10.   Enhance TWI support and resources

- Continue efforts to hire bilingual staff including support staff (e.g., special education educators, reading specialists) who can provide services in both languages, including reviewing Spanish language materials. In particular, research on the education of EMLs has shown that EMLs who receive instruction in their native language and English should receive reading interventions in their native language (National Academies, 2017). One way to contribute to these efforts is to consider hiring teachers from Spanish-speaking countries and providing them with the support system needed to acclimate to the U.S. educational system and MCPS culture.

- Continue to provide funding for TWI programs that is commensurate with the program's vertical and horizontal growth. Ensuring that adequate human and material resources are in place (including in the partner language) before adding more programs will be critical to the continued success of the program and its expansion into middle school and beyond.

3: Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students

Literature on best practices for multicultural and multilingual students consistently stresses the need for understanding the linguistic and cultural assets that students bring to the classroom, and the harm that is done via deficit perspectives on these students. We sought to understand how multilingual students are recognized and celebrated; how their full linguistic repertoires are recognized and respected; and the extent to which EML and Latino/a students experience nurturing and safe school climates.

Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students: Key Findings

How are multilingual students recognized and celebrated?

Results on this question are mixed.

- More than 80% of educator survey respondents agreed that their school, and MCPS in general, work to provide a welcoming environment for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Students who participated in focus groups feel welcome and expressed that they were able to rely on trusted adults in school, particularly ELD teachers.
  - A student said: "I love being here. My family and I love this country and this district, all the opportunities we are given. The teachers care and always help."
- Some educators noted that sometimes students' assets were overlooked, particularly academic skills in students who were not proficient in English.
- An educator said: "EMLs are not seen as assets, and until the deficit point of view is eliminated, we won't see this school system progress."
- Focus group participants called for more Latino/as in leadership positions in MCPS as a way to increase the depth of cultural proficiency in the district.

Are the full linguistic repertoires (including translanguaging abilities) of students recognized and respected?

- 90% of survey respondents agreed that students benefit from using their home language in the classroom.
- Almost all of survey respondents 80% agreed that home languages and cultures are respected in MCPS; conversely, there were 20% of survey respondents who did not agree that home languages and cultures are respected.
- Two-way immersion programs are a particular area of strength in the recognition and respect for students' full linguistic repertoires.
- We find that Spanish for Spanish Speakers at Level 3 does not have an Honors designation, while the parallel course Spanish 3 is offered at an Honors level.
- Our examination of linguistic representation in the library catalog indicates that students from diverse linguistic backgrounds may not see their linguistic identities reflected in school libraries. Focus group participants expressed concern around the number of multilingual reviewers available to participate in the MCPS book review process in order to approve texts in languages other than English for both Library Media and instructional purposes.

How are resources assigned to two-way immersion programs? Should two-way immersion programs be expanded, and if so, what barriers or obstacles exist?

- There are currently four K-5 and two emerging TWI programs in the district (one is currently K-4 and the other K-1); once fully rolled out, we project that these programs have capacity to serve approximately 6% of EML students and 4% of Latino/a students.
- Should the district decide to expand these programs, it is critical that they be of high quality, have clear goals and a vision of bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence that are

shared by the school community (Howard et al., 2018), and further that appropriate resources be allocated for expansion.

Are there disparities in disciplinary practices between EML and Latino/a students, and the general population of students?

Yes.

- In MCPS, Latino/a and EML students are suspended **more than twice** as often as White students.
- In middle school, Latino/a and EML students are suspended at **more than three times** the rate of White students.
- These disparities are less pronounced in elementary school.
- EML students with disabilities are **more than three times** likelier to face suspension than White students in elementary, middle, and high school.

Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students: Recommendations

3.1. Continue to strengthen and expand antiracism and antibias work in MCPS by explicitly including attention to anti-Latino/a bias and to linguistic bias.

3.2. Strengthen this antibias position by ensuring educators have access to professional learning opportunities that focus on the assets of EML students, and to the deep connections between students' linguistic repertoires and their identity.

3.3. Offer Spanish for Spanish Speakers Level 3 as an Honors level class.

3.4. Expand multilingual library resources and ensure that there are sufficient multilingual staff allocated to the review of titles in languages other than English.

3.5. Continue to monitor discipline disparities. Identify if there are particular schools in which Latino/a or EML students are more likely to experience negative disciplinary consequences, and target these schools for additional support.

3.6. Continue protective socio-emotional interventions to support decreases in discipline disparities.

3.7. Continue the work to diversify the educator pool. Monitor recruitment, retention, and promotion of multilingual and Latino/a staff.

3.8. Carefully continue to grow TWI programs, taking into account the need for consistent program structure, enhanced instruction, professional learning, and support and resources as outlined in Chapter 2.

4: Educator Assets and Supports

Educator Assets and Supports: Key Findings

Educators bring critical assets to supporting ELD and Latino/a students, and we sought to understand the strengths of MCPS educators in nurturing ELD and Latina/o students. We also examined the degree to which further support is needed, including needs for credentialed teachers and professional development in specific areas such as language development in content areas, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and use of data to support student success.

What assets do the cadre of MCPS educators bring with respect to education for EML and Latino/a students? What supports are needed?

- There is clear evidence of the care and responsibility that MCPS educators bring to EML and Latino/a students, as demonstrated in data collected via survey and focus group participation. Educators enjoy supporting their students, they have positive feelings toward them, and they actively seek opportunities to enhance their professional knowledge to further support the education of their students.
- Survey and focus group participants were disproportionately ELD educators. More work is needed to ensure that <u>all teachers</u> feel the same sense of responsibility toward EML students.
- We find evidence of multilingual capacity among MCPS educators, and particularly among paraeducators. The multilingual and multicultural prowess of paraeducators is an asset to be celebrated.

Are the teachers of EML and Latino/a students comparable in their years of experience and level of credentialling to the general population of teachers?

- Latino/a and EML students may be more likely to be served by novice educators, and less likely to experience classes with veteran teachers, than non-Latino/a students and students who are not identified as EML.
- Latino/a and EML students may be less likely to have teachers with Advanced Professional certification, and more likely to have teachers with Conditional Certification or a Professional Eligibility Certificate than other students.
- Latino/a students do not see themselves proportionally reflected in the MCPS corps of educators – while 33% of students in MCPS are Hispanic or Latino/a, only 7% of educators are.
- The corps of paraprofessionals are more racially and ethnically diverse than the general pool of educators, and more likely to be multilingual.

What opportunities are available for professional learning to support Emergent Multilingual Learners (EML students) in the content areas, and what opportunities are needed?

- DELME provides extensive professional development offerings to educators across the course of a school year.
- Educators expressed needs for training in socio-cultural competence (including anti-bias training) and in trauma-informed education.
- Educators also expressed that it was important for all educators to have the opportunities to access PD that prepared them to support EML students, and that it was important to ensure that this was not just the responsibility of ELD teachers.

Do educators in the district have preparation in the pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013) needed to support multilingual learners?

- We find that ELD teachers are more likely to seek out and value professional learning that centers EML students, while content and general education teachers are less likely to do so.

What opportunities are available for professional learning to support Emergent Multilingual Learners (EML students) in the content areas, and what opportunities are needed?

- DELME's PD offerings include PD sessions targeted toward particular curricular elements in the content areas, such as Lexia or Eureka math.
- Survey and focus group participants expressed that general or mainstream education teachers, as well as administrators and special education teachers, are in need of additional support to clearly understand and implement their responsibilities for EML students.

Do educators bring an assets-based mindset to supporting EML students?

- MCPS educators who participated in our research have an appreciation of the benefits of multilingualism, express commitments to support their students and to build connections with students' families, and survey respondents overwhelmingly express that they enjoy their interactions with EML students.
- These educators also express concern that these views are not shared across the system and that there are persistent deficit viewpoints surrounding EML students.

Do educators have tools to implement culturally sustaining approaches to Latino/a students and to students from immigrant backgrounds?

- Educators consistently requested additional professional learning around sociocultural competence.

Additional finding – Educator workload

- Survey and focus group participants clearly articulated their concerns with the level of workload taken on by ELD instructors to support EML students.
- At the high school level, there is a dedicated FTE role ("ESOL Resource Teacher") to support activities and administrative work across teachers.
- At the middle school, the equivalent role is the "Content Specialist," however this role usually includes other areas in addition to support for EML students.
- There is no parallel role at the elementary school level.
- Administrators experience challenges in appropriately staffing for ELD teachers due to the timing of official data from the state on the total numbers and ELP levels of EML students.

Educator Assets and Supports: Recommendations

4.1. Expand professional learning on strategies for EML students to include all teachers, not just ELD teachers.

- Distribute responsibility for professional learning on topics related to EML students so that teachers who are supported by the College and Career Readiness programs and the PreK-12 Curriculum office receive appropriate training in supporting EML students.
- Ensure that school leaders also receive appropriate training in supporting EML students.
- Monitor progress to understand the extent to which general education and content area teachers have received professional development in how to support EML students.

4.2. Expand professional learning to include training in sociocultural competence (including anti-bias training) and support for trauma-informed education.

4.3. Attend to equity of educator credentials and experience, implement measures to retain educators at schools with majority EML and Latino/a student populations, and continue efforts to expand the diversity of the teaching force.

4.4. Consider implementing or expanding paraeducator-to-teacher pathways, and incentivize recruitment into these programs for Latino/a and multilingual professionals.

4.5. Ensure that there are clearly identified ELD coordinator positions, at all levels (elementary, middle, and high school) within (or across) schools to support professional learning, mentoring, and the administrative work that pertains to EML students, such as identifying students, managing testing, and engaging with families.

4.6 Increase ELD teacher allocations in staffing formulas to reduce the ratio of EML students to ELD instructors.

5: College and Career Transitions

As EML and Latino/a students move toward adulthood, we sought to understand how well prepared they are for this transition. The experiences of early adulthood are diverse, and we would like to understand how students are afforded opportunities for high school graduation, well prepared for higher education, and/or supported in career opportunities.

College and Career Transitions: Key Findings
Are EML and Latino/a students appropriately prepared for college and career opportunities upon leaving school?

- Graduation rates for EML and Latino/a students are of grave concern.
- More than two-thirds of educators surveyed feel that EML students and families do not have clear access to information about graduation requirements.
- More than one third of educators surveyed feel that EML students and families do not have clear access to information about community college pathways or college applications.
- MCPS staff pointed to a need for additional bilingual guidance counselors to support multilingual students.

Do students feel confident that they are prepared and supported upon leaving school?

- Educators expressed concern around a narrowed set of pathways for students emerging from deficit perspectives.
- Students expressed that they would like to more pathways and opportunities made available to them.

What is the graduation rate for EML and Latino/a students? How does it compare to all students in MCPS, and how does it compare to national rates? *(see also "Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities" – we repeat our findings here)*

- Almost half of EML students and almost one-quarter of Latino/a students do not graduate in four years.
- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino/a students lags 12 percentage points below the overall MCPS average, and 17 percentage points below White students.
- The four-year graduation rate for EML students lags 35 percentage points below the overall MCPS average and 41 percentage points below White students.
- EML and Latino/a students in MCPS graduate at lower rates than the national averages for these subgroups, and the gap between EML and Latino/a students and all students is wider than the national average.
- When given an additional year to graduate, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino/a students graduating rises by an average of 4%, and the percentage of EML students graduating rises by 8%.

Are EML students scheduled to be on-track for graduation based on their scheduled course-taking?

- Focus group participants identified course scheduling as a significant barrier to student success.
- As schools do not receive firm numbers of EML students (or their levels) until late in summer, appropriate scheduling is a structural challenge for schools.
- Research participants also identified required Student Service Learning (SSL) credits as a barrier to opportunity, especially to students who are engaged in paid employment. The Secondary DELME team has been working with the SSL team to provide more opportunities for EMLs to earn up to 30 SSL credits in ELD courses.
- Research participants also pointed out concerns about multilingual students missing world language credits for graduation, due to scheduling issues.

Are EML and Latino/a students afforded opportunities to engage in college preparatory programs (e.g., IB and AP)? In gifted and talented programs? If not, what barriers exist?

- There are disproportionalities in students' patterns of course-taking. While 31% of high school students are Hispanic or Latino/a, only 25% of SAT course-takers are Hispanic or Latino/a. While 12% of high school students are classified as EML, only 8% of SAT course-takers are EML.
- Hispanic or Latino/a students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB, or SAT courses.
- EML students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB, or SAT courses.
- EML students who take AP language examinations in Chinese, French, and Spanish outperform their fluent-English peers; however, the number of EML students who participate is very small.

Are EML and Latino/a students provided with supports to transition to the workforce (community college or career placement)?

- Educators feel that EML and Latino/a students and their families do not have access to clear information, in language that they understand, to support this transition.

What are the assets of the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) program, and what supports might this program need?

- The CREA program provides a space for career-oriented learning for students who cannot fulfill the credit requirements needed to graduate but need systemic supports to acquire English and train for career pathways. While this program does not provide a graduation track, students can complete a GED.
- The program provides a nurturing and warm environment for its adult students.
- The program has seen a 30% increase in the number of students over five years, but with no increase in staffing levels.
- Challenges identified by the program include, in addition to staffing, maintaining connections to wraparound services for students, particularly the Wheaton Wellness Center, and to legal supports for students who need to acquire appropriate paperwork for employment.

How many students have the opportunity to earn the Seal of Biliteracy at graduation, and of that percentage how many in fact earn the Seal? Are students, their families, and their teachers aware of the opportunity?

- Since 2020, 470 Latino/a students have achieved the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Latino/a students represent almost 40% of the students who achieve this qualification and Latino/a students are more likely than other subgroups of students to achieve the Seal.
- Since 2020, 80 EML students, or 6% of the total awardees, have achieved the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Educators spoke to a need to enhance knowledge about this opportunity with their colleagues and with families.

College and Career Transitions: Recommendations

5.1 Set benchmarks for improvement of EML and Latino/a four- and five-year graduation rates as a matter of urgency.

5.2 Track and communicate graduation rate data for the following subgroups:

- Students who are former EMLs and have exited services. One way to examine whether ELD services are appropriately supporting students is to confirm that once students exit services, they are on track for academic success without the support of the ELD services.
- Students dually identified as EML students and students with disabilities.
- Newcomer students.
- Students with limited or interrupted formal education.

5.3 Improve accountability around scheduling to support graduation rates for EML students.

- At the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, begin a process to provide each entering ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth-grade EML student a personalized outline of graduation requirements, with detail on which requirements should be met in which of their remaining school years. Review and revise this outline at the end of each semester.
- If EML students enter MCPS mid-year after the beginning of ninth grade, provide a personalized outline of graduation requirements and detail on which requirements should be met in which of their remaining school years within 90 days of enrollment.

- Prioritize constructing schedules for EML students as early as possible in the scheduling process.
- Examine the schedules of every EML student in high school to ensure that all required courses are included within students' schedules for the year.
- Require each high school to provide an annual report to DELME and other relevant MCPS offices charged with supporting students' success toward graduation indicating how many, if any, EML students have schedules that are missing courses that are included in those students' personalized graduation requirements for the year.

5.4 Prioritize investment in nurturing relationships for EML and Latino/a students

- Allocate additional culturally and linguistically competent counseling staff to support these recommendations.
- Empower counseling staff to escalate the need for a scheduling change if a student is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements due to scheduling issues.
- Ensure that students are included in the process and understand their own graduation requirements, and provide caring and nurturing systems that support students who are not on track.

5.5 Improve outreach to families around graduation requirements and college and career opportunities.

- Ensure key information about graduation requirements is provided to families in a language that they can understand. Routinely seek feedback from families to ensure that the information is received and accessible.
- Conduct college and career information sessions for multilingual families, including information about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), in a language that families can understand.
- Ensure that all relevant staff share responsibility for multilingual communication on college and career opportunities, not just ELD teachers.
- Ensure that college and career meetings are accessible to students who are in the workforce.
- Train MCPS staff to be sensitive to students' diverse immigration statuses when communicating about college and career opportunities.

5.6 Examine specific graduation requirements identified as barriers

- MCPS has an elective requirement for graduation which may be fulfilled by 2 credits of the same World language. Explore avenues to waive this graduation requirement for EML students, who, by definition, have fluency in a language other than English, while ensuring that advanced course-taking opportunities in world languages are open to those who wish to pursue them.
- Explore the state Student Service Learning (SSL) requirements to understand ways in which the SSL requirement can be met by students currently experiencing challenges in meeting these requirements. If hours are pro-rated for students who enroll in MCPS after the ninth grade, ensure that students, families, and counselors have a clear understanding of the pro-rating model.

5.7 Support the assets of EML and former EML students in advanced coursework.

- Target EML students for participation in relevant advanced world language classes and examinations.
- Continue to promote the Seal of Biliteracy, especially to EML students. Integrate DELME staff into efforts to promote the Seal of Biliteracy.

5.8 Examine school accountability systems and ensure that such systems do not penalize schools for allowing newcomer EML students to graduate in five years. Examine flexibility around original year of graduation requirements for newcomer students who enter MCPS midway through the ninth grade.

5.9 Examine staffing for the CREA program to ensure that sufficient staff are available to accommodate the increase in applicants and students, and to ensure that there are staff able to support the community connections to healthcare, legal, housing and other services to support adult students.

6: Newcomer Students, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) Program

Many districts across the United States are seeing increases in students newly arrived in the US. In some (but by no means all) cases, these students may have been denied educational opportunities (often referred to as students with limited or interrupted formal education). We sought to understand how these students are welcomed, what resources are available to support them, and what additional supports might be needed to ensure that these students have access to opportunity.

Newcomer Students, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education, and the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) Program: Key Findings

Is there a welcoming and inclusive approach to EML students who begin their US educational career in high school?

- Student participants in focus groups expressed positive experiences.
- Some educators expressed concern at the level of academic challenge presented to newly arrived students with beginning levels of English.
- Survey respondents agreed that students in the METS program have access to socioemotional support in a language that they understand, although they noted supports in languages other than Spanish were limited.
- The corps of EML Therapeutic Counselors (ETCs) represents a critical element of the systemic commitment to welcoming newcomer students, particularly as they work to support individual students with barriers to attendance.

What resources support students with limited or interrupted formal education? What are the assets of the METS (Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support) program, and what supports might this program need?

- While focus group participants expressed concerns about the processes for screening and identifying SLIFE students, we found that there are clear definitions and criteria in place.
- Based on data available to us, we find that all of the students who met the criteria in middle and high school were placed in the METS program.
- Support for elementary SLIFE students transitioned in 2019-20 from placement for these students in one of three elementary METS programs to placement at their neighborhood school. Due to the timing of this change and the impact of the pandemic, it is not possible to understand the impact of this change on students' academic outcomes.
- Most educators agreed that the secondary METS program meets students' needs.
- Educators did express concern over the variation in program implementation.
- Our classroom observations identified instruction in the METS program as an area of strength, with average classroom observation ratings higher than 3.0.
- Participants had mixed concerns around the practice of placing students exited from the METS program at their neighborhood schools.
- Participants expressed a need for PD around supporting SLIFE students, especially around socio-emotional supports for these students.
- Participants expressed concern that METS students may not be appropriately referred for special education services.
- An area that was identified as particularly welcoming to elementary SLIFE students was TWI programs.

Are newcomer students and students with interrupted formal education (SLIFE) afforded the opportunity to access curricular and extracurricular activities, comparable to their peers?

- We find that research participants expressed concern around MCPS not having a clearly communicated definition of the term "newcomer" student – however, we also urge caution around defining and tracking students based on their time of entry to the United States.
- Student focus group participants expressed that they had challenges in accessing after-school activities as they often had paid work or caregiving commitments.

Newcomer Students, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) Program: Recommendations

6.1. Continue the work that DELME is undertaking to monitor and evaluate the achievement and opportunities for elementary SLIFE students now that these students are dispersed among multiple elementary schools.

6.2. Should MCPS choose eventually to expand TWI programs, explore a priority pathway to these programs for SLIFE students.

- Engage the parents of SLIFE students in any planning to understand the impact of such change.
- Ensure that TWI schools have appropriate staffing in grades 3-5 to support SLIFE students.

6.3. Conduct annual reviews of data on the METS program, including numbers of students newly identified as SLIFE, number served, number exited, and number of students meeting ELD and academic content goals.

- Monitor these data to understand if site and staffing levels continue to be adequate or of numbers of students served are fluctuating.
- Monitor these data to understand if students are meeting programmatic goals, including graduation rates.
- Monitor these data to understand whether METS students are appropriately referred to special education services if needed.
- Supplement Central Office staffing to ensure this goal can be met.

6.4. Provide professional learning to support both ELD and content area teachers in METS programs.

- Prioritize professional learning for content area teachers.
- Provide professional learning on trauma-informed instruction and socio-emotional support for students with limited or interrupted formal education.

6.5. Expand the number of EML Therapeutic Counselors (ETCs) with the specific goal of understanding and reducing individual students' barriers to attendance.

6.6. Engage families, METS students, and their teachers in considering whether to follow the new elementary model and serve students at their home schools, or to continue the centralized METS model.

7: Emergent Multilingual Learners with Disabilities

Students who are dually identified as EML and as a student with a disability require expert educators and specialized supports. We sought to understand the extent to which educators are prepared to support these students, and also will examine rates of identification, and ways in which multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) data are used to support these students.

Emergent Multilingual Learners with Disabilities: Key Findings

Do teachers who work with Emergent Multilingual Learner students with disabilities feel prepared to support these students?

- Educators do not feel prepared to work with EML students with disabilities. The majority of survey respondents had not received any preservice or in-service training to support this group of learners.
- Educators expressed concern that special education evaluation processes and IEP or 504 meetings and written plans were inaccessible to families who need language access.

Is there disproportional identification of EML students as students with disabilities (either over- or under-representation)?

- There is a slight overrepresentation of EML students among students with disabilities.
- EML students are slightly overrepresented among students identified with speech or language impairment.
- EML students are more overrepresented among students identified with intellectual disability.
- EML students are twice as likely to be identified with specific learning disability than are the general population of students.
- EML students are slightly underrepresented among students with emotional disability
- Latino/a students are slightly overrepresented among students identified with a disability.
- We uncovered two major misconceptions about EMLS with disabilities that pertain to the identification and evaluation of these students.
  - Some educators expressed the mistaken belief that EMLs should not be evaluated until after they have been in the country for two years or until they learn English.
  - Some educators expressed the mistaken belief that special education services trump English language development service and expressed concern that ELD services are dropped once a child is diagnosed with a disability.
- We were unable to identify documented evaluation guidelines for EML students.
- We were unable to identify clear guidelines from MCPS on best or expected practices for outreach to parents of EML students.
- Staff interviews indicate that there is considerable variability among schools in how they evaluate, place and serve EMLs with disabilities.

How is data from MTSS being used in schools?

- We did not find widespread use of data from MTSS to support EML students with disabilities. When we probed educators on this question in focus groups, only one educator mentioned familiarity with this process.

Additional Finding: Communication with the families of EML students with disabilities

- Compelling evidence emerges from our research study that there are challenges when it comes to communicating with the families of EML students with disabilities.
- Focus group and survey participants expressed challenges within securing translation and interpretation services to support evaluation and IEP and 504 meetings and documentation.
- Examination of the systems around interpretation services indicate that there are challenges in staffing these services.
- We were unable to find evidence that assessment staff had the training to work effectively with interpreters.

Emergent Multilingual Learners with Disabilities: Recommendations

7.1   Develop clear guidelines for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities.

- Review comparable guidelines and toolkits, including the *California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities* and Chapter 6 of the Office of English Language Acquisition's *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies*.
- Ensure that the guidelines are appropriately communicated and that all stakeholders are trained in processes and procedures for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities.

7.2   Hold schools accountable for implementing best practices.

- Once guidelines are developed and implemented, conduct periodic monitoring visits to ensure schools are implementing these best practices. A focus of these visits should be ensuring that EMLs are provided with ELD services if indicated as well as special education and related services.

7.3   Provide extensive professional learning opportunities to all MCPS staff.

- Provide all schools with mandatory training in processes and procedures for the identification and evaluation of EML students in cases of a suspected disability.
- Provide training for ELD and special educators on best practices for instruction for EML students with disabilities.

7.4   Create a pool of well-trained and well-paid interpreters.

- Increase the pool of available interpreters.
- Recruit qualified interpreters by increasing interpreter compensation and ensuring that compensation for travel is included, as travel location is a current barrier to services.
- Train interpreters on issues of assessments, confidentiality, and working with different language and cultural groups.
- Train MCPS special education assessment personnel on working effectively with interpreters.

8: Family Engagement

Family engagement is a key practice for all students and it is especially important to ensure that family engagement practices meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families. We investigated MCPS family engagement practices, looking particularly at resources to support families from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

Family Engagement: Key Findings

Do families feel welcome at their schools?

- Families in general felt welcome at MCPS and students observed that their parents were treated well in school.
- Some schools embraced their diverse families and made efforts to communicate in the language and mode preferred by parents but those schools with fewer EMLs and Latinos did not do so well.
- Chinese parents in particular struggled to communicate with schools.

- Educators were able to highlight a broad and diverse range of strategies that they use to welcome multilingual families into schools, including dedicated support staff, school events and classes for parents, childcare services, and resource sharing.
- While this is a key strength, and although MCPS has a commitment to cultural competence, we also find that the adoption of these practices does not seem to be consistent across schools.

Is there appropriate communication between home and school, and are families receiving information in languages that they can understand?

- Language access appears to be a major issue.
- While the Language Line is a useful resource, it is not always appropriate for more sensitive topics.
- Multilingual staff are a critical resource but are not compensated for the additional burden of supporting multilingual family engagement.
- While central office communications are often translated into Spanish, communications are not routinely available in other languages. Family research participants pointed to the need for Amharic and Pashto, among other languages.

Are school events (e.g., back to school nights) appropriately communicated to families, in languages that they understand and via modes of communication that all families access (e.g., ensuring that communication is not only digital)?

- Information is sometimes, but not always, communicated in languages that families understand.
- Participants reported that in-person and paper communication were always useful.
- Families also noted a preference for digital communication via phone-based means (including texting, WhatsApp, and calls) over digital communication that required internet and computer access.

Are translation services available and are educators aware of and using these services?

- Fewer than half of the respondents to the educator survey felt that translation services were appropriately staffed.
- Research participants raised multiple issues and concerns around the adequacy of translation and interpretation services. Key concerns included:
  o Availability and timeliness of services, and inadequate numbers of interpreters who can provide services when needed;
  o Interpreters' capacity to provide technical or specialized language around educational contexts;
  o Interpersonal challenges with interpreter-mediated communication;
  o More extensive translation of documents needed, particularly from Central Office; and
  o Need for greater representation of languages.

What barriers to enrolment and school engagement are faced by multilingual families?

- Email communication was identified as a barrier.
- Families preferred in-person or phone-based communication modes.
- County-level communications should be available in multiple languages.

- Parents identified the parent community coordinators as an excellent resource.

Family Engagement: Recommendations

8.1   Expand the use of interpretation and translation services.

- Expand the number of staff available to support interpretation and translation services.
- Expand the number of languages available.
- Create a standardized list of educational terms and acronyms for translators and interpreters to use.
- Train interpreters and translators on key educational terms and concepts.

We note that this recommendation should be considered in conjunction with recommendation 7.4 in the chapter on EML students with disabilities.

8.2   Employ multiple modes of communication to reach parents of EMLs, including text, apps, and paper communication.

8.3   Foster linguistic and cultural competence in MCPS staff.

- Offer professional learning opportunities for all staff on culturally responsive practices.
- Ensure that these practices are being implemented in all schools.
- Expand the share of MCPS staff who are bilingual and bicultural.
- For schools with large numbers of EMLs and Latino students, consider holding school meetings in Spanish with interpretation for non-Spanish speaking parents.

Part 1: Introduction and Research Methods

1. Introduction

Our evaluation report consists of two parts. Part 1, Introduction and Research Methods, introduces our work and details the research methods that we employed to collect and analyze data. Part 2, Results, Findings, and Recommendations, provides in-depth detail on research results, the findings from those results, and the recommendations which emerge from the findings.

In this introduction to our evaluation report, we provide background on the impetus for the creation of the evaluation and detail CAL's approach to implementation. We describe our evaluation framework, which consists of eight *areas of inquiry*, aligned with MCPS requirements and with two foundational publications, namely the *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies* (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017) and *Monitoring Educational Equity* (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019)*.* We present our research questions, which are embedded within this framework, as well as a tabulation that aligns the areas of inquiry with both the MCPS requirements and the foundational publications. Finally, we provide detail on the four meetings of the Stakeholder Commission which informed our approach.

Our next chapter, Research Methods, provides in-depth detail on our methods, which include focus groups, surveys, school observations, interviews, and review of documentation and quantitative data.

In Part 2, eight chapters present findings and recommendations aligned with each of the eight areas of inquiry.

Background

In a June 24, 2020, Memorandum, the Montgomery County Board of Education directed the superintendent to convene a commission of stakeholders to review the current ESOL[1] model, including student achievement outcomes, and to conduct a review and analysis of the data related to Latino/a student achievement. The Memorandum is provided in Appendix A of this report.

On September 22, 2020, MCPS issued a request for proposals (RFP) from qualified vendors to conduct the work. Due to a change in specification and timeline, the RFP was not awarded. On August 30, 2021, the RFP was reissued. The intent of the RFP was as follows:

> The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit a consultant with deep knowledge and expertise in current research, programming, and effective practices to improve student engagement and achievement of Multilingual Learners (MLs) in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, and Latinx students in various programs across the system. These programs include, but are not limited to, Two Way Immersion (TWI), Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA), and other innovative language programs that have been implemented at the school level. The consultant will lead and facilitate a commission of various stakeholders and provide recommendations for innovative instructional models and practices, professional learning to enhance teaching, learning and leading, and cultural and equitable practices to help improve

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[1] Note that MCPS now prefers the term "English language development" or ELD. We use ELD throughout this document except in cases where we are quoting prior documentation.

student achievement. The consultant will work with district staff to analyze performance data, benchmark with other districts, and use current research about MLs in English language development programs (i.e., ESOL, TWI, CREA) to make recommendations. Ideally the district would like to see students receiving ESOL services make the minimum language growth required by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Montgomery County Public School's (MCPS) Evidence of Learning Framework, as well as feel a sense of pride for their accomplishments.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is seeking an innovative approach to (1) improve students' academic and language proficiency growth (2) coordinate efforts to address the needs of students receiving ESOL services and Latinx students (3) identify and select programming options that best meet the needs of MLs and Latinx students that are recipients of ESOL services.

The RFP requested that the vendor provide the following scope of services:

a) Lead and facilitate a commission of multiple stakeholders to examine current instructional practices, accountability and program models, and racial and linguistic equity.
b) Provide an initial analysis of instruction of ELs using evidence-based tools and provide areas for improvement and pathways to achieve said improvements.
c) Analyze quantitative and qualitative data to determine root causes of the opportunity and achievement gap.
d) Provide recommendations that align with Common Core State Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, and WIDA Standards for ELs that includes both theoretical and practical pedagogical application for staff.
e) Make recommendations regarding new structures and processes that may be needed to accomplish the goal of instructing ELs in a manner that leads to content and language proficiency growth of a year or more.
f) Provide knowledge, guidance, and analysis about the implementation of translanguaging, biliteracy, and biculturalism for all schools.
g) Provide knowledge and expertise in the idea that Bilingual Education is a vehicle for equalizing opportunities for all students receiving ESOL services.
h) Provide culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) as the foundation for linguistic and racial equity.
i) Provide recommendations for MCPS K–12 programs that service all MLs, Latinx students receiving ESOL services and are participating in other Language Development Programming (i.e., TWI, SLIFE, CREA).
j) Identify a virtual platform that will be used to maximize engagement of all stakeholders. In the case where we return to in-person learning, the vendor should indicate how they will adjust their services.
k) Provide teaching and learning recommendations for Emergent Bilingual students (Newcomers) K-12.
l) Prepare an interim report to the Board of Education due in February 2022 and a final report due May 2022.[2] Develop a comprehensive timeline of services that aligns with the delivery of the interim and final reports.

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[2] Note that these dates were updated upon execution of the contract, which was awarded February 2022.

Montgomery County Public Schools selected the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), a DC-based non-profit organization, to carry out the evaluation work. A contract was awarded to CAL on February 7, 2022.

Overall Approach

The CAL team worked alongside the MCPS Department of English Learner and Multicultural Education (DELME) to execute the investigation. In partnership with DELME, CAL worked to convene a Stakeholder Commission. The Stakeholder Commission met twice in the spring of 2022 to review the general scope of the investigation and to provide input for the data collection process, and twice in the fall of 2022 to review initial and final recommendations.

CAL's mixed methods investigation proceeded in two phases. Phase 1 included focus groups, a survey, a review of documents, and a review of quantitative data. Phase 1 data were analyzed and reviewed in an interim report that we provided to MCPS for internal review in September 2022. Recommendations from Phase 1 were reviewed by the Stakeholder Commission in the third meeting in the series (held September 30). Phase 2 added extensive classroom observation, conducted in the fall of 2022, as well as additional survey data, quantitative data, and further detail from reviews of documents. We also conducted interviews with select MCPS staff in Phase 1 and Phase 2. The Stakeholder Commission reviewed the process and provided input on data collection. Throughout the process, we were supported in our understandings of the contexts and processes by DELME.

Figure 1 below outlines the integration and workflow emerging from the Commission inquiry recommendations, through data collection, into the interim and final report.

Figure 1: Process for creation of the final report
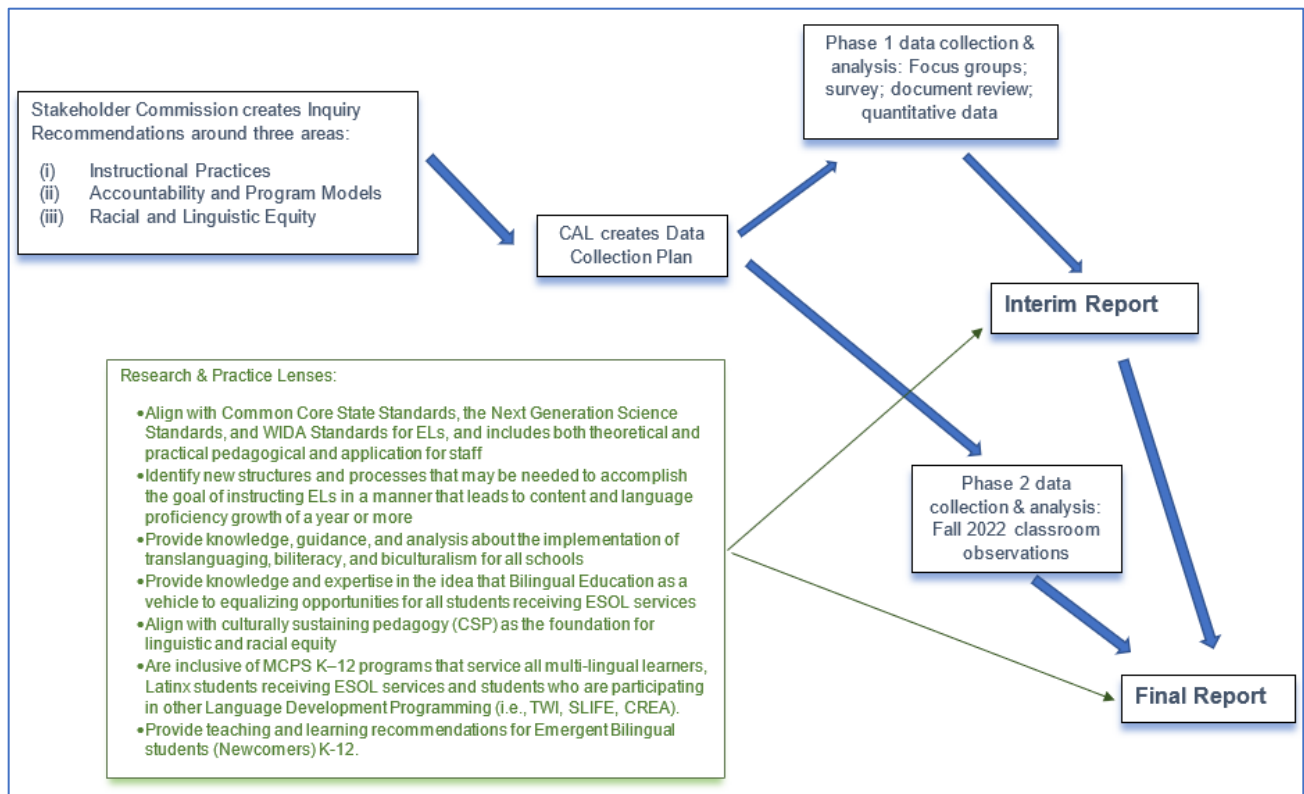
Areas of Inquiry

CAL structured the work around eight areas of inquiry, which emerged from the 7/14/20 MCPS Board of Education memorandum on Examination of Student Achievement Data for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Latino Students (Appendix A), and from the scope of work issued by MCPS for the evaluator.

The areas are also informed by and in alignment with the *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies* (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017) and *Monitoring Educational Equity* (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019)*.*

The eight areas are:

- Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities
- Methods and Models for Instructing Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) (including Two-way immersion (TWI) programs)
- Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students
- Educator Assets and Supports
- College and Career Readiness (including the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA))
- Newcomer Students (including students denied educational opportunities, i.e., students with limited or interrupted formal education) (including the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) program)
- Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) with Disabilities
- Family Engagement

Below, we provide a brief summary of each of these areas and their associated research questions.

Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities

We have deliberately combined our analysis of achievement outcomes with an analysis of opportunities to learn, based on our understanding that students cannot pursue high levels of achievement without strong access to opportunities for engagement and instruction.

For this area of inquiry, we investigate current outcome data in MCPS (for example, assessment and graduation data). We also examine where opportunities are afforded to diverse students and where opportunities may not be presented.

Research Questions

- What are achievement outcomes for EML students and Latino/a students, and how do they compare to outcomes for the total population of students?
- Are EML and Latino/a students engaged in schooling? Are students consistently attending school?
- Are schools able to access and use these data, especially the equity/accountability data?
- What data is being used to track outcomes of bilingualism and biliteracy in TWI programs?

Methods and Models for Instructing EMLs

MCPS uses a variety of methods and models for ELD instruction. This area of inquiry focuses on understanding the span of the methods and models and determining if they meet the current needs of MCPS EML students.

In addition to examining elementary- and secondary-level programming, we will pay particular attention to the following three programs:

- Two-way Immersion (TWI)
- Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) programs, especially as they relate to students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)
- Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA)

Research Questions

- Are current classroom methods and models tailored to suit the needs of the current EML population?
- Are current methods and models appropriate within TWI programs?
- Specifically, how are content areas well-supported for EML students by the current methods, models, and curriculum areas, and are there grade-level/content areas that could use additional support?
- Do models ensure that EML students have ample opportunity to engage with their peers?
- Are EML students afforded the opportunity to access curricular and extracurricular activities, comparable to their peers, such as access to the arts, technology, and physical education?
- Are staffing models and structures appropriate to support EML students and student growth? How are schools translating their staffing allocations into individualized programs of instruction?
- Are staffing models and structures appropriate within TWI programs?
- Are staff members who are responsible for ELD programs sufficiently supported? Is their role diluted with too many responsibilities?

Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students

Literature on best practices for EML students consistently stresses the need for understanding the linguistic and cultural assets that students bring to the classroom, and the harm that is done via deficit perspectives on these students. For this area of inquiry, we seek to understand how multilingual students are recognized and celebrated; how their full linguistic repertoires are recognized and respected; and the extent to which EML and Latino/a students experience nurturing and safe school climates.

Research Questions

- How are multilingual students recognized and celebrated?
- Are the full linguistic repertoires (including translanguaging abilities) of students recognized and respected?
- How are resources assigned to TWI programs? Should TWI programs be expanded? If so, what barriers or obstacles exist?
- Are there disparities in disciplinary practices between EML and Latino/a students, and the general population of students?

- Do EML and Latino/a students experience nurturing and safe school climates?

Educator Assets and Supports

Educators bring critical assets to supporting EML and Latino/a students, and this area of inquiry seeks to understand the strengths of MCPS educators in nurturing EML and Latino/a students. We also examine the degree to which further support is needed, including needs for credentialed teachers and professional development in specific areas such as language development in content areas, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and the use of data to support student success.

Research Questions

- What assets do the cadre of MCPS educators bring with respect to education for EML and Latino/a students? What supports are needed?
- Are the teachers of EML and Latino/a students comparable in their years of experience and level of credentialling to the general population of teachers?
- Do educators in the district have preparation in the pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013) needed to support EMLs?
- What opportunities are available for professional learning to support EMLs in the content areas, and what opportunities are needed?
- Do educators bring an assets-based mindset to supporting EML students?
- Do educators have tools to implement culturally sustaining approaches to Latino/a students and to students from immigrant backgrounds?

College and Career Readiness

As EML and Latino/a students move toward adulthood, we seek to understand how prepared they are for this transition. The experiences of early adulthood are diverse, and this area of inquiry examines how students are afforded opportunities for high school graduation, prepared for higher education, and/or supported in accessing career opportunities.

Research Questions

- Are EML and Latino/a students appropriately prepared for college and career opportunities upon leaving school?
- Do students feel confident that they are prepared and supported upon leaving school?
- What is the graduation rate for EML and Latino/a students? How does it compare to all students in MCPS, and how does it compare to national rates?
- Are EML students scheduled to be on track for graduation based on their scheduled course-taking?
- Are EML and Latina/o students afforded opportunities to engage in college preparatory programs (e.g., IB and AP)? In gifted and talented programs? If not, what barriers exist?
- Are EML and Latino/a students provided with support to transition to the workforce (community college or career placement)?
- What are the assets of the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) program, and what supports might this program need?

- How many students have the opportunity to earn the Seal of Biliteracy at graduation, and of that percentage how many earn the Seal? Are students, their families, and their teachers aware of the opportunity?

Newcomer Students

Many districts across the United States are seeing increases in older students newly arrived in the U.S. In some cases, these students may have been denied prior educational opportunities and are often referred to as students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). For this area of inquiry, we seek to understand how these students are welcomed, what resources are available to support them, and what additional supports might be needed to ensure that they have access to opportunities, comparable to their peers.

Research Questions

- Is there a welcoming and inclusive approach to EML students who begin their U.S. educational career in high school?
- What resources support students with limited or interrupted formal education?
- What are the assets of the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) program, and what supports might this program need?
- Are newcomer students and students with interrupted formal education afforded opportunities to access curricular and extracurricular activities, comparable to their peers?

Emergent Multilingual Learners with Disabilities

Students dually identified as EML and as a student with a disability require expert educators and specialized supports. For this area of inquiry, we seek to understand the extent to which educators are prepared to support these students. We also examine rates of identification as well as ways in which multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) data are used to support these students.

Research Questions

- Do teachers who work with EML students with disabilities feel prepared to support these students?
- Is there disproportional identification of EMLs as students with disabilities (either over or underrepresentation)?
- How is data from MTSS being used in schools?

Family Engagement

Family engagement is a key practice for all students, and it is especially important to ensure that family engagement practices meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families. For this area, we investigate MCPS family engagement practices, looking particularly at resources to support families from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

Research Questions

- Do families feel welcome at their schools?
- Is there appropriate communication between home and school, and are families receiving information in languages that they can understand?

- Are school events (e.g., back to school nights) appropriately communicated to families, in languages that they understand and via modes of communication that all families can access (e.g., ensuring that communication is not only digital)?
- Are translation services available and are educators aware of and using these services?
- What barriers to enrollment and school engagement are faced by multilingual families?

Areas of Inquiry: Alignment with Foundational Documents

In the table below, we align the eight areas of inquiry to CAL's scope of work and the 7/14/20 MCPS Board of Education memorandum, Examination of Student Achievement Data for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Latino Students.

We also provide alignment with two other relevant publications that informed the scope of our inquiry:

U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2017). *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies.* Washington, DC: Author. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019*). Monitoring Educational Equity*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/25389

We refer to the collection of these four documents as our "foundational documents" for the inquiry. Table 1 lays out the alignment of the eight areas of inquiry with relevant sections in these documents

Table 1: Alignment of eight areas of inquiry with relevant sections of foundational documents.

Area of Inquiry	Relevant Sections of Foundational Documents
Achievement Outcomes & Opportunities	MCPS BoE memorandum 7/14/20 OELA Toolkit Chapter 9 NAS Indicators 3, 5
Methods & Models	CAL SOW task d) Provide recommendations that align with Common Core State Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, and WIDA Standards for ELs that include both theoretical and practical pedagogical applications for staff. CAL SOW task e) Make recommendations regarding new structures and processes that may be needed to accomplish the goal of instructing ELs in a manner that leads to content and language proficiency growth of a year or more. MCPS BoE memorandum 7/14/20 OELA Toolkit Chapter 2 OELA Toolkit Chapter 5 OELA Toolkit Chapter 9 NAS Indicator 12
Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students	CAL SOW task f) Provide knowledge, guidance, and analysis about the implementation of translanguaging, biliteracy, and biculturalism for all schools. CAL SOW task g) Provide knowledge and expertise in the idea that Bilingual Education is a vehicle to equalizing opportunities for all students receiving ESOL services. CAL SOW task i) Provide recommendations for MCPS K–12 programs that service all MLs, Latinx students receiving ESOL services and are participating in other Language Development Programming (i.e., TWI, SLIFE, CREA). NAS Indicator 14, 15
Educator Assets and Supports	CAL SOW task h) Provide culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) as the foundation for linguistic and racial equity. OELA Toolkit Chapter 3 NAS Indicator 10
College and Career Readiness	CAL SOW task i) Provide recommendations for MCPS K–12 programs that service all MLs, Latinx students receiving ESOL services and are participating in other Language Development Programming (i.e., TWI, SLIFE, CREA). OELA Toolkit Chapter 4 NAS Indicators 4, 6, 7, 11
Newcomer Students	CAL SOW task i) Provide recommendations for MCPS K–12 programs that service all MLs, Latinx students receiving ESOL services and are participating in other Language Development Programming (i.e., TWI, SLIFE, CREA). OELA Toolkit Chapter 4
English learner students with disabilities	OELA Toolkit Chapter 6 NAS Indicator 13
Family engagement	OELA Toolkit Chapter 10

We also provide detail on two external documents (*English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies* [U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017] and *Monitoring Educational Equity* [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019]).

Figure 2 shows chapters in the *English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies* that are included within the Areas of Inquiry. Select elements, e.g., coverage of the identification of EML students, or coverage of exiting students from programs, were not included in our inquiry as they were not directly related to the SOW issued by MCPS.

Figure 2: Chapters in the English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies that are included within the Areas of Inquiry

OELA Toolkit (2017) – List of Chapters
Bolded items are aligned with the areas of inquiry.

Chapter 1: Tools and Resources for Identifying All English Learner Students
Chapter 2: Tools and Resources for Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program
Chapter 3: Tools and Resources for Staffing and Supporting an English Learner Program
Chapter 4: Tools and Resources for Providing English Learners Meaningful Access to Core Curricular and Extracurricular Programs
Chapter 5: Tools and Resources for Creating an Inclusive Environment for and Avoiding the Unnecessary Segregation of English Learners
Chapter 6: Tools and Resources for Addressing English Learners with Disabilities
Chapter 7: Tools and Resources for Serving English Learners Who Opt Out of EL Programs
Chapter 8: Tools and Resources for Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services
Chapter 9: Tools and Resources for Evaluating the Effectiveness of a District's EL Program
Chapter 10: Tools and Resources for Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents

Figure 3 similarly indicates which of the National Academies of Science (2019) indicators of educational equity fell into the scope of our evaluation. Early learning and kindergarten readiness were not in the scope of our evaluation. While exposure to racial, ethnic, and economic segregation is an important indicator of educational equity, this has been extensively studied in MCPS' recent Districtwide Boundary Analysis[3] and was not included in our inquiry.

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[3] See 2.3. *Data Analysis: Diversity*, available at
https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/publicinfo/Boundary_Analysis/interim-report/02c_Diversity.pdf

Figure 3: National Academies of Science Indicators of Educational Equity that are included within the Areas of Inquiry

National Academies of Science (2019) – Indicators of Educational Equity
Bolded items are aligned with the areas of inquiry.

Domain A: Kindergarten Readiness
- Indicator 1: Disparities in Academic Readiness
- Indicator 2: Disparities in Self-Regulation and Attention Skills

Domain B: K-12 Learning and Engagement
- **Indicator 3: Disparities in Engagement in Schooling**
- **Indicator 4: Disparities in Performance in Coursework**
- **Indicator 5: Disparities in Performance on Tests**

Domain C: Educational Attainment
- **Indicator 6: Disparities in On-Time Graduation**
- **Indicator 7: Disparities in Postsecondary Readiness**

Domain D: Extent of Racial, Ethnic, and Economic Segregation
- Indicator 8: Disparities in Students' Exposure to Racial, Ethnic, and Economic Segregation

Domain E: Equitable Access to High-Quality Early Learning Programs
- Indicator 9: Disparities in Access to and Participation in High-Quality Pre-K Programs

Domain F: Equitable Access to High-Quality Curricula and Instruction
- **Indicator 10: Disparities in Access to Effective Teaching**
- **Indicator 11: Disparities in Access to and Enrollment in Rigorous Coursework**
- **Indicator 12: Disparities in Curricular Breadth**
- **Indicator 13: Disparities in Access to High-Quality Academic Supports**

Domain G: Equitable Access to Supportive School and Classroom Environments
- **Indicator 14: Disparities in School Climate**
- **Indicator 15: Disparities in Non-Exclusionary Discipline Practices**

Stakeholder Commission

MCPS DELME staff identified and invited members to join the Stakeholder Commission Group.

A total of 40 individuals were identified and invited to join. Of these, 27 were in attendance at at least one Stakeholder Commission Meeting.

Stakeholder Commission members were distributed across multiple roles within MCPS. Table 2 provides information about their professional roles.

Table 2: Stakeholder Commission members by role

District-level administrator	18%
Elementary ELD teacher	7%
Elementary general education teacher	7%
Elementary school principal	7%
Other	18%
Paraeducator	7%
Parent or community member	7%
School psychologist, social worker, or guidance counselor	4%
Secondary content teacher	7%
Secondary ELD teacher	18%

Commission members were important stakeholders in the three programs of particular interest to the evaluation, with 32% indicating that their work supported Two-way Immersion programs; 61% noting that their work supported the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) programs; and 18% who shared that their work supported the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA).

The three MCPS unions were represented as follows: 57% of Commission members indicated that they were Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) members; 29% were members of the Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals (MCAAP); and 7% were members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Demographic data was collected anonymously from the participants in Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1. There were 81% of surveyed Commission members who identified as female, 4% as male, and one member who did not specify gender. Thirty-seven percent of the participants identified as Latina/o, and 63% did not.

Table 3 shows the proportions of the group that indicated each racial and ethnic identity. Note that participants could select more than one category so the figures may not sum to 100%.

Table 3: Racial and ethnic identities of Stakeholder Commission members

American Indian or Alaska Native	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian or Asian American	White or Caucasian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Multiracial	Prefer not to say
7%	37%	37%	4%	41%	0%	4%	0%

Participants were also asked if they spoke a language other than English "at home or in your classroom."

Table *4* shows that the majority of participants indicated that they spoke Spanish (63%); however, in their self-reports, some participants noted that they had minimal proficiency.

Table 4: Multilingual proficiencies of Stakeholder Commission members

Spanish	German	Korean[4]	French	Japanese
63%	7%	7%	15%	4%

CAL convened four meetings of the Stakeholder Commission to steer the work of our evaluation. Each meeting was structured around the eight areas of inquiry.

Meeting 1: March 30, 2022 – this meeting was intended to support the creation of a detailed data collection plan. For each of the areas of inquiry, Commissioners were asked about current strengths, weaknesses, and places where the evaluation team could learn more (for example, schools to observe, documents to review, data to examine).

Meeting 2: April 28, 2022 – in this meeting, the Stakeholder Commission reviewed and commented on the data collection plan. The Commission members also supported the creation of an outreach plan for family and community engagement, providing a list of community and family organizations that would be central to reaching the families of multicultural students.

Meeting 3: September 30, 2022 – by our third meeting, CAL had already completed a good deal of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. At this meeting, Stakeholder Commission members were invited to review and comment on initial recommendations. This review was incorporated into the final set of recommendations.

Meeting 4: December 7, 2022 – at this meeting, CAL presented key findings and recommendations to the Stakeholder Commission in a virtual gallery walk, Commission members participated by commenting with sticky notes and using colored dots to indicate recommendation areas of priority.

Agendas for the Stakeholder Commission meetings are provided in Appendix B. Below, we provide detailed descriptions of each meeting, including meeting evaluations from participants.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1: March 30, 2022

The first stakeholder meeting was held on March 30, 2022. CAL provided two options for attendance, with one session at the end of the workday for educators (4:30PM) and the second session in the evening (6:30PM) to allow parents and other community stakeholders the chance to join after the end of regular business hours. The sessions had the same agenda and content. The meetings were held via Zoom.

- Thirteen Stakeholder Commission members attended the afternoon session.
- Seven Stakeholder Commission members attended the evening session.

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[4] One Stakeholder Commission participant identified a language of their home or classroom as "Kosraen" which is a language of a small Pacific island community with about 6,000 speakers. We believe this is likely a typo for Korean.

To begin the meeting, the facilitator welcomed the group, introduced herself and Dr. Norton, and reviewed group norms for full and engaged participation. Next, the CAL project director provided a brief overview of the project goals and activities, including details about the role of the Stakeholder Commission and a disclosure that Commission members would be acknowledged by name. The bulk of the meeting time was occupied by a small-group breakout session.

Our meeting design was intended to welcome participants into groups that were amenable to intimate discussion and sharing, allowing participants a breadth of opportunities to give input. Our design included an extended small-group breakout session, followed by a "walkthrough" during which participants had the opportunity to add comments to the discussion notes of other small groups.

The facilitators created four small groups, each with a breakout room and a set of Google Jamboards, which allowed multiple contributors to add input online. Participants self-selected groups, although they were asked to move between groups if group sizes were imbalanced. Participants successfully negotiated a balanced set of four groups within the first few minutes of the group breakouts. The four groups were:

1. Two-way Immersion (TWI) programs
2. Secondary students – moving toward successful graduation
3. EML students in elementary settings
4. MCPS Core team – this group was made up of MCPS Central Office staff who oversaw the evaluation work

Each small group, facilitated by a CAL staff member, engaged with four of the areas of inquiry. Table 5 shows the distribution of areas of inquiry across groups.

Table 5: Tabulation of the distribution of inquiry areas across small groups

	Two-way Immersion (TWI) programs	Secondary students – moving toward successful graduation	EML students in elementary settings	MCPS Core team	Number of groups
Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities				X	**1**
Methods and Models for Instructing EMLs	X	X	X		**3**
Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students	X		X		**2**
Educator Assets and Supports	X			X	**2**
College and Career Transitions		X		X	**2**
Newcomer Students		X	X		**2**
Emergent Multilingual Students with Disabilities			X	X	**2**
Family Engagement	X	X			**2**

Group members were led through each area of inquiry by the CAL facilitator. For each area, three questions guided discussion:

- For this area, what are current MCPS assets? What is the district doing well?
- For this area, what challenges do you see? What supports are needed?
- For this area, how can we learn more? We welcome your suggestions on programs or schools to observe, individuals or groups whose voices we should include, and any reports or documents that we can use to learn more about MCPS in this area.

Participants used Google Jamboard to provide responses, allowing the facilitator and group members to collaborate on note-taking in real time using virtual "sticky notes." Figure 4 illustrates a screencap of a Jamboard in one of the small group breakouts.

Figure 4: An example of a small-group Google Jamboard in Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1
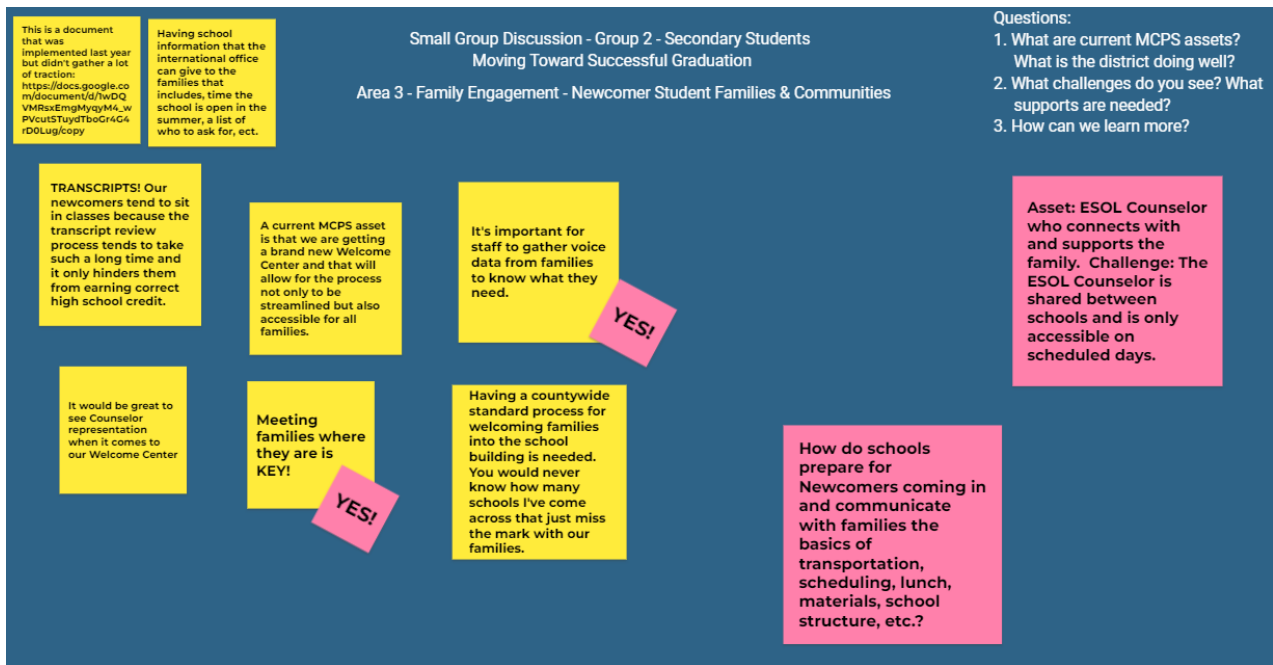
Participants spent 45 minutes in small-group discussions. Once the discussion time had ended, participants engaged in a self-paced Jamboard "walkthrough" for 10 additional minutes. In this section of the meeting, participants were provided with links to the Jamboards for each of the other small groups and had the opportunity to add to the comments.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1: Evaluation

After the meeting, participants were provided with a link to complete an anonymous online survey. Results are provided in Table 6. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the purpose of the commission and their role. Participants also felt that the main meeting facilitator and the small group leads were well-organized and that the virtual meeting technology was appropriate. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their voice and perspectives were welcomed, and that they have had input into the direction of the evaluation. The final column of the table provides the average rating for each question, where a "Strongly Agree" has a value of "4" and

"Strongly Disagree" has a value of "1." Note that one survey participant consistently marked "Strongly Disagree" in each column.

Table 6: Results of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1 Evaluation Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
I understand the purpose of the commission.	5%	5%	45%	45%	3.3
I understand my role.	5%	5%	70%	20%	3.0
The main facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	5%	0%	40%	55%	3.4
The small group facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	5%	0%	45%	50%	3.4
The virtual meeting technology was appropriate for my needs and I could participate.	5%	0%	35%	60%	3.5
I feel that my voice and perspectives were welcomed.	5%	5%	35%	55%	3.4
I feel that I have had some input into the direction of the evaluation.	5%	10%	50%	35%	3.1

Participants were also invited to provide open-ended comments. One respondent expressed their appreciation for the meeting organization:

> The meeting was so well-organized, provisioned, and facilitated. Communication before and during were excellent!

However, another respondent expressed concern about uptake of the input:

> I have been on workgroups with MCPS before. They meet with *stakeholders* and then do what they want. Today felt rushed, but maybe that will be adjusted. I would like to know what IS possible. Because often our solutions are met with…"That cannot work"

Most participants did not provide any additional comments.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1: Outputs
The CAL team collected Jamboard notes and facilitator notes, and entered these into a spreadsheet, coded by session (afternoon or evening), group (TWI, Elementary, Secondary, or MCPS Core), and inquiry area. There were a total of 441 individual lines in the notes spreadsheet, each representing a Jamboard note or an individual facilitator note.

The spreadsheet was examined to further flesh out questions and to integrate observations into the data collection plan. As the team examined the meeting outputs, we noted that there was a subset of comments from Meeting 1 that recommended a change or a course of action. For example, a participant made the following comment in Meeting 1: "Provide general educators and other instructional staff additional PD on working with EMLs." To elevate specific recommendations from the Stakeholder Commission, we moved a subset of these into our workflow for Meeting 2. We refer to these recommendations as "Commission Proposals."

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2: April 28, 2022
Stakeholder Meeting 2 was also conducted virtually, and we hosted sessions at 4.30PM and 6.30PM.

- Seventeen Stakeholder Commission members attended the afternoon session.
- Eight Stakeholder Commission members attended the evening session.

The introduction to the meeting followed the same format as Stakeholder Meeting 1, with the facilitator welcoming the group, making introductions, and reviewing group norms for engaged participation. The introduction also included a brief overview of the purposes and aims of the Stakeholder Commission and the evaluation in general, both as a reminder and as an orientation to those participants who had not attended Meeting 1.

A major purpose of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2 was to examine data collection proposals. The CAL project director presented an overview of the plans to collect data, with specific emphasis on family and community engagement in focus groups. Participants were invited to identify community groups that they recommended for outreach in the recruitment of participants for focus groups. The two sessions provided a rich list of groups that advocate for or serve EML and/or Latina/o students.

After the presentation of the data collection plan, participants again moved to small-group breakout rooms, using the same four categories as in Meeting 1.

1. Two-way Immersion (TWI) programs
2. Secondary students – moving toward successful graduation
3. EML students in elementary settings
4. MCPS Core team – this group was made up of MCPS Central Office staff who oversaw the evaluation work

Each group looked at a set of "Commission Proposals" generated during Meeting 1, and responded to three discussion questions:

- What is the current situation?
- What actions would help implement this change?
- Who can support implementing this change?

Figure 5 shows an example of the note-taking tool that participants could access in Google Docs. Both participants and the small-group facilitator could take notes and groups had flexibility in choosing how they wanted to capture their data.

Figure 5: Small-group breakout note-taking tool for Meeting 2

Commission Proposal 1: Provide general educators and other instructional staff additional PD on working with EMLs.
What is the current situation?
What actions would help implement this change?
Who can support implementing this change?

At the conclusion of the breakout groups, each group reported back on one of the proposals that they had considered.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2: Outputs

The following were the outputs of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2:

- A list of community groups (and in some cases, contacts) for use in family and community focus group recruitment outreach
- A deeper dive into the "Commission Proposals," including details on the current state of affairs, areas to probe for data collection, and key elements of MCPS organizational structure that might support the inquiry (uncovered in the element "Who can support implementing this change?")

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2: Evaluation

Results of the evaluation of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2 are provided in Table 7. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the purpose of the commission and their role. Participants felt that the main meeting facilitator and the small-group leads were well-organized and that the virtual meeting technology was appropriate, although there were participants who indicated that it would have been beneficial to provide more background on the purpose and direction, specifically for those individuals who had not attended Stakeholder Commission Meeting 1. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their voices and perspectives were welcomed, and that they had input into the direction of the evaluation. The final column of the table provides the average rating for each question, where a "Strongly Agree" has a value of "4" and "Strongly Disagree" has a value of "1."

Table 7: Results of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2 Evaluation Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
I understand the purpose of the commission.	0%	6%	29%	65%	3.6
I understand my role.	0%	0%	47%	53%	3.5
The main facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	0%	18%	41%	41%	3.2
The small group facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	0%	18%	41%	41%	3.2
The virtual meeting technology was appropriate for my needs and I could participate.	6%	0%	53%	41%	3.3
I feel that my voice and perspectives were welcomed.	0%	18%	24%	59%	3.4
I feel that I have had some input into the direction of the evaluation.	6%	13%	38%	44%	3.2

Participants were additionally invited to provide open-ended comments. As noted above, participants who did not attend Meeting 1 expressed that they would have appreciated additional background information.

> Prep new participants so they can be fully aware and involved.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3: September 20, 2022
Stakeholder Meeting 3 was also conducted virtually at hosted sessions at both 4.30PM and 6.30PM.

- Seventeen Stakeholder Commission members attended the afternoon session.
- Eight Stakeholder Commission members attended the evening session.

The meeting began with a re-introduction of key project staff, followed by a review of the project goals, of the eight areas of inquiry, and of the roadmap of the four Stakeholder Commission meetings. We also informed participants that CAL had completed some of the data collection and had crafted initial recommendations for review. We provided a brief overview of data collection and analysis to date.

The facilitator then provided participants with the full set of initial recommendations in writing, and projected the recommendations (in condensed format) on screen.

Next, participants were invited to join small breakout sessions. There were two consecutive sets of breakout sessions. The first set covered three areas of inquiry: Instructional Methods and Models (Two-way immersion); Family Engagement; and MCPS Educators. The second set covered four areas of inquiry: College and Career Transitions; Newcomer and SIFE Students; EML Students with Disabilities; and Assets-based Approaches to EML and Latino/a Students.

As data collection and analysis were not completed at the time of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3, no recommendations were presented in the area of Achievement and Opportunity. In the area of

Instructional Methods and Models, recommendations were presented on the area of Two-way immersion only.

Participants self-selected their breakout room of interest and engaged in a 25-minute discussion of the recommendations. Facilitators began each breakout session by presenting the full list of recommendations to the participants, and then invited discussion of the recommendations. Discussions included any critical gaps in the recommendations or areas that participants felt warranted further inquiry. Facilitators took on-screen notes using prepared Google docs.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the facilitators thanked the participants, wrapped up the meeting, and provided a link for an evaluation tool.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3: Outputs
The following were outputs of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3:

- Detailed notes on Stakeholder Commissioners' responses to the initial set of recommendations

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3: Evaluation
Results of the evaluation of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3 are provided in Table 8. All participants agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the purpose of the commission and their role, that the main facilitator was organized, that their voices and perspectives were welcomed, and that they felt that they had input into the direction of the evaluation. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the small groups were organized and well-prepared, and that the technology was appropriate for their needs. The final column of the table provides the average rating for each question, where a "Strongly Agree" has a value of "4" and "Strongly Disagree" has a value of "1."

Table 8: Results of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 3 Evaluation Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
I understand the purpose of the commission.	0.00%	0.00%	23.08%	76.92%	3.8
I understand my role.	0.00%	0.00%	46.15%	53.85%	3.5
The main facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	0.00%	0.00%	41.67%	58.33%	3.6
The small group facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	0.00%	7.69%	46.15%	46.15%	3.4
The virtual meeting technology was appropriate for my needs and I could participate.	0.00%	7.69%	38.46%	53.85%	3.5
I feel that my voice and perspectives were welcomed.	0.00%	0.00%	30.77%	69.23%	3.7
I feel that I have had some input into the direction of the evaluation.	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	66.67%	3.7

Participants were additionally invited to provide open-ended comments. Select comments are summarized below:

- One participant shared some discomfort with sharing freely in the breakout room as their supervisor was also present.

- A participant advocated for greater communication and coordination between central offices.

- A participant advocated for content scaffolding for content teachers to be built into the curriculum.

- A respondent recommended clarity in distinguishing between recommendations that were intended for elementary SLIFE students and those intended for secondary students in METS programs.

- Two respondents requested more time for the future meetings and more detail on recommendations to be provided in advance of the meetings.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 4: December 7, 2022

For our final Stakeholder Commission meeting, based on patterns from meeting 3, we held one session, from 5-7PM.

- 13 Stakeholder Commission members attended the meeting.

This meeting took the format of a virtual gallery walk, in which partcipants reviewed and commented on the final set of recommendations. We began with a brief introduction, re-orienting participants to the work to date. We also provided an high-level overview of the data collection work.

Participants were then invited to comment on key findings and recommendations by dropping sticky notes in to provide feedback. Participants were also invited to support prioritization, by using a sticky dot to indicate recommendations that they felt were important to elevate. Figure 6 shows an example of this process.

Figure 6: A example jamboard, showing comments and virtual "sticky dots" to indicate elements of recommendations that Stakeholder Commission members felt were important to prioritize

Faciltators were available in breakout rooms to support questions from participants. Because participants were self-directed in reviewing each of the areas, there was no formal wrap-up at the conclusion of the meeting, and participants left once they completed their review.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 4: Outputs
The following were outputs of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 4:

- Commentary on select findings and recommendations.
- Data on areas which participants collectively found to be of high priority.

Stakeholder Commission Meeting 4: Evaluation
Results of the evaluation of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 4 are provided in Table 8. Note that only 4 of the participants completed the evaluation. As we noted above, this meeting had no formal wrap-up, and the evaluation link was disseminated the next day via email rather than in the Zoom chat at the meeting close. We believe this difference may account for the smaller number of respondents.

The particpants that responded either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with all the items on the evaluation.

Table 9: Results of Stakeholder Commission Meeting 4 Evaluation Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
I understand the purpose of the commission.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	3.75
I understand my role.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	3.75
The main facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	4.00
The small group facilitator was organized and well-prepared.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	4.00
The virtual meeting technology was appropriate for my needs and I could participate.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	3.75
I feel that my voice and perspectives were welcomed.	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	3.25
I feel that I have had some input into the direction of the evaluation.	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	3.50

Participants were additionally invited to provide open-ended comments. Select comments are summarized below:

- One participant felt that they would have appreciated a wrap-up to bring participants back together at the end of the meeting.

- Another commenter found the self-paced format conducive to reading and digesting the recommendations.

- "Love the constructive feel of the meeting."

2. Research Methods

Our mixed-methods analysis employed four major data collection efforts: focus groups, surveys, document review, and classroom observations. In addition, the CAL team met weekly with representatives from DELME. These weekly meetings had two major purposes: first, to support logistical and practical aspects of data collection; and second, for CAL to have the opportunity to deepen understandings of MCPS data, practices, documents, and other key contextual factors at play in the district.

This chapter describes each of these methods, including, where relevant, recruitment, instrumentation, characteristics of participants, and methods of analysis.

Focus Groups

A series of focus groups was conducted in May and June of 2022, and in October of 2022. Focus group participants included MCPS educators, students, and family and community members.

CAL created four distinct focus group protocols and recruited participants for a total of 18 focus groups. Each of the four focus group protocols is provided in Appendix C. Focus groups were organized to ensure that multiple perspectives of educators with diverse professional lenses were included. We also recruited students and family and community members to participate in focus groups to ensure that their perspectives were represented. Table 1 lists the four focus group protocols, and the targeted participants for the 18 focus group meetings.

In line with focus group methodological recommendations (Kruger & Casey, 2014), we targeted five to eight participants for each focus group.

Table 1: List of targeted participants for focus groups, by protocol type

Protocol 1: Classroom Educators (virtual)
Focus Groups:
1. TWI program educators
2. Elementary school educators – ELD educators/paraeducators
3. Elementary school educators – Content area educators/paraeducators
4. Secondary school educators– ESOL educators/paraeducators
5. Secondary school educators– Content area educators/paraeducators, including those in METS program/classes
6. Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) educators
7. Special education teachers
Protocol 2: Administrators & Other Staff (virtual)
Focus Groups:
8. TWI principals
9. Elementary school principals
10. Secondary school principals
11. Guidance counselors
12. Secondary school master scheduling staff
Protocol 3: Students (in-person)
Focus Groups:
13. High school students at Seneca Valley High School
14. High school students at Wheaton High School (with CREA students from Thomas Edison High School of Technology)
Protocol 4: Family & Community Groups (virtual and in-person)
Focus Groups:
15. In-person Group 1
16. Virtual Group 1
17. Virtual Group 2
18. Virtual Group 3

Recruitment

For the classroom educators, administrators, and other MCPS staff, CAL created recruitment materials, and DELME disseminated these among various channels, including email lists. All of these focus groups were conducted virtually, in the late afternoon or early evening. Interested participants registered via a link in the recruitment email. Only the CAL staff who conducted the focus groups were able to access the names of participants. Registration was capped at ten participants per virtual focus group to ensure that all participants could have a chance to express their views.

The student groups were held in-person, during the school day. DELME staff collaborated with CAL staff to identify two high schools for recruitment, prioritizing schools which were accessible to students enrolled in a CREA program, to support inclusion of these students. School principals supported the recruitment of students. Students under the age of 18 participated with parental permission, which was made available in eight languages. A pizza lunch was provided to student participants.

Recruitment for the family and community groups proved the most challenging. At Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2, participants were invited to nominate Montgomery County community, affinity, and stakeholder groups who might be contacted to disseminate information about the focus groups widely across the community. At a meeting that followed Stakeholder Commission Meeting 2, the MCPS

Core team reviewed the list that was generated and added additional groups. The following list of community groups and MCPS staff roles were included in outreach:

> Latino Student Advocacy & Action Group (LSAAG); Identity; Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations – Diversity & Inclusion Committee; Asian Pacific Islander Student Achievement Action Group (APISAAG); Parent community coordinators; CASA de Maryland; Judy Centers; Linkages to Learning; George B. Thomas. Sr. Learning Academy, Inc. - Saturday School; Association of Vietnamese Americans (AVA); LEAAP: League of Educators for Asian American Progress; Hispanic Alliance of Educators; ESOL Parent Liaisons; Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association; MCPS Black and Brown Coalition; Impact Silver Spring

CAL created an invitation to participants, which was translated into seven languages by MCPS translation services. The MCPS Core Team disseminated the invitation across the community groups. Focus groups were offered in both virtual and in-person formats to allow participants to choose their preferred format. Participants were invited to request language support services upon registration.

CAL prepared recruitment materials for two virtual focus groups in June 2022, each with a Spanish/English bilingual facilitator. For each of these groups, ten participants registered, and were provided with a link for a virtual focus group. Unfortunately, no participants attended either of these focus groups.

An in-person focus group was conducted in June 2022, with a Spanish/English bilingual facilitator and a second facilitator to support participants who wished to use interpretation services. This group was sparsely attended and none of the participants were parents of EML students.

In the fall of 2022, CAL worked with MCPS to reach out again to ensure that community voices were included in the focus groups. This effort was successful, and we hosted two focus groups in October 2022.

Table 2 provides detail on the number of focus group participants.

Table 2: Number of focus group participants in total and by focus group type

Focus Group Type	Number of Participants
Protocol 1: Classroom Educators	35
Protocol 2: Administrators & Other Staff	27
Protocol 3: Students	24
Protocol 4: Family & Community Groups	13
Total	99

Focus Group Meeting

Each focus group began with the facilitator welcoming participants and orienting them in completing informed consent forms. For virtual focus groups, participants were provided with a link to an electronic consent form. Virtual focus group consent forms were provided in eight languages. For in-person focus groups, paper consent forms were provided, and were available in eight languages. For participants in focus groups who were under 18 years of age, paper parental consent forms (available in eight languages) were collected in advance, and student assent forms (available in eight languages) were provided.

Facilitators proceeded through the set of focus group protocol questions, and took running notes. Participants were anonymized in the focus group notes (e.g., "HS Principal 1") and the names of the participants were not recorded except on consent forms.

Focus groups for Protocol 1, Classroom Educators, and Protocol 2, Administrators & Other Staff, were conducted in English. A bilingual (Spanish-English) facilitator conducted the TWI focus groups. Bilingual (Spanish-English) facilitators conducted the student focus groups. A bilingual (Spanish-English) facilitator conducted each of the family and community focus groups. We collected information on language access needs when participants registered for the family and community focus group sessions, and MCPS supported the provision of interpreters as needed.

Analysis Methods

Focus group notes were analyzed using Atlas.ti, a qualitative analysis software program designed for complex coding tasks that involve multilayered coding and examination of interactions between codes (Lewis, 2004). The notes were loaded into a single "Hermeneutic Unit" (Atlas.ti file) and analyzed as a set to look for patterns across focus groups. Data were coded for participants—group type (i.e., administrators and other staff, classroom educators, family and community members, or students) and then for subgroups, or specific participant roles (principal, counselor, ESOL teacher, classroom teacher, parent, student, etc.). Data were then coded for emergent themes using a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), within the context of the research questions and eight areas of inquiry. Codes were assigned to relevant sections of the notes, with the sizes of coded sections ranging from entire conversations around a single focus group question to a single comment made by a participant. Notes were coded for the eight areas of inquiry and new codes were added as new themes emerged. Codes were further arranged in a hierarchical thematic structure as themes and sub-themes emerged. In total, 311 codes were used in analyzing the focus group data.

Survey of MCPS Educators

Recruitment

CAL surveyed MCPS educators in June of 2022. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix D. The survey was conducted in English only. The survey was conducted online using SurveyMonkey.

CAL prepared recruitment materials for MCPS educators that described the purpose of the evaluation and the role of the survey in the evaluation process. MCPS staff disseminated the survey recruitment materials. The survey remained open for four weeks. CAL staff periodically reviewed the composition of survey respondents during the survey period. Three survey recruitment reminder notices were sent.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

There were a total of 888 responses to the survey.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

The majority of respondents were female (85.52%).

Table 3 provides detail on the ethnic and racial identities of survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents were White (61.76%). There were 15.87% of respondents who identified as Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic, and 11.99% who identified as Black or African American. Note that respondents were invited to select multiple categories. There were 477 respondents who identified as White and no other ethnicity, constituting 54.45% of respondents.

Table 3: Race and ethnicity of survey respondents

Which of these groups do you identify with? Select all that apply to you:

Answer Choices	Responses	
I prefer not to answer.	6.28%	55
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.80%	-
Asian	9.02%	79
Black or African American	11.99%	105
Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx, or Hispanic	15.87%	139
Middle Eastern or North African	2.74%	24
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.46%	-
White	61.76%	541
Some other race, ethnicity, or origin (please specify)	2.17%	19

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Respondents were also asked about their current language practices. Data are provided in Table 4. The majority of respondents use English at home and with their families (87.12%). Some participants (15.05%) use Spanish at home or with their family. An additional 11.63% use other languages, for a total of 27% of survey respondents who use a language other than English at home or with their family. Respondents indicated the languages that they used, with some respondents using up to four languages. There were a total of 41 additional languages indicated, including Korean, French, Portuguese, Mandarin, and Arabic.

Table 4: Language practices of survey respondents

Please indicate which languages you speak at home or with your family. Select all that apply to you:

Answer Choices	Responses	
I prefer not to answer.	3.08%	27
I speak English at home and with my family.	87.12%	764
I speak Spanish at home or with my family.	15.05%	132
I speak another language at home or with my family. (please specify)	11.63%	102

Educational Contexts of Survey Respondents

We asked survey respondents to estimate the proportion of students that they serve who are (a) identified as EML and (b) identify as Hispanic or Latino/a. Results are provided in Table 5 and Table 6 below. Note that the results here are based on respondents' estimations only and not on data on actual numbers of EML or Latino/a students.

Respondents were roughly even on the proportion of EML students that they served, tending toward respondents who served greater proportions of EML students. There were more respondents serving in contexts with higher proportions of Hispanic or Latino/a students, with more than 40% reporting that they served in contexts with greater than two-thirds of their students from this ethnic heritage.

Table 5: Respondents' estimates of the proportion of EML students that they serve

Thinking about the students that you serve in your classroom, school, or in other capacities, approximately how many do you believe are Emergent Multilingual learners?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Fewer than one-third	23.04%	203
One-third to two-thirds	35.87%	316
More than two-thirds	38.14%	336
Don't know or not applicable	2.95%	26

Table 6: Respondents' estimates of the proportion of Latino/a or Hispanic students that they serve

Thinking about the students that you serve in your classroom, school, or in other capacities, approximately how many do you believe identify as Latina/o/e/x or Hispanic?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Fewer than one-third	15.38%	136
One-third to two-thirds	40.72%	360
More than two-thirds	41.52%	367
Don't know or not applicable	2.38%	21

Professional Roles and Experience of Survey Respondents

Table 7 through Table 10 provide an overview of the professional roles and years of experience of survey respondents.

Most respondents were classroom teachers, and slightly more than one-third (36.30%) were ELD teachers. Less than one-third (29.08%) were general education or content area teachers. School building administrators comprised 6.31% of respondents. There was representation from both Special Education teachers (33 respondents, or 3.72% of respondents) and from psychologists, social workers, and counselors (31 respondents, or 3.49% of respondents). Paraeducators constituted slightly more than 10% of respondents. There were also 18 responses (2.03% of respondents) from individuals who identified as parent or community members. Note that the survey did not target this population specifically – the survey target audience was MCPS educators; however, respondents were invited to "check all that apply" and may have been MCPS educators in addition to identifying themselves as parent or community members.

A plurality of respondents (45.41%) held ESOL certification. Slightly more than half (50.76%) held the Advanced Professional Certificate (APC). The survey participants were largely experienced teachers, with more than half of the respondents (55.72%) indicating more than 16 years of experience. Only 11.33% of respondents indicated that they had five or fewer years of experience.

Table 7: Professional roles of survey respondents

Which of the following best describes you? Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Elementary general education teacher	9.13%	81
Elementary English Language Development (ELD) teacher	22.32%	198
Elementary Two-way Immersion (TWI) teacher	1.47%	13
Secondary content teacher (e.g., math, physical education, music, science)	19.95%	177
Secondary ELD teacher	13.98%	124
Special education teacher	3.72%	33
SLIFE coach	0.34%	-
Elementary school administrator	4.40%	39
Middle school administrator	0.90%	-
High school administrator	1.01%	-
Paraeducator	10.03%	89
School psychologist, social worker, or school counselor	3.49%	31
District-level administrator	3.04%	27
Parent or community member	2.03%	18
Other (please specify)	12.74%	113
Answered		**887**

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Table 8: Survey respondents' areas of teaching certification

Please indicate your areas of teaching certification, if applicable. Please check all that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
English for Speakers of Other Languages	45.41%	371
Early Childhood/Elementary Areas	39.29%	321
Middle School Areas (4-9)	15.54%	127
General Secondary Content Areas (7-12)	21.42%	175
Special Education	17.75%	145
Other Specialty Areas (e.g., art, health, world languages)	12.48%	102
Administrative or Supervisory Areas	14.44%	118
Counselor, social worker, or school psychologist	5.02%	41
Other (please specify)	14.32%	117

Table 9: Survey respondents' level of teaching certification

Please indicate the type of certification you hold, if applicable. Please indicate the highest level of certificate that you hold.

Answer Choices	Responses	
I do not hold a teaching certification.	11.90%	102
Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC)	2.10%	18
Standard Professional Certificate I (SPC I)	11.09%	95
Standard Professional Certificate II (SPC II)	4.55%	39
Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)	50.76%	435
Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC)	0.23%	-
Conditional Certificate (CDC)	1.98%	17
Administrator I	4.78%	41
Administrator II	7.70%	66
A different type of certification (please specify)	4.90%	42

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Table 10: Survey respondents' years of teaching experience

Please select your number of years of experience as an educator (including teaching, school administration, and/or other school support roles).

Answer Choices	Responses	
None of the above	0.79%	-
0-5	11.33%	100
6-10	13.59%	120
11-15	18.57%	164
16-20	21.74%	192
21 or more	33.98%	300

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Survey Analysis

We conducted both quantitative and qualitative survey analyses.

The quantitative analysis took the form of descriptive statistics. We provide tabulations throughout this report of relevant proportions and numbers of respondents. To protect the privacy of survey respondents, we suppress n-counts for cell sizes smaller than 10.

Open-ended survey questions were analyzed for emergent themes within Microsoft Excel. This was done due to the limited number of open-ended items, and in order to maintain links between coded responses and other survey data (e.g., respondent role). Each survey question was analyzed within a separate worksheet and themes were identified in columns, with responses coded with *X*s within the code columns. Additional information about responses relevant to a particular code was added next to the X. For example, for responses indicating needs with regard to interpretation of less common home languages, any languages mentioned specifically by respondents were included next to the X so that responses could be easily tallied following coding as necessary. Number of responses coded for each theme were tallied using the COUNTIF function within Excel in order to identify the most common themes among survey responses for each open-ended survey question.

Family and Community Survey

A family and community survey was conducted in the fall of 2022. The survey was conducted in two phases to maximize opportunities for participation. Phase 1 was a paper survey instrument, distributed during the August 27 MCPS Back to School Fair at Westfield Wheaton. The survey was available in English, Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A total of 58 participants responded. Phase 2 was an electronic survey instrument, distributed via SurveyMonkey, in October and November of 2022. There were a total of 378 respondents, for a grand total of 436 survey respondents. For more detail about the respondents to the family and community survey, see Chapter 2.8. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix G.

Interviews and Input from MCPS Central Office and Other Staff

CAL conducted weekly meetings with staff from the MCPS Department of English Learners and Multilingual Education (DELME). DELME staff supported CAL in key contextual understandings of the MCPS system, and details from these conversations are woven throughout the report. DELME staff also facilitated additional conversations with key staff in various roles in MCPS. To ensure that individual staff members are not identifiable, we include insights from MCPS staff interviews as contextual elements throughout our report but do not identify staff by name or role.

Document Review

CAL examined numerous documents provided by MCPS. An initial set of 41 documents were provided by MCPS. These were added to on an ad hoc basis throughout the duration of the investigation. CAL also drew publicly available documentation from the MCPS website, and the Maryland Department of Education website. Documents included past research reports, handbooks, staffing formulas, quantitative reports, and other miscellaneous documents. Analyses of documents and findings which arise from them are discussed across the chapters of the report.

Quantitative Data

CAL submitted a request for summary quantitative data to the MCPS Office of Shared Accountability. Data supplied to CAL were summary data only, and no identifiable student data or staff data were shared with CAL. The DELME team facilitated the delivery of quantitative data to CAL. CAL also included, where appropriate, publicly available data drawn from the MCPS or Maryland State Department of Education websites.

Classroom Observation

CAL observed a total of 358 classrooms in 60 schools between May 2022 and November 2022. Below, we describe our process to select schools and classrooms, and the instrument that we used to conduct classroom observations.

Selection of Schools for Observations

CAL received a list of 206 schools from MCPS, consisting of 135 Elementary Schools, 40 Middle Schools, 25 High Schools, and 6 Special Schools. Of these, 200 were used to a sample of schools for observation.

One of the list of 206 was the designation "Alternative Programs" with a total enrollment of 1, and so this was excluded from the sample. In addition there were five two-way immersion (TWI) schools on the list received from MCPS. As we intended to conduct observations in all five of these schools, they were excluded from the general pool to construct the sample of non-TWI schools.

A total of 200 schools (130 elementary, 40 middle, and 25 high schools, and 5 special schools) were used to construct the observation sample. We aimed for a representative sample across the following categories: proportion of Latino/a students in the school, proportion of EML students in the school, geographic school area, and Title I status.

Proportion of Latino/a Students in the School

We sampled to ensure that schools in the observation pool represented schools with small, medium, and large proportions of Latino/a students. We defined these groups by ranking the schools by the proportion of students who are Latino/a, and then dividing the group into three, representing schools with a large population of Latino/a students (greater than 41%), schools with a medium population of Latino/a students (19%-40%), and schools with a small population of Latino/a students (0%-18%).

Proportion of EML Students in the School

Our sample also includes schools with small, medium, and large proportions of EML students. As the proportion of EML students in schools tends to decrease from elementary to middle to high school (as students exit the category), these three categories were computed differently for elementary, middle, and high schools, as follows. The category definitions for small, medium, and large proportions of EML students by school type were computed so that they divided the groups into approximately thirds. Table 11 describes how these were defined for each of the school types. To illustrate how categories were defined, for all of the elementary schools in the sample, approximately one-third had proportions of EML students greater than 25%, approximately one-third had proportions between 15% and 24%, and approximately one-third had proportions of 14% or less.

Table 11: Category definitions for schools with small, medium, and larger proportions of EML students

Category	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
Small proportion	0-14%	0-7%	0-5%
Medium proportion	15%-24%	9%-16%	6%-10%
Large proportion	25% plus	17% plus	11% plus

Our aim is for proportional numbers of schools from each category in the sample.

Other Characteristics

We aimed for the sample to be representative on two other characteristics:

- Geographic representation
- Representation of schools that receive Title 1 schoolwide services

Summary Characteristics of the Population

Table 12 provides characteristics of the total group of 200 schools from which we sampled.

Table 12: Select relevant characteristics of the population of MCPS schools

	Category	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Total
Proportion of Latino/a students	Small proportion	45	13	6	64
	Medium proportion	44	11	10	65
	Large proportion	42	16	9	71
	Total	**130**	**40**	**25**	**195**
Proportion of EML students	Small proportion	42	13	8	63
	Medium proportion	41	13	7	61
	Large proportion	47	14	10	71
	Total	**130**	**40**	**25**	**195**
School Area	Area 1	43	13	9	65
	Area 2	44	15	8	67
	Area 3	43	12	8	63
	Total	**130**	**40**	**25**	**195**
Title 1 Status	Title 1 Schoolwide	31	2	0	33
	Not Title 1 Schoolwide	99	38	25	162
	Total	**130**	**40**	**25**	**195**

Note: For proportions of EML students, proportions are computed differently for elementary (Small = 0-14%; Medium = 15%-24%; Large = 25% plus), middle (Small = 0-7%; Medium = 9%-16%; Large = 17% plus), and high schools (Small = 0-5%; Medium = 6%-10%; Large = 11% plus). Proportions are computed differently for school types because there are smaller proportions of EML students in high school, as students exit the category. Proportions of Latino/a students are more constant over school type. Proportions of Latino/a students are computed as follows: Small = 0-18%; Medium = 19-40%; Large = 41% +.

Characteristics of the Sample

Special Schools

Two of the 5 Special Schools were selected.

Two-way Immersion Schools

All 5 TWI schools were included in the observation.

High Schools, Middle Schools, and non-TWI Elementary Schools

A final sample of 58 additional schools was selected. MCPS Core team staff reviewed the sample. The initial sample draw slightly oversampled K-2 elementary schools, so a single substitution was made. This substitution did not impact the representativeness of the sample compared to the population.

Table 13 provides characteristics of the final sample of 58 non-TWI schools.

Table 13: Select relevant characteristics of the sample of MCPS schools

Category		Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Total
Proportion of EML students	Small proportion	13	3	3	**19**
	Medium proportion	11	3	2	**16**
	Large proportion	14	4	5	**23**
	Total	**38**	**10**	**10**	**58**
Proportion of Latino/a students	Small proportion	12	3	2	**17**
	Medium proportion	13	2	4	**19**
	Large proportion	13	5	4	**22**
	Total	**38**	**10**	**10**	**58**
School Area	Area 1	12	4	5	**21**
	Area 2	15	3	3	**21**
	Area 3	11	3	2	**16**
	Total	**38**	**10**	**10**	**58**
Title 1 Status	Title 1 Schoolwide	12	1	0	**13**
	Not Title 1 Schoolwide	26	9	10	**45**
	Total	**38**	**10**	**10**	**58**

Note: For proportions of EML students, proportions are computed differently for elementary (Small = 0-14%; Medium = 15%-24%; Large = 25% plus), middle (Small = 0-7%; Medium = 9%-16%; Large = 17% plus), and high schools (Small = 0-5%; Medium = 6%-10%; Large = 11% plus). Proportions are computed differently for school types because there are smaller proportions of EML students in high school, as students exit the category. Proportions of Latino/a students are more constant over school type. Proportions of Latino/a students are computed as follows: Small = 0-18%; Medium = 19-40%; Large = 41% +.

Additional relevant characteristics of the sample include the following:

- The sample includes at least 3 elementary schools with greater than 50% EML students.
- The sample includes at least 2 high schools with greater than 50% Latino/a students.
- The sample includes representation of schools with METS programs. Seven of ten high schools in the sample have a METS program (compared with 12/25 in the population) and five of ten middle schools in the sample have a METS program (compared with 10/40 in the population).
- One of the high schools in the sample has a CREA program.

Observation Instrument

All classrooms except for the five schools in TWI programs[1] were observed using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model. A copy of the SIOP protocol is provided in Appendix E. The protocol is a research-based and validated observation instrument and instructional model that has proven effective in addressing the academic needs of EMLs throughout the United States.

The SIOP Model consists of thirty features across eight interrelated components:

- Lesson Preparation
- Building Background
- Comprehensible Input
- Strategies
- Interaction

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[1] As TWI programs have distinct instructional practices, CAL used the CAL Dual Language instruction Observation Protocol to observe these contexts. Further discussion of this instrument is provided in Chapter 2.2; the instrument is included in this report as Appendix F.

- Practice/Application
- Lesson Delivery
- Review & Assessment

The model was developed by researchers at California State University, Long Beach (Jana Echevarria and Mary Ellen Vogt), and the Center for Applied Linguistics (Deborah J. Short), under the auspices of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), a national research center funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 1996 through 2003.

The model can be used as an observation instrument to understand the extent to which educators are implementing instructional features that support emergent multilingual learners, as a framework for teachers to plan integrated language and content lessons (Short, 2013), or as a framework for professional learning. In MCPS, CAL used the model as an observational protocol.

The individual components of the model are backed by empirical research; in addition, validation research supports the protocol as an observational instrument.

In a study examining the validity and reliability of the protocol (Guarino, Echevarria, Short, Schick, Forbes, & Rueda, 2001), four highly qualified raters, used the 30-item SIOP to evaluate six video recordings of teachers using sheltered instruction. The 30 items comprised three dimensions, which were treated as subscales. Half of the recordings were highly aligned to the principles of sheltered instruction, while half were not, as determined by specialists. Reliability thresholds assessed by Cronbach's alpha were set at .90 for the three subscales. All three subscales reached or exceeded this level of acceptance. Discriminant functional analysis was used to assess criterion validity. Three subscales (Preparation, Instruction, and Review/Evaluation) were used as predictors for membership in two groups based on instruction type (sheltered and non-sheltered). Statistically significant differences were found between the two groups for all three subscales, with the sheltered instruction group scoring higher. The results of this study indicate that the SIOP is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring sheltered instruction.

Each component of the SIOP Model is supported by empirical studies (for overviews and meta-analyses see August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006) and the model itself has a solid and growing research base (Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, Canges, & Francis, 2011; Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012; Friend, Most, & McCrary, 2009; McIntyre, et al., 2010; Song, 2016; Watkins & Lindahl, 2010).

For the purposes of the MCPS research study, the instrument was uploaded into SurveyMonkey. An experienced CAL SIOP user validated the instrument in this format using a simulated classroom observation with data collected from prior observations to confirm ease of use in the electronic environment.

A team of trained CAL personnel worked to observe classrooms using the SIOP protocol. All of the observers had prior experience in using the SIOP model and all participated in a training session designed specifically for the MCPS observation data collection. In this training, observers viewed training videos of classrooms and practiced using the SurveyMonkey format. Observers also had the option of recording observations on paper and entering the paper data after the end of the observation.

Part 2: Results, Findings, and Recommendations

1. Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities

Summary of Recommendation

1.1. Draft and implement an absenteeism response plan centering on Latino/a students, that examines potential barriers to school attendance for this group of students in MCPS.

1.2. Provide annual data reports to the DELME office and the public that detail the:
- Proportion of exited EML students at or above proficient on ELA and mathematics assessments, by grade level.
- Proportion of EML students with disabilities at or above proficient on ELA and mathematics assessments, by grade level.

1.3. Review and revise criteria for outreach, identification, and inclusion in Gifted and Talented programs to ensure that Latino/a and EML students have access to these programs.

1.4. Examine the way in which home language data is populated into central data systems, especially in cases where the home language of EML students is identified as English.

1.5. Routinely monitor across schools for high rates of parental refusal of EML services and engage with families to understand why they are refusing services.

Background

The disparate achievement outcomes of EML and Latino/a students are referenced explicitly in the MCPS memorandum calling for a Stakeholder Commission, which notes that:

> ESOL students, and more specifically Limited English Proficient students, have struggled to attain proficiency on state math and literacy assessments and continue to underperform as compared to their English-proficient peers.

> The MCPS Latino student population continues to underperform as compared to White, Asian, and African American students overall, including a lower overall graduation rate.

In this chapter, we examine achievement data for EML and Latino/a students in MCPS in math and literacy, and achievement data for EML students on English language proficiency. We note that any review of data must be sensitive to the impacts of COVID on the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, and data should be reviewed with care for the disparate contextual impacts of the pandemic, with particular reference to students who are "missing" from data sets. Data on graduation rates are presented in Chapter 7, College and Career, but we reiterate the findings in this chapter as they are intrinsically linked to the research questions around achievement outcomes.

We additionally recognize that achievement is inextricably linked to opportunity. If there are disparities in opportunities to learn, there will inevitably be disparities in achievement – and furthermore, disparities in achievement cannot be rectified until barriers to opportunity are removed. In this chapter, we consider evidence surrounding students' levels of engagement in schooling, using absenteeism data. We include a research question pertaining to participation in gifted and talented programs in this

chapter. We incorporate findings on high school students' participation in advanced coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement [AP] or International Baccalaureate [IB] courses) but present the data on these questions in Chapter 7, College and Career.

Before considering the achievement and opportunity data, we begin with a snapshot of key characteristics of the EML and Latino/a student populations. We further examine the population of EML students by ethnicity, home language distribution, and grade level.

Characteristics of the EML and Latino/a Student Population in MCPS

There are more than 150,000 students enrolled in MCPS. EML students comprise 18% of the total student body and Latino/a students represent one-third of all MCPS students. Table 1 provides total numbers and proportions of EML and Latino/a students and breaks down these numbers by school level.

Of note is that the proportion of students who are identified as EML tends to fall as students reach middle and high school. This pattern is expected, as students who enter elementary school and achieve English language proficiency are reclassified and therefore are no longer counted in the EML category.

Table 1: Numbers and proportions of MPCS students who are EML or Latino/a by school level, SY 2021-22

|	Elementary	Middle	High	Special	Total
Total number of students	71,090	36,307	50,434	401	**158,232**
Total number of students identified as EML	18,207	4,626	5,568	88	**28,489**
Percentage of students identified as EML	26%	13%	11%	22%	**18%**
Total number of students who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a	24,741	11,865	16,132	116	**52,854**
Percentage of students who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a	35%	33%	32%	29%	**33%**

Table 2 further illustrates the diversity within the EML population. While the majority of EML students are Latino/a (approximately three-quarters), there are also substantial numbers of EML students who are Asian and who are Black or African American.

Table 2: MCPS EML population by race and ethnicity, SY 2021-22

	Elementary	Middle	High	Special	County
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Asian	12.6%	7.5%	6.4%	13.6%	10.6%
Black or African American	10.5%	10.4%	10.8%	14.8%	10.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
White	4.6%	4.6%	3.3%	4.5%	4.4%
Two or More Races	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
Hispanic/Latino	71.3%	76.8%	79.2%	67.0%	73.7%

When compared with the total population of MCPS students, the EML population has a greater share of Latino/a students, and a smaller share of Asian, Black or African American, White, and multiracial students. Figure 1 illustrates these characteristics.

Figure 1: Demographic characteristics of the total MCPS population and the EML population, SY 2021-22
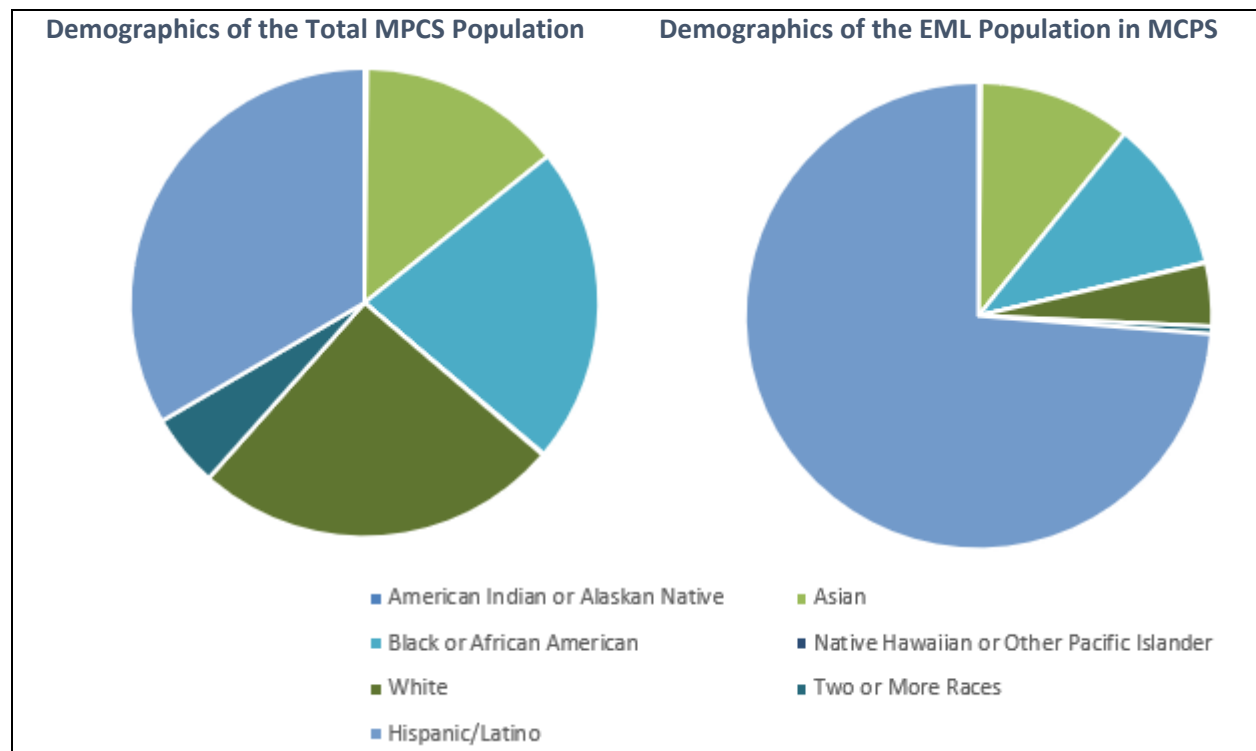
The EML population in MCPS is linguistically diverse, and MCPS data shows students from 107 distinct language backgrounds.

The collection of EML students' home language data is often complex. Home language data is typically collected during the intake process through a Home Language Survey administered to all students. The purpose of the survey is to identify students who may be eligible for language services. Students identified in the Home Language Survey as eligible for services are next typically assessed to determine

their level of language proficiency (Henry et al., 2017; Lhamon & Gupta, 2015; Linquanti & Bailey, 2014). For students who are identified as EML, the home language survey provides data on the languages other than English that are spoken in the students' homes.

The state of Maryland includes three questions on the Home Language Survey. If students indicate a language other than English for two or more of these screener questions, the student is then referred to the assessment stage. Note that question 1 and question 2 allow for the possibility of more than one language.

The three questions are[1]:

1. What language(s) did the student first learn to speak?

2. What language does the student use most often to communicate?

3. What language(s) are spoken in your home?

Data from the Home Language Survey for students who are ultimately identified as EML are then populated in Synergy (the internal MCPS data system).

Table 3 provides data on home language as reported in Synergy for EML students in the 2022-23 school year (data drawn October 2022).

The majority of EML students (57%) have Spanish as a home language.

Surprisingly, for more than 9,000 EML students, English is listed as the home language. CAL examined this pattern further with MCPS personnel. We believe that for some students in multilingual households where English is spoken along with another language, families are (appropriately) including multiple languages for questions 1 and 3 on the Home Language Survey. In some cases, where a family might answer, for instance, that English and Urdu are spoken in the home, the data system is capturing English as the home language, rather than Urdu, for an Urdu-speaking EML student from a multilingual household. For this group of students, MCPS does not have easily available data on the non-English home language of the student.

There are a total of 119 home languages listed in Synergy data. The 10 languages listed in Table 3 account for the home languages for 96% of EML students in MCPS. The remaining 4% of students have 109 languages among them, and for 60 of these languages, there are five or fewer students.

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[1] https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/English-Learners/HLS/HLS_English.pdf

Table 3: Top 10 Home Languages as identified in Synergy for EML students, October 2022

Language	Number of EML students	Proportion of EML students
Spanish	16,729	57%
English	9,209	31%
Amharic	514	2%
French	441	1%
Chinese	392	1%
Portuguese	371	1%
Pushto; Pashto	202	1%
Japanese	170	1%
Korean	159	1%
Russian	146	0%

Finally, we consider the population of EML students by grade-level distribution. Table 4 provides this distribution.

Table 4: Number of EML students by grade level and proportion of the total of MCPS EML students, 2022

Grade Level	Number of EML Students	Proportion of the EML Total
Kindergarten	3,206	10%
Grade 01	3,482	11%
Grade 02	3,162	10%
Grade 03	3,295	11%
Grade 04	3,204	10%
Grade 05	2,911	9%
Grade 06	1,924	6%
Grade 07	1,579	5%
Grade 08	1,594	5%
Grade 09	3,058	10%
Grade 10	1,369	4%
Grade 11	853	3%
Grade 12	1,021	3%
Total	30,661	100%

Note: The total N of EML students differs from that in Table 1, as data were collected at different points in time.

More than half of all EML students are in fourth grade or below. As students who were identified as EML in Kindergarten begin to exit services, the number of students per grade level tends to fall.

Of note is a sharp rise in EML students in the ninth grade – this is an artifact of when the data were drawn as well as international intake processes. When international students first arrive in MCPS, there is sometimes a lag time in processing students' intake documents. Students may need to have past educational records translated, or a student may not have past educational records available. Until

schools have information that indicates an appropriate grade-level placement, all incoming international students are coded as ninth graders.

Of note also is the fluctuation in the number of EML students. There are approximately 2,000 more EML students in the dataset that MCPS provided to populate Table 4 than in the data set for Table 1. These totals were taken at different points in time, and the difference likely represents students enrolling during the course of the school year.

Finally, for further context about the EML student population in MCPS, we present data on students' English language proficiency level.

Students' English proficiency is expressed according to WIDA levels as follows:

> 1-Entering – A student requires significant visual cues to support comprehension and responds in single words or set phrases using the words that are most common and frequent in English.

> 2-Emerging – A student understands general language in a familiar context and responds using phrases or short sentences, making frequent errors that interfere with communication.

> 3-Developing – A student understands and uses specific language related to various topics and uses expanded sentences in expanded discourse and makes some errors that can confuse communication.

> 4-Expanding – A student understands and uses more complex language, including some technical vocabulary and makes errors that do not impede communication.

> 5-Bridging – A student is using language to communicate at a level approaching the proficiency of English-proficient peers.

> 6-Reaching – A student is using language to communicate at a level comparable to that of English-proficient peers.

In Maryland, students who reach an overall English language proficiency level of 5.0 (Bridging) are exited from the ELD program. Data on the distribution of students' ELP levels are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: ELP levels of students, by school type and for all students, 2022

School Type		ELP 1	ELP 2	ELP 3	ELP 4	Total EML Students
Elementary School	Number	7,130	3,680	6,321	2,032	19,163
	Percent	37%	19%	33%	11%	
Middle School	Number	1,121	791	2,156	996	5,064
	Percent	22%	16%	43%	20%	
High School	Number	2,193	1,143	2,173	729	6,247
	Percent	35%	18%	35%	12%	
Special Program	Number	70	9	11	1	92
	Percent	76%	10%	12%	1%	
Total	Number	10,514	5,623	10,661	3,758	30,566
	Percent	34%	18%	35%	12%	

Results

In the sections below, we provide results from our mixed methods inquiry. Details of the methods are provided in Chapter 1.2. In this chapter, we provide detailed results from focus groups, a survey of MCPS educators, and review of quantitative data and relevant MCPS documents.

Focus Groups

Our focus group results around achievement and opportunity include students' perspectives on engagement, educators' perspectives on achievement measurement, and two specific challenges around opportunity – namely course scheduling and gifted and talented programs.

Student focus group participants largely conveyed a sense of engagement and a desire to be involved in meaningful instruction and other school activities. One school administrator in the TWI groups noted that student engagement was less evident in the weaker language.

Administrators expressed frustration over the timing of the delivery of WIDA ACCESS scores, which leads to later-than-desired numbers to drive ELD teacher recruitment.

One teacher commented that METS students do better than students in standard ELD programs because of frequent progress measurement, offering a sense of the utility of data gathering and sharing.

A key theme that emerged from early Stakeholder Commission meetings was that for middle school and high school students, course scheduling was a specific challenge. Students identified as EML must have access to ELD services, and scheduling conflicts can lead to missed opportunities for these students to participate in challenging coursework or to engage in non-core or extracurricular courses. Concern was expressed that in extreme cases, insufficient quality control over scheduling might situate a student such that they were mathematically unable to acquire the credits needed for graduation. We explored the question of scheduling further in focus groups with school administrators. School administrators noted the importance of two elements in crafting appropriate schedules for EML students. First, they offered that it is important to ensure that school counselors are involved in the creation and review of students' schedules. Second, they recommend that because EML students have particular needs for course-scheduling to accommodate their ELD courses, their schedules should be constructed first, rather than trying to fit in the requirements of EML students toward the end of the process. Please see Chapter 2.5, College and Career, for further discussion of scheduling as it impacts graduation requirements.

Gifted and Talented Programming

In the family and community focus groups, concerns were raised regarding the proportion of Latino/a students identified for gifted and talented programs. A parent noted that her Latino family felt very alone in this program and expressed a need for community affinity groups. Parents noted that they felt that EML students were absent from gifted and talented programs. Families identified several obstacles to participation. First, they felt that communication to families regarding entry requirements into these programs was not clear. They also raised questions about cultural alignment in gifted and talented programs, including concerns about students being the "only" student from their cultural background, and also about representation among the MCPS staff, especially in senior positions. We note that the disproportionate access to gifted and talented programs was also a concern of Stakeholder Commissioners.

One parent focus group participant who had a child identified as gifted and talented shared several challenges. The participant said that the "lack of Latino kids in gifted programs is very telling," sharing that their family has felt isolated within the program. They expressed a desire to connect with other Latino/a families in gifted and talented programs. They further shared that communication about the program needs to improve, saying that families are not clear on what is needed to get into the program, and that English language skills unfairly impede students' entrance into the program. They also said that Latino/a families they know value being in their local schools and may be less interested in sending their children to magnet schools to pursue access to gifted and talented programs. They expressed a desire for more gifted and talented programs to be integrated into local schools to allow families to participate in the program while remaining in their neighborhood school, saying this would be a more "culturally sensitive" approach.

We note here that Stakeholder Commissioners also raised concerns about access to Gifted and Talented programs, specifically around the underrepresentation of EML students. One additional concern that was raised was that in some schools, parents may be refusing EML services out of a belief that these services would render students ineligible for participation in Gifted and Talented programs.

Survey

Our survey examined educators' beliefs about students' opportunities to learn (

Table 6). The majority of educators believed that EML students can access learning opportunities, indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed that EML students had opportunities to engage in challenging courses (70.26%); opportunities to engage with a broad curriculum including music, arts, world languages, and physical education (84.00%); and opportunities to participate in a range of extracurricular activities (70.53%).

Table 6: Educators' beliefs about EML students' opportunities to learn

Please rate each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Weighted Average
The Emergent Multilingual students that I serve have opportunities to engage in challenging courses.	17.73%	52.53%	16.67%	2.40%	10.67%	2.04
The Emergent Multilingual students that I serve have opportunities to engage with a broad curriculum including music, arts, world languages, and physical education.	33.87%	50.13%	6.80%	1.73%	7.47%	1.74
The Emergent Multilingual students that I serve have opportunities to participate in a range of extracurricular activities.	22.80%	47.73%	15.87%	2.53%	11.07%	1.98

Quantitative Data and Document Review

CAL requested data from the MCPS Office of Shared Accountability on numerous aspects of EML and Latino/a student characteristics, including content area achievement, ELP progress, school attendance and absenteeism, and participation in gifted and talented programs.

Achievement Data – English language arts and mathematics

We present achievement data for the 2018-19 and 2020-21 school years. Achievement data for all students, Hispanic students, and EML students are from the MSDE website.

2018-19 is the last school year for which full data are available on the Maryland State Department of Education website. MDSE reports that "Maryland received waivers from the US Department of Education for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years which impacts the data available. No assessments were administered in 2019-2020, and the state administered a shortened assessment for the 2020-21 school year during the early fall of the 2021-2022 school year."

Table 7 and

Table 8 show data for the 2018-19 school year, for English language arts and mathematics, respectively.

Table 7: Students at a proficiency level of 4 or 5 on the 2019 MCAP assessments of English language arts

Grade level	All students	Hispanic students	EML students
3	50.50%	28.10%	16.30%
4	53.40%	33.00%	15.00%
5	53.70%	31.80%	≤5%
6	50.70%	27.80%	≤5%
7	56.70%	33.80%	≤5%
8	55.40%	32.10%	≤5%
10	52.70%	30.70%	≤5%

Table 8: Students at a proficiency level of 4 or 5 on the 2019 MCAP assessments of mathematics

Grade level	All students	Hispanic students	EML students
3	54.60%	32.40%	24.70%
4	52.50%	31.30%	18.30%
5	47.70%	26.70%	6.40%
6	40.20%	17.40%	≤5%
7	26.30%	12.80%	≤5%
8	≤5%	≤5%	≤5%
Algebra I	33.50%	12.70%	≤5%
Algebra II	95.00%	*	*
Geometry	88.40%	73.40%	*

*Proportion suppressed to avoid identification of students OR data unavailable

Table 9 and Table 10 show data for the shortened 2020-21 assessment administered during the early fall of the 2021-2022 school year. These tables also include columns for Hispanic students, current and

reclassified EML students, and for EML students with disabilities. These last two data fields were provided by MCPS; other data are from the MSDE website.

Table 9: Students who met or exceeded expectations on the shortened MCAP assessments of English language arts for 2021

ELA	All students	Hispanic students	EML students	Current & reclassified EML students	EML students with disabilities
3	36.3	15.7	13.6	16.9	1.3
4	34.1	15.2	10.4	16.2	1.9
5	33.9	13.8	9.4	18.0	0.2
6	61.5	40.5	28.3	43.3	3.1
7	41.3	21.9	6.4	24.5	0.8
8	42.0	22.9	5.4	26.3	1.0
10	64.7	41.7	12.1	45.2	2.5

Table 10: Students who met or exceeded expectations on the shortened MCAP assessments of mathematics for 2021

Math	All students	Hispanic students	EML students	Current & reclassified EML students	EML students with disabilities
3	22.8	7.8	8.8	10.3	3.0
4	34.6	13.7	12.8	18.8	3.7
5	34.3	13.1	10.2	18.8	1.1
6	31.2	11.9	7.6	16.9	1.1
7	5.4	<= 5.0	<= 5.0	2.2	0
8	<= 5.0	<= 5.0	<= 5.0	0.8	0
Algebra 1	10.3	<= 5.0	<= 5.0	5.8	0
Algebra 2	52.6	17.9	*	20	0
Geometry	25.9	9.6	11.4	59.6	0

Each of these data sources includes some limitations around interpretation. The 2018-19 data is now four years old, and the 2021 data is a shortened form of the assessment. Notwithstanding these nuances, the data are clear: Latino/a and EML students are consistently performing less well on standardized assessments of ELA and mathematics than all students. Latino/a students tend to perform around 20 percentage points below average, and EML students tend to perform around 30 percentage points below average.

One data point that can be useful in understanding the long-term impact of services for EML students is the performance of students once they exit services. Unfortunately, these data can be complex to draw. For example, if a student exits services in the fourth grade, without planned longitudinal data tracking, it is complex to understand that student's performance as part of the group of exited EML students once that student is in the tenth grade. The aggregated performance of that group of students, however, can be extremely useful for gaining an understanding of the long-term impact of ELD services.

Finally, the picture for EML students with disabilities is particularly sobering – in no cases were there more than 5% of the students from this group who met expectations in either English language arts or mathematics.

Achievement data – English language proficiency

For the 2021-22 school year, 28,659 students participated in the ELP assessment; of these, 3,305, or 11.5%, reached a proficiency sufficient to exit services.

Compared to prior years, there is a dip in the number of students who achieved sufficient scores on the ELP assessment to exit services. From 2018-2020, between 13%-14% of students exited services. For 2022, only 11.5% of students exited services. Note that no data are available for 2021 due to the impact of COVID. These data, in total and by grade level, are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 11: Proportion of EML students who exited services, by year, by grade level

	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2022**
K	9.2%	7.3%	6.1%	3.4%
1	6.4%	5.3%	5.2%	5.3%
2	6.8%	6.3%	9.5%	6.4%
3	11.9%	12.7%	15.6%	10.1%
4	35.0%	37.2%	35.2%	29.1%
5	26.6%	30.1%	33.3%	33.7%
6	9.3%	7.0%	6.2%	3.9%
7	10.3%	10.8%	10.0%	5.7%
8	12.7%	14.6%	14.0%	7.6%
9	13.3%	8.4%	8.6%	4.9%
10	12.7%	10.7%	11.9%	10.2%
11	16.3%	10.3%	11.9%	9.8%
12	12.3%	6.8%	5.7%	7.2%
Total	**13.6%**	**13.4%**	**13.8%**	**11.5%**

No data available for 2021 due to the impact of COVID.

Error! Reference source not found. shows that many students exit services in the fourth or fifth grade. This is consistent with national patterns in EML students' achievement (see e.g. Center for Applied Linguistics, 2022). The greatest changes between 2020 and 2022 data (with more than five percentage points fewer EML students exiting services) are at third, fourth, and eighth grade.

Unlike assessments of ELA and mathematics, it is not expected that all students should be proficient on the ELP assessment. Literature on time to proficiency for students classified as English learners suggest four to seven years as the typical time length that it takes for students to be reclassified (see e.g., Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Cook, Boals, & Lundberg, 2011; Umansky & Reardon, 2008; Thompson, 2015). Newly entering students are not expected to achieve proficiency in their first, second, or even third year. In addition to considering students who exit EML status, it is also important to review English language proficiency growth. This measure looks at the year-on-year change of a student's ELP measure.

ELP accountability growth targets are set at the state level. Targets vary by students' incoming ELP level. Students meet the growth target when the difference between their ELP level on the current year's test exceeds their ELP level on the prior year's test by an amount greater than the growth target. Students did not receive ELP levels for 2021. The state of Maryland therefore uses the growth between 2020 and 2022 to compute 2022 growth. Table 12 shows data for students' growth in 2019, 2020, and 2022.

Table 12: Proportion of students who met state targets for ELP growth, 2019-2022

	2019	2020	2022
1	74%	75%	-
2	60%	67%	76%
3	51%	63%	62%
4	84%	84%	77%
5	74%	68%	71%
6	33%	28%	20%
7	50%	41%	23%
8	53%	48%	31%
9	59%	51%	32%
10	52%	46%	37%
11	47%	34%	38%
12	34%	23%	28%
Total	**61%**	**60%**	**54%**

No data available for 2021, or for first grade students in 2022, due to the impact of COVID.

The overall number of students who meet targets drops in 2022, despite the fact that this number represents two years of growth – if anything, this data overestimates students' actual growth trajectories. The most significant declines are found in seventh grade (18% decline), eighth grade (17% decline), and ninth grade (19% decline).

In terms of public-facing data on EML students' achievement, MCPS uses a measure of ELP growth in the MCPS Equity Accountability Model (EAM).[2] The EAM data provide "a detailed and focused assessment of school success and publicly monitors and reports all students' performance." We note that this model appears to entrench some deficit perspectives. The model uses the outdated term "Limited English Proficient." Additionally, the only measure on EML students within this equity matrix is a measure of language proficiency, which narrows the accountability focus for EML students to English language proficiency alone.

School Engagement

CAL reviewed unexcused absences for the 2021-22 school year. Table 13 shows numbers of students who had more than 5, 10, or 20 days of unexcused absences, for all students, Hispanic or Latino/a students, and EML students, and also shows these numbers expressed as a proportion of total students from each subgroup. We note that these data are preliminary data provided to CAL and are not the final SY data.

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[2] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/data/equity-accountability-model.html

Table 13: Numbers and percentages of students with more than 5, 10, or 20 days of unexcused absences, for all students, Hispanic or Latino/a students, and EML students

	5+ days		10+ days		20+ days	
	Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
All students	79,022	50%	45,883	29%	19,943	13%
Hispanic/Latino	37,700	71%	25,346	48%	12,163	23%
EML	20,897	73%	13,932	49%	6,583	23%

Almost one-quarter (23%) of Latino/a students and almost one-quarter (23%) of EML students had more than 20 days of unexcused absences in the 2021-22 school year.

To interpret these numbers more appropriately, we look at the proportion of students in each of these unexcused absence categories who are Hispanic/Latino/a or EML, and compare that proportion to the share of the Latino/a or EML students in the population. All else being equal, these proportions should stay level. Table 14 provides detail on disproportional risks for Latino/a and EML students among students with extended rates of absences.

Table 14: Proportions of Latino/a and EML students in the total population, among those absent for 5+, 10+, or 20+ days, and risk ratios for absenteeism

	Proportion of students in total population	Proportion of students among those absent for 5+, 10+ and 20+ days		
		5+ days	**10+ days**	**20+ days**
Hispanic/Latino students	33%	48%	55%	61%
Risk ratio	n/a	1.43	1.65	1.83
EML students	18%	26%	30%	33%
Risk ratio	n/a	1.47	1.69	1.83

While Latino/a students constitute only 33% of the population, they are 61% of the group of students who have unexcused absences of more than 20 days; EML students, at only 18% of the total population, comprise 33% of those absent for 20 or more days. Both Latino/a and EML students are at elevated risk for absenteeism.

Gifted and Talented
CAL requested data on the total number of students, and the number of EML students identified as Gifted and Talented. This data is provided in Table 15.

Table 15: Total students and EML students identified as Gifted and Talented, 2021-2022

	All Students	EML Students
Total Number of Students	158,232	28,489
Number identified as Gifted & Talented	33,667	113*
Proportion identified as Gifted & Talented	21.3%	0.4%

*Data was drawn in 2022-23 school year

As these data show, EML students are essentially unrepresented in this group.

The current MCPS strategic plan includes attention to access to enriched and accelerated opportunities for EML students:

> "Employ a universal review process to reduce barriers to access and ensure all students have an opportunity for recommendation to enriched and accelerated programming."
> MCPS Strategic Plan FY 2022-25[3]

Parental Refusal of EML Services

Following up on the suggestion of the Stakeholder Commission, CAL investigated variation around parental refusal of EML services. While local education agencies (LEAs) must identify students who are eligible for language instruction services, parents have the option to refuse participation in these services. Nationally, the rate of participation in language instruction services stands around 96%-97% (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

The overall MCPS parental refusal rate stands at 7% of identified EML students, a total of 2,192 students. The rate of parental refusal varies markedly across schools. Some schools have very low rates of parental refusal (fewer than five students among hundreds, with rates as low as 1%). The majority of schools have rates of 10% or less. However, there are several schools with extremely high rates, with 15 schools with rates of more than 20%, and one middle school with a parental refusal rate of 49%. An overview of numbers of schools with varying rates is provided in Table 16.

Table 16: Variation in parental refusal rate across schools – rates of refusal and numbers of schools in each band

Proportion of parents of students identified as EML who refused services	Number of schools
5% or less	93
6%-10%	54
11%-15%	25
16%-20%	20
21%-30%	10
31% or more	5

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[3] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/campaigns/Strategic-Planning-FY22-25/

Findings

What are achievement outcomes for EML students and Latino/a students, and how do they compare to outcomes for the total population of students?

Academic Achievement on the MCAP

CAL examined data on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) for English language arts and for mathematics. To ensure that interpretations were not overly affected by impacts of COVID on student participation in assessments, we reviewed data for 2019 and 2021. Assessment data were not collected in 2020 due to COVID.

We find consistently that Latino/a students tend to perform around 20 percentage points below average, and EML students tend to perform around 30 percentage points below average.

For EML students with disabilities, rates of proficiency on these standardized assessments are extremely low; in all of the grades and years that we examined, the rate of proficiency for EML students with disabilities stood below 5%.

English Language Proficiency Assessment

EML students in MCPS are assessed annually on their English language proficiency until such time as they meet the requirements to be reclassified and are no longer classified as EML. Studies show that students, on average, take four to seven years to gain sufficient English language proficiency to be reclassified (see e.g., Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Cook, Boals, & Lundberg, 2011; Umansky & Reardon, 2008; Thompson, 2015). There is no *a priori* expectation that a certain threshold number of students should be proficient each year. The more meaningful interpretive measure is English language proficiency growth.

We find a marked decline in students' English language proficiency growth in 2022 data, as compared to 2019 and 2020 data. The number of students who achieved EML proficiency sufficient to exit EML services declined by 2.3 percentage points, and the number of students achieving year-on-year growth in their English language proficiency, as defined by Maryland state metrics, fell by 6%. The most precipitous declines were at seventh grade (18% decline), eighth grade (17% decline), and ninth grade (19% decline).

Graduation Rates

The following findings pertain to graduation rates. The data supporting these findings are provided in Chapter 7, College and Career. We repeat these findings in this section as they are relevant across multiple research questions.

- Almost half of EML students and almost one-quarter of Latino/a students do not graduate in four years.
- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino/a students lags 12 percentage points below the overall MCPS average, and 17 percentage points below White students.
- The four-year graduation rate for EML students lags 35 percentage points below the overall MCPS average and 41 percentage points below White students.
- EML and Latino/a students in MCPS graduate at lower rates than the national averages for these subgroups, and the gap between EML and Latino/a students and all students is wider than the national average.

- When given an additional year to graduate, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino/a students graduating rises by an average of 4%, and the percentage of EML students graduating rises by 8%.

Are EML and Latino/a students engaged in schooling? Are students consistently attending school?

Engagement in schooling is a complex construct with multiple facets, including behavioral components, emotional components, and cognitive components. As such, it is not necessarily easy to measure as a single unit, although specific aspects of engagement are more amenable to understand at a systems level than others (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). There are a number of indicators which have been proposed to understand "behavioral engagement," defined as "participation in the schooling process … include[ing] involvement in academic, social, and extracurricular activities" (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019, p. 58). Emotional and cognitive engagement are more challenging to measure as they relate to students' subjective experiences and are not directly observable.

For indicators of engagement, the National Academies of Sciences recommend (i) rates of absenteeism and (ii) other more disparate indicators of academic engagement such as time on homework, preparation for class, class participation, participation in school-based activities, adherence to classroom rules, and risk behaviors. We include some of these elsewhere in the report (e.g., participation in advanced classes is included in the section on college and careers, and adherence to rules is potentially a partial aspect of the discipline data in the section on assets-based perspectives). We were able to gather some information on students' engagement via focus groups, but our primary findings on engagement are around school attendance and absenteeism.

As we consider school engagement in 2022, we would be remiss if we did not also overlay an understanding of the disproportionate impact of COVID on communities of color, including Latino/a communities, and on immigrant families – not only in terms of the immediate health impact, but also in terms of mental health impact, stress, and job and income loss (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021; Uro, Lai, & Alsace, 2020). One 2021 estimate suggests that of the children who lost a caregiver to COVID, almost 40% were Latino (Treglia et al., 2021). While our inquiry does not directly address this impact, we feel that any efforts to increase students' engagement must be sensitive to the disparate impacts of the pandemic.

Engagement

Students who participated in CAL's focus groups reported that they were engaged with their schooling and valued engagement. A limitation of this finding is that the students who participated were a self-selecting group – and likely the most engaged students would elect to participate.

Attendance

Chronic absenteeism (defined as missing 10% or more of enrolled school days) is negatively correlated with student achievement and student graduation rates (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019; Child Trends, 2013; Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009).

Nationally, the chronic absenteeism rate for Latino/a students is 20%, which exceeds the rate of 14% for White students. The national rate of absenteeism for English learner students is 13.7%, but the rate is higher for English learners who are also Latino/a.

We find that both Latino/a and EML students are more likely than average to have extended levels of absenteeism.

- For 2021-22, there were 19,943 MCPS students with unexcused absences of more than 20 days – this is 13% of the total MCPS student population.

- Among Latino/a students, 12,163 had unexcused absences of more than 20 days, representing 23%, or almost one-quarter of Latino/a students.

- Among EML students, the number with unexcused absences of more than 20 days was 6,583, representing 23%, or almost one-quarter of EML students.

We note also that the proportion of Latino/a students who are chronically absent tracks with the proportion who do not graduate on time.

The following findings pertain to advanced course-taking rates. The data supporting these findings are provided in Chapter 7, College and Career. We repeat these findings in this section as they are relevant across multiple research questions.

- There are disproportionalities in students' patterns of course-taking. While 31% of high school students are Hispanic or Latino/a, only 25% of SAT course-takers are Hispanic or Latino/a; while 12% of high school students are classified as EML, only 8% of SAT course-takers are EML.
- Hispanic or Latino/a students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB, or SAT courses.
- EML students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB, or SAT courses.
- EML students who take AP language examinations in Chinese, French, and Spanish outperform their fluent-English peers; however, the number of EML students who participate is very small.
- While not directly related to the question of engagement, we also found a perception that EML students and Latinos are not proportionately represented in gifted and talented programs.

Are schools able to access and use these data, especially the equity/accountability data?

We did not uncover wide-spread challenges or concerns from educators around using achievement data.

Educators mentioned that the lag time in receiving students' ACCESS data results in challenges in planning for the upcoming school year – schools may not know in advance how many EML students they have or at what level, due when schools receive students' ACCESS data. We note that this is out of the control of MCPS.

In working with MCPS achievement and opportunity data, we do notice some challenges in the use of data-driven metrics at the district level, including public-facing accountability data, home language data, and data on gifted and talented students.

Public accountability data — the MCPS Equity Accountability Matrix

First, from the perspective of public accountability, in our analyses of the publicly available equity and accountability data on the MCPS data dashboard website, we found that the only accountability component specific to EMLs focused on the English language growth of these students. While language growth is a critical component of accountability for EML students, we would encourage a perspective

that is more well-rounded and does not focus simply on what EML students are lacking. We also had challenges in understanding the growth metric as it was explained on the web pages. We also advise updating this public-facing webpage to remove the deficit-based terminology.

A Stakeholder Commission member commented on the publicly available data, noting that "I want to learn more about the types of outward facing data that can be used for content performance accountability. What can we do to hold the whole system accountable for EMLs?"

Home language data
A key finding in our data analysis is that home language data is not easily retrievable at a system level.

Data on students who exit services
As we noted above, maintaining data on students who exit EML services is complex, however, we suggest that this is an area in which MCPS might enhance data systems to allow a view of the long-term impact of ELD services.

Additional findings – variation in parental refusal of EML services
In addition to the findings above, we believe that the variation across schools in rates of parental refusal warrants further investigation. Nationally, 96%-97% of students identified as English learners under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) receive language instruction services (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). In MCPS, the rate of parental refusal of services is 7%, and there are 15 schools where the rate exceeds 20%. While additional investigation of these individual schools is outside of the scope of our evaluation, we recommend that MCPS reach out to schools with higher rates to understand the reasons that parents have for opting out of EML services.

Recommendations

1.1. Draft and implement an absenteeism response plan centering on Latino/a students, that examines potential barriers to school attendance for this group of students in MCPS.

1.2. Provide annual data reports to the DELME office and the public that detail the:
   - Proportion of exited EML students at or above proficient on ELA and mathematics assessments, by grade level.
   - Proportion of EML students with disabilities at or above proficient on ELA and mathematics assessments, by grade level.

1.3. Review and revise criteria for outreach, identification, and inclusion in Gifted and Talented programs to ensure that Latino/a and EML students have access to these programs.

1.4. Examine the way in which home language data is populated into central data systems, especially in cases where the home language of EML students is identified as English.

1.5. Routinely monitor across schools for high rates of parental refusal of EML services and engage with families to understand why they are refusing services.

2. Instructional Methods and Models

Summary of Recommendations

2.1. Increase support from MCPS central office to elementary schools to ensure that appropriate program models are in place in elementary schools.

- While we did not find evidence that schools are not implementing appropriate models, we recommend increasing accountability to ensure that all schools are appropriately implementing MCPS's program models in elementary schools.
- MCPS central office should consider periodic and regular reviews of samples of elementary schools to confirm that schools are implementing program models appropriately. Appropriate resources should be provided to ensure that this can be executed effectively.

2.2. Increase support from MCPS central office to secondary schools to ensure that EML students are being appropriately scheduled.

- Institute a scheduling review process and ensure that processes are in place to reschedule any students who are not in appropriate classes. Ensure that adequate staffing resources are available to support this effort.
- Create an accountability feedback loop to ensure that schools are staffed to support recommended levels of ELD support.

2.3. At the secondary level, continue efforts to align sheltered classes in core content areas (science, social studies, and math) to grade-level standards so that students can receive graduation credits from these classes.

2.4. To support a model in which EML students are instructed in mainstream classes in secondary schools, increase ELD instructional supports in mainstream content classes in middle and high school.

- Provide support from qualified ELD instructors in middle and high school mainstream content classes.
- Ensure that mainstream content educators receive regular opportunities to engage in PD around instructional practices for EML students.

2.5. Engage content area educators to enhance diverse cultural connections in content area curricula.

2.6. Ensure that content area educators in non-core curriculum areas (e.g. arts, music, physical education) receive support on instructional methods for EML students.

Recommendations: Two-Way Immersion Programs

There are many promising practices that MCPS and school staff can build on, as well as some areas for growth that, if pursued, would strengthen its TWI program and enhanced its ability to achieve its goals of educating bilingual, biliterate and socio-culturally competent individuals who are college and career ready. Recommendations for the improvement of the TWI program are described below under the pertinent strand of the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard et al., 2018):

2.7. Enhance TWI program structures

- Continue the efforts towards achieving consistency across elementary school campuses and clearly communicate those efforts and the rationale behind them to the various stakeholders.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are made available in order to incorporate the language arts standards into the curriculum of the other three core content areas and teachers have received training around the new language and content allocation plan and have a good understanding of how to execute it with fidelity before implementation begins.
- Monitor the implementation of the new language and content allocation plan to ascertain that foundational language and literacy skills in the two languages are being taught and that students have the opportunity to engage with literary and informational texts in all content areas.
- Include specials in the language allocation plan to ensure that 50% of total instructional time is facilitated in Spanish.
- Continue the progressive expansion of the program by adding elementary programs, continuing to expand into middle schools and eventually offering a PreK-12 pathway for TWI students

2.8. Enhance TWI Instruction:

- Provide carefully planned and structured opportunities for students to engage in extended oral discourse with peers in pairs or small groups strategically created in such a way that students must work interdependently, with individual and group accountability for all group members and social equity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).
- Carefully consider the language demands of academic content during lesson preparation and incorporate differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use.
- Seek opportunities to bring the two program languages together to point out similarities and differences between them at different dimensions of language (sound/letter, word/phrase, sentence, and discourse) to promote cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in EML students in all content areas. This practice will be even more important when the new language allocation plan starts being implemented and content areas are taught in one program language only by grade level and should take place in addition to end of the unit Bridge lessons

2.9. Enhance staff quality and professional development in TWI programs

- Continue to provide professional learning opportunities for TWI staff that focuses on moving away from approaching instruction, assessments, and support services through a monolingual

lens, and toward adopting a holistic approach to language and literacy development that considers students' whole linguistic repertoires.

- Provide PD and job-embedded coaching to TWI teachers and support staff that focuses on purposefully enacting opportunities for the development of language and literacy in and through teaching the core curricular content to enhance their pedagogical language knowledge (Galguera, 2011) with an emphasis on the following areas:
    - Promoting structured peer-to-peer interaction that incorporates differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use;
    - Fostering cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in EML students to facilitate the use of their whole linguistic repertoire; and
    - Translanguaging practices at different grade levels (an area teachers identified as needed)

2.10. Enhance TWI support and resources
- Continue efforts to hire bilingual staff including support staff (e.g., special education educators, reading specialists) who can provide services in both languages, including reviewing Spanish language materials. In particular, research on the education of EMLs has shown that EMLs who receive instruction in their native language and English should receive reading interventions in their native language (National Academies, 2017). One way to contribute to these efforts is to consider hiring teachers from Spanish-speaking countries and providing them with the support system needed to acclimate to the U.S. educational system and MCPS culture.
- Continue to provide funding for TWI programs that is commensurate with the program's vertical and horizontal growth. Ensuring that adequate human and material resources are in place (including in the partner language) before adding more programs will be critical to the continued success of the program and its expansion into middle school and beyond.

Background: Instructional and Program Models for the Instruction of EML Students in MCPS

The US Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition Toolkit (OELA, 2017) provides guidance on program models for the instruction of students identified for English language development services. This document states:

> LEAs have the flexibility to choose the EL services and programs that meet civil rights requirements and best meet the needs of their EL population. Appropriate EL services and programs enable ELs to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable amount of time.

> (OELA 2017, Ch. 2, p. 1)

The document goes on to describe the standards for such programs:

> These standards, established in Castañeda v. Pickard, include a three-pronged test: First, is the program based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or considered a legitimate experimental strategy? Second, are the programs and practices (including resources and personnel) reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively?

Third, does the program succeed in producing results indicating that students' language barriers are being overcome within a reasonable period of time?

(OELA 2017, Ch. 2, p. 2)

MCPS provides a variety of programs to meet the needs of students identified as EML.

Elementary Instructional and Program Models

MCPS uses several program models at the elementary level. In documentation provided to the state, MCPS outlines these program models: "English Language Development services at the elementary level are provided to all eligible students via a co-teaching, plug-in, pull-out or Two-Way Immersion model."

> March 2022 Monitoring Visit Indicators for English Learners and Title III Services: English Learners and Immigrant Students Response Checklist

Further expansion on these types of models and their subtypes is provided to MCPS educators via the Elementary ESOL English Language Development Program (ELDP) Staff Handbook. CAL examined the 2021-22 edition of this handbook to further understand program and instructional models for EML students in MCPS. The document provides guidance to school building leaders in selecting an instructional model, as well as detail on factors that should be taken into account when a school selects a model (e.g., grade levels, numbers of EML students, languages) and critical elements of such models (e.g., importance of small group learning with exposure to English proficient peers, greater amounts of language instruction for students at beginning levels of proficiency).

The document identifies the following models for use in MCPS (pp. 45-46):

- **Plug-In/Push-In** – in this model, an ELD teacher "pushes in" to a general education classroom to support EML students in content area instruction. There are several subtypes, which include:
  - *Team Teaching (Co-Teaching)* – "A classroom teacher and ELD teacher plan, instruct, assess and analyze results together. The classroom teacher focuses on content knowledge while the ELD teacher focuses on teaching the language of the content. Both teachers share responsibility for the content learning and language development of all students in the class." (p. 46).
  - *Pull-Aside (Station Teaching)* – in which an ELD teacher works with a small group of students at a station, "to provide language-focused instruction in support of the content standards" (p. 47).
  - *Support Services Staff Push-in/plug-in* – this subtype includes bilingual staff (in addition to an ELD teacher) who also support language access or language services.
- **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)** – as an instructional model, the eight components of the SIOP model are used for lesson design and delivery. (Note that this protocol can also be used as an instrument to observe instruction. Please see below.)
- **Pullout**– in which ELD teachers work with EML students outside of regular content classrooms to provide instruction "that focuses on the academic language necessary for success" for their grade-level content. (p. 47)
- **Two-Way Immersion (TWI)** – a model which aims for bilingualism and biliteracy as outcomes, addressed in greater detail below.

- **Hybrid** – as needed, a school may also combine relevant models listed above and use more than one of them.

Schools typically do not provide systematic information back to MCPS central office regarding the types of programs that they have selected. A 2020 survey of principals in MCPS elementary schools sought to elicit information on EL programs from elementary school principals. The results of the survey are reproduced below. We note that the set of models included in the 2020 survey differs from the current list. First, at this time, there were still METS programs in elementary schools. Second, this list includes co-teaching as a program model.

Table 1: Results from 2020 MCPS Survey of Elementary School Principals

Number and Percent Reporting English Language Models in Use at Their Schools (Valid *N*=83)

ELD Model	n	%
Plug-in/push-in	72	88.9
Pull-out	66	**81.5****
Co-teaching between ESOL and classroom teachers	52	**64.2***
Pull aside	41	50.6
Sheltered content instruction (SIOP)	6	7.4
METS program	3	3.7
Two-way/dual language	3	3.7

Note. The percentage of responses may exceed 100% because respondents could check all that apply. *Indicates statistically higher use of co-teaching between the High ELs and Title I schools relative to Non-Title I schools ** Indicates higher use of Pull out in non-Title I and K–5 schools relative schools not in these categories.

Source: MCPS Office of Shared Accountability *Elementary Principal Survey: English Learner Program Spring 2020*

Secondary Instructional and Program Models

A description of the programming and instruction for EML students in secondary programs is available in the MCPS *Secondary ELD Scheduling Guide*. CAL reviewed the 2022-23 version of this document.

In middle and high schools, instructional pathways are based on students' ELP levels. Instructional pathways for middle and high school students are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

Figure 1: Instructional pathway for middle schools EML students, based on ELP level

Suggested Middle School Instructional Pathway

Subjects	ELP 1	ELP 2	ELP 3	ELP 4
ELD/ELA (aligned to grade level) DP-Double Period SP-Single Period	English for ELs 1 (DP)	English for ELs 2 (DP)	English for ELs 3 (SP)	Grade-level English course with '40' suffix
Reading -or- World Language	World Languages (e.g, SS1)	World Languages (e.g., SS2)	Reading Intervention (based on data)	World Languages
Math	Grade Math with ELD co-teacher	Grade Level Math	Grade Level Math	Grade Level Math
Science	Grade Level Science	Grade Level Science	Grade Level Science	Grade Level Science
Social Studies	Grade level Social Studies	Grade Level Social Studies	Grade Level Social Studies	Grade Level Social Studies
PE/Health	PE	PE or Health	PE or Health	PE or Health
Elective	Arts	Music	Music	Music

Source: Secondary ELD Scheduling Guidelines

Figure 2: Instructional pathway for high school EML students, based on ELP level

Suggested High School Instructional Pathway

Subjects	ELP 1	ELP 2	ELP 3	ELP 4
ELD/ELA (aligned to grade level) DP-Double Period (ELP 1 & 2) SP-Single Period (ELP 3 & 4)	English for ELs 1 -and- ELD Seminar I	English for ELs 2 -and- ELD Seminar II	English for ELs 3 (SP) -or- ELD Seminar III -and/or- Grade-level English course with '40' suffix	Grade-level English course with '40' suffix
World Languages -or- Reading	World Language (e.g., SS2)	World Language (e.g., SS3)	Reading Intervention (based on data)	AP Spanish Language -or- AP Spanish Literature
Math	Sheltered or Bilingual Algebra 1 or Geometry	Sheltered Algebra 1 -or- Sheltered Geometry	Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus or Calculus	Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus or Calculus
Science	Sheltered or Bilingual Biology -or- Sheltered Physics NEW! Earth Systems and Sustainability	Sheltered Chemistry -or- Sheltered Biology -or- Sheltered Physics NEW! Earth Systems and Sustainability	Biology, Chemistry or Physics	Biology, Chemistry or Physics
Social Studies	Sheltered Modern World History -or- Sheltered US History	Sheltered US History -or- Sheltered Modern World History -or- Sheltered NSL Government	NSL Government -or- Modern World History -or- US History	US History -or- NSL Government -or- Modern World History
Electives	PE -or- Arts	PE -or- Arts -or- Music	PE -or- Arts -or- Music -or- CTE coursework	CTE Coursework

METS students may need to take either intervention courses for both literacy and math to address their interruption in education. See separate METS instructional pathways and resources.

Source: Secondary ELD Scheduling Guidelines

At both the middle and high school level, ELD instruction takes place within the ELA block, either in sheltered classes or in co-taught classes with a content area and ELD instructor (or in some cases, a

dually-certified instructor). For students at ELP level 3, schools have flexibility in how they implement the pathway for language arts and may schedule students either in sheltered courses or mainstream courses.

MCPS ELD curriculum at the secondary level is aligned with the grade-level ELA standards. This allows for students to remain on grade level in language arts and in some cases apply their joint ELD/ELA classes to graduation credit. The Maryland State Board of Education requires 4 language arts credits for graduation; and while the sheltered English classes are aligned to the grade-level language arts standards, a student may only use two sheltered ELD courses to count toward the graduation credit requirement.

In other content areas, at the middle school level, EML students are placed in general education classes for science, social studies, and math; according to MCPS guidelines, only ELP Level 1 students are provided with a ELD co-teacher, and only in math. At the high school level, ELP Level 3 and Level 4 students are placed in mainstream classes for science, social studies, and math. While this model has the advantage of placing students with their peers, it requires that content area instructors have well-honed skills to deliver instruction to students who are learning in their second language.

Efforts are currently underway to align sheltered science and social studies curricula to grade-level standards.

In terms of monitoring and accountability, while DELME requests that schools provide copies of students' schedules, typically these are not analyzed in the aggregate to understand the extent to which schools are placing students into the appropriate settings based on their EML level.

In addition to the general secondary pathways for EML students, MCPS maintains two special programs. The Multidisciplinary Education Training and Support (METS) program is targeted toward students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). We address this program in Chapter 2.6 on newcomer and SLIFE students. The Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) is for students 18 years of age or older who are seeking career and technical training. This program is addressed in Chapter 2.5 on college and career.

Results

Focus Groups

Program Models, Identification, and Placement

The processes for identifying students as EMLs and for conducting WIDA testing were discussed by focus group participants in two groups. A challenge reported by a school administrator was the delay in receiving WIDA test results, which they said created challenges with regard to staffing programs, since ELD teachers have to be hired over the summer once they have final numbers of EMLs. Challenges with WIDA processes at the beginning of the school year were discussed by ELD teachers and a coach in another focus group, including the amount of staff time consumed by the process, with one teacher indicating it took two weeks with two teachers at their school. The counselor suggested that time would be better spent on informal assessments. The group also discussed changes in the process, including the fact that the ACCESS report can no longer be used as a student work sample.

A content teacher and counselor in the same focus group shared concerns about the placement of EMLs in classes with SPED students, relating the situation to the limited availability of the ELD teacher and the

absence of an available ELD paraprofessional. They said that this situation resulted in EMLs receiving little to no language support. Related staffing issues are discussed further below in the subsection on staffing.

Two participants mentioned pull-out versus push-in instructional models explicitly. One administrator said that pullout is not the best practice and that instead all teachers should be skilled in ELD strategies and provide this instruction within content area courses. An ELD teacher said that another teacher is pushing back because the ELD teacher does pullout during some instructional time, a complaint they perceived as misguided. Many others discussed needs with regards to support within content instruction, which are discussed below in the subsection on content area support.

Two students shared a desire to be in integrated classrooms. A student in general education said, "We need a variety of people in the class. We need to mix up the classes with the English students. We need to integrate our classes so we can learn English better." Another student, who is in CREA, agreed, saying, "They think that if they put us all together, Latinos with Latinos, we'll learn better. But that's not true. We need to be with other students so we can learn English. I learn more English in my class with no other Latinos than in the ones where we are all together. How can I learn English if the person next to me doesn't know it any better?" The first student also noted that needing to use English with peers in class helps take away their fear of using English.

A final comment on placement, from the family focus group, was that grade-level placement is a cultural expectation specific to U.S. schooling, whereas, in some other countries, children are placed by ability rather than age. They suggested that students be placed in lower grade levels as needed, especially for ELA.

Curriculum

Participants in six focus groups cited challenges with the curriculum. A school administrator said the curriculum is too difficult for students, and that students are "academically overwhelmed." Parents shared that the math curriculum is "very language-heavy." Students in one focus group suggested that the curriculum for EML students be looked at and revised, saying it was too difficult. One student said, "The curriculum is just too difficult. I was in ESL 1 and was asked to write a formal letter in English. It's like I'm in ESL 1 but doing the work of another student in ESL 3. Those two classes are very different, but we have to do the same kind of work." In another focus group, two counselors reported issues with the new curriculum, one saying that teachers with whom they work are saying that EML students aren't learning English, and that this happened when the curriculum changed. Another counselor added that the new curriculum is very structured and the pacing is very strict.

Six ELD teachers and a content teacher across two focus groups emphasized the inappropriateness of EML curriculum as a critical issue that needs to be addressed. In one of the groups, an ELD teacher and content teacher often returned to the topic of the curriculum during questions on other areas, seeing it as such an important and misaligned piece of EML instruction. The ELD teacher said, "We have the wrong curriculum. The ELD students only have two years to master 9th grade ELA curriculum. They are asked to do what the general education Spanish students are not asked to do. It's not the same demands." Both teachers said the ELA curriculum was inappropriate, that tasks were above students' proficiency levels, and that students were, therefore, unable to keep up—even students at higher proficiency levels—and that many students "just stop." The other focus group, which included five ELD teachers, similarly focused a lot of attention on problems with curriculum. These teachers noted issues

in particular with Study Sync, which they said was developed for native English speakers and too difficult for EML students, especially newcomers and second-year students. One noted that Study Sync is the only developed curriculum for secondary EML students ("the only thing available for second- and third-year students"), adding that its lowest Lexile reading level is 600, whereas many newcomers and second-year students have a Lexile reading level closer to 300. One teacher shared that they create a lot of their own materials, and that the students tend to do better with teacher-created materials and Nearpod. These ELD teachers also discussed the McGraw Hill curriculum, one noting that McGraw Hill materials for newcomers are better than StudySync, but "not robust enough for language structures, nor of high interest." One of the teachers said the curriculum needs to be reconsidered in light of the student population, in terms of the large numbers of EMLs as well as the characteristics of the EML students entering MCPS.

Parents also shared that the curriculum is not culturally inclusive. They said they want topics related to Latino/a culture and heritage year-round, "not just as a snapshot," and for there to be "truly diverse representation" within the curriculum.

Instructional Strategies

Focus group participants reported effective instructional strategies in classrooms and also noted areas for improvement, with one administrator noting there is "lots of variability in instructional practice" across classrooms.

Some of the instructional strategies reported by focus group participants include the following:

- Differentiation
- Scaffolding
- Small-group work

Instructional strategies reported as needing to improve or increase by focus group participants include the following:

- Language support and accommodations, broadly
- Differentiation
- Scaffolding
- Teacher modeling
- Use of first languages, in particular Spanish

In one focus group, students described some instructional needs they perceived as necessary in order for them to succeed in their classrooms. They discussed how they need more time to work on assignments and more days to hand them in. They said the work is given out to be completed, but it is not scaffolded for different proficiency levels. They then described actions teachers could take to make it easier for them, like visuals, word banks, sample answers, teacher modeling, extra time, and feedback on what they have done correctly and what needs to be corrected. In the other student focus group, a student in general education said, similarly, "They need to improve how they teach. Not to just tell us what to do, but really teach."

School administrators in two focus groups also discussed classroom assessment. One school administrator noted "exam stress" among students. In another group, an administrator similarly

mentioned that EMLs are taking on-grade assessments with "no grace given," and that this is part of an overall instructional approach that provides too little support for EML students.

Content Area Support

Focus group participants described instructional methods that support EML students, such as scaffolding, while also reporting that EMLs are left insufficiently supported in many content area classrooms. A school administrator described the challenges faced by some EMLs in mainstream content classes, for example, a WIDA Level 1 student in English 11 reading Macbeth with modification, and a Level 3 student doing the same with no modification. A school administrator in a different focus group expressed the need for content teachers to be skilled in integrating ELD strategies into content instruction, and another administrator in the same group said they'd like to "elevate teachers so all teachers become teachers of language and academic content." A contrast between the mindset with regards to EMLs and SPED was further identified in another administrator focus group, with one administrator noting that special educators are told "Every teacher is a special educator," but there is not a comparable expectation that all teachers are ELD teachers, adding that the district "needs to prioritize learning about EML students across general education."

A few teachers made comments about the needs within math and science instruction. ELD teachers in one focus group said there's a need for more structure in math classes. They said the requirements in place do not reflect the strengths of EML students, emphasizing that while the curriculum needs more structure, it should still allow flexibility for teachers to match instruction with students' strengths and knowledge areas. One of the teachers said that ELD teachers have to "build a plan in-flight" for EMLs taking math and science, because the "content teachers just can't help them."

A content teacher reported needing materials to be able to better support EML students in their classroom. They emphasized the need for Spanish-language materials in particular.

Access to Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

Student focus group participants reported barriers to participation in the full curricular and extracurricular offerings available to the general student population. Many of the students in the focus groups were CREA students or former METS students, who have particular contextual factors and barriers that may inhibit their participation. The concerns of these students are described further in the CREA and Newcomer sections. However, some of the students in one of the student focus groups were enrolled in the general education program, and they similarly described some lack of opportunity relative to the whole MCPS student population. They said that if an activity is not available during the day, they can't participate due to work after school or family responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings. Two of the students reported breakdowns in communication about available activities. One said, "Sometimes there are sports activities, but we don't find out how to participate. For example, they had tryouts for soccer, but no one told us about it so we couldn't participate. It would have been nice to participate. But no one told us about the tryouts, dates, times, or how to sign up." Another student shared, "I've never seen a dance or show here at the school, and if there was one, we weren't told about it."

Staffing

Staffing was described as a challenge by many focus group participants, with an emphasis on the need for ELD teachers and paraeducators to be available to support EML students.

ELD Teachers

A theme across focus groups was the need for more ELD teachers to be available to provide language support for EMLs. Limited availability of ELD teachers was noted in five focus groups (by 3 administrators, 1 counselor, 2 content teachers, and 2 ELD teachers). As described above, a school administrator noted one challenge with ELD staffing related to the timing of the availability of WIDA results, leading to ELD teachers needing to be hired over the summer. They also said that increases in enrollment, which were mentioned by others as well, were part of the issue: "Enrollment is up. Staffing is not keeping pace."

Closely tied to the issue of the need for more ELD teachers was the workload expected of current ELD teachers. One administrator noted, "A LOT of responsibility is placed on ELD teachers," describing how they have to prepare for their own classes, support content teachers, and do paperwork, adding, "It's untenable for these teachers, really challenging." One ELD teacher reported that their caseload was 50 students. An administrator shared that an ELD Resource Teacher with whom they work said that there needs to be additional staff, since the ELD teacher has to teach classes on top of administering WIDA tests for 500 students. Another administrator said the staffing plan doesn't factor in that ELD teachers have to work across multiple grade levels.

One approach to changing the staffing structure was described by an administrator whose school is bringing ELD under ELA so that ELD is coordinated within the ELA content area. They reported that this change has encountered challenges because of staff bias about what ELD is, and what people believe about the students. They said that teachers are pushing back on accommodating EML students, but that leadership is working to overcome that.

Paraeducators

The benefits of having paraeducators available to support EMLs were cited across a number of focus groups. This theme was also closely tied to the workload and availability of ELD teachers.

Participants described a need for greater availability of paraeducators to sufficiently support EML students across programs, especially in general education classrooms. A counselor noted the lack of paraeducators in secondary classrooms, saying that this, combined with the lack of training for general education teachers to work with EMLs, means that "kids spend most of their days lost and not aware of what is being taught." An administrator similarly noted that insufficient allocation of paraeducators for their EMLs leaves many of these students unsupported in content classes.

Counselors

Among the many varied supports needed for EML students and their families, the availability of school counselors was cited as a key support by some focus group participants. A content teacher said that some schools have counselors specifically for EMLs, enabling these schools to provide robust support for students and their families. Participants in four focus groups reported a need for more counselors. One counselor shared that MCPS does not have enough counselors, although more keep getting added. They further said that counselors spend too much time on administrative tasks and not enough time with students directly. A counselor in the same group shared that ELD counselors have caseloads of over 150 students. A counselor in another group expressed concern that low-incidence schools, in particular, have insufficient counseling support, saying they would like to see a cohort of ELD counselors and staff trained for these settings in order to support students and their families. A need for bilingual counseling for students and families was a specific need shared by an ELD teacher in another group.

Bilingual Staff

A counselor noted the benefits of bilingualism among staff, saying that their own bilingualism and understanding of families' cultural contexts enables them to interact with families not only in their language but also in culturally appropriate ways. They mentioned other bilingual colleagues as well, who they said are very helpful in promoting good communication with students' parents. Parents in the family focus group noted challenges in speaking with staff due to lack of availability of bilingual staff.

Teacher Collaboration

Focus group participants conveyed an overall sense of the value of collaboration, co-teaching, and co-planning among teachers, sharing examples of successful collaboration and noting a number of limitations or challenges.

A few examples of collaboration were shared in the focus groups. Two counselors in the same group shared that teachers representing different areas were collaborating, with one sharing that teachers met every two weeks. The other counselor said that ELD teachers are paired with content teachers but did not elaborate on the details of their collaboration. An administrator in another focus group shared that a new ELD teacher tries to collaborate with classroom teachers. However, this participant and two other administrators in the same focus group expressed that collaboration was limited due to staffing and the large workloads of ELD teachers.

Focus group participants were asked specifically about co-planning among teachers, and some gave examples of productive co-planning while others noted challenges. One school administrator reported having successfully facilitated co-planning between ELD and content areas at their school. An ELD teacher in another group said that they plan with content teachers. However, several other participants said there was limited co-planning between content and ELD teachers. An ELD teacher and content teacher in the same group said that ELD and content teachers do not plan together due to the low number of EMLs at their school. The content teacher noted that they had more time to co-plan when they were working virtually, whereas now, they have a large number of courses to prepare for and there is no time for co-planning. An ELD teacher in another group said they would like to have greater consistency in planning with other teachers. In another focus group, a content teacher said co-planning is inconsistent across levels, and that many teachers plan individually. An ELD teacher in the same group said that their recommendations were not listened to or implemented; this appeared to be a barrier to effective co-planning with colleagues teaching content classes.

As part of the broader context of the interaction and relationships between ELD and other areas, including content areas, an ELD teacher expressed a desire for ELD to be better integrated with other staff and departments. They said, "It's like we are in silos—on our own—more isolated than we were during the pandemic," adding that ELD needs to be empowered as a department within the district.

Observations

CAL observed a total of 317 classrooms across 55 schools. A full description of the sample of schools selected for observation can be found in Chapter 1.2, Research Methods.

MCPS facilitated the request for CAL observers to visit schools, and response rates were high. Of the schools targeted in the sample, 92% responded and provided access for a school visit. Table 2 provides an overview of the number of schools targeted, and the number observed.

Table 2: Total number of schools and classrooms targeted for observation, and total number observed

	Number of schools in target sample	Number of schools observed	% Response rate
Elementary	38	38	100%
Middle	10	9	90%
High	10	7	70%
Special	2	1	50%
Total	**60**	**55**	**92%**

All of the targeted elementary schools, and all but one of the targeted middle schools responded to the request for observation. It was more challenging to schedule observations in high schools, and MCPS engaged in several rounds of outreach and follow-up with schools to request access for CAL observers. Of the ten high schools targeted for inclusion, seven responded. One of two Special schools responded.

Each school was asked to construct a schedule for observers that allowed for six classroom observations. We requested a schedule that was representative across the instructional settings that EML students experience in MCPS, including ELD classes and non-ELD classes, and across a diverse range of grade levels. Schools were asked to include at least one non-core curriculum class (e.g., art, music, PE, career or technical classes, world languages). In elementary schools with SLIFE students, schools were asked to include one or two classes including these students. In secondary schools with METS programs, schools were asked to include at least two classes in the METS program.

Some schools scheduled more than six classrooms for observation. All classrooms which had observation data logged were included in our analysis. A small number of classes scheduled for observation could not be observed for a variety of reasons (e.g., a fire drill, an absent teacher, a class on the schedule in which the students were engaged in reading in the media center).

Table 3 provides detail on the numbers of classes observed at elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Table 3: Total numbers of classes observed at the elementary, middle, and high school level

	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
Number of classrooms observed	226	52	38	316

At the elementary level, 226 classroom observations were conducted across 38 schools. Of these, one was a partial observation, as most of the classroom instruction was an assessment in which the teacher was unable to assist students, and so not all the observation features were relevant.

At the middle school level, 52 classroom observations were conducted across nine schools.

At the high school level, 38 classroom observations were conducted across eight schools. One of the schools was a Special school, with two observations. To ensure that educators and classrooms from this

setting are not identifiable, we include these observations within the overall sample and discuss them separately where appropriate.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities Among Observed Classrooms

Students with disabilities were represented in observed classrooms. Observers were sometimes informed about the participation of these students, and in some contexts, instructional contexts were designed specifically for these students. As we did not want to collect identifiable student data, we did not collect the total number of students with disabilities in the classrooms that we observed. However, observers were able to collect evidence of the inclusion of students with disabilities in other ways.

At the elementary level, a SPED inclusion math class was observed, with one identified EML. Two classes were co-taught with a SPED teacher. Another observation included an ELD teacher pushing into a general education classroom to work with three EML students who were identified by the instructors as students with disabilities. A math class included two students with disabilities who were not EML students.

Among observed middle school classrooms, two mainstream classrooms included students with disabilities—a language arts classroom with three students with disabilities and a math class in which many students were either EMLs or students with disabilities. Two classes of targeted, specialized instruction also included students with disabilities—one ELD class in which all students were EMLs with IEPs, and a developmental reading class in which the observer noted that some students were EMLs and most were students with disabilities.

At the high school level, as noted above, two of the observations were conducted at a Special school, in which instruction was tailored and delivered specifically for students with disabilities.

Overall Observation Ratings

Observed classrooms were rated using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) instrument, which includes 30 features organized into eight components, which, together, indicate the extent to which sheltered instructional strategies are being implemented in classrooms. Please see Chapter 1.2, Research Methods, for further information about this instrument.

Each of the 30 features was rated by a trained observer on a scale of 0-4. Observers could also indicate "N/A" or leave a feature blank if they were unable to rate the feature, for example, if that feature did not apply to the context or if they were unable to ascertain whether a feature was included.

Overall ratings for observed classrooms varied by instructional context, including educational level, standalone ELD classes versus mainstream or general education, and content area.

Average overall classroom ratings for each of the three levels (elementary, middle, and high) are presented in Table 4 below. Within the rating scale range from 0-4, we consider ratings of 3.0 or above to be areas of strength, and ratings of less than 2.0 to be areas for growth. Middle school classrooms were, on average, the most highly rated, and high schools were the least highly rated.

Table 4: Average ratings among observed classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels

Level	Number of Observations	Average Rating	Lowest Rating	Highest Rating
Elementary	226	2.8	0.6	4.0
Middle	52	3.1	1.1	4.0
High	38	2.3	0.0	3.8

Overall Observation Ratings by Instructional Context

At the elementary level, overall average ratings were the same for ELD pullout and general education contexts (see Table 5 below). When looking at specific features, however, there are differences between ratings within these two contexts, with higher scores for some features among ELD pullout classes and higher scores for other features in general education classes. These will be discussed below.

Table 5: Average ratings by class type in elementary school classroom observations

Instructional Context	Number of Observations	Average Rating	Lowest Rating	Highest Rating
ELD pullout	36	2.8	0.6	4.0
General education classes	184	2.8	0.9	4.0

Average ratings for observation of sheltered instructional features varied by instructional context among observed secondary classrooms. Table 6 presents average ratings for secondary classrooms (middle and high school combined) for four broad instructional contexts: ELD classes; mainstream content classes (a broad category that includes ELA, math, science, social studies, and non-core curriculum classes); sheltered content classes (math, science, and social studies for students at lower ELP levels); and METS classes.

Table 6: Average ratings by instructional context in middle and high school classroom observations

Instructional Context	Number of Observations	Average Rating	Lowest Rating	Highest Rating
ELD classes	25	3.2	1.5	3.9
Mainstream content classes	42	2.6	0.0	4.0
Sheltered content classes	13	2.4	0.8	3.8
METS classes	10	3.1	1.3	3.7

This analysis revealed higher average ratings in ELD classes (3.2) and METS courses (3.1), and lower averages in content classes, both mainstream (2.6) and sheltered (2.4).

Next, we disaggregate these data by middle (Table 7) and high school (Table 8) contexts. We do not report averages for cases in which we have fewer than five observations in the category, both to ensure that we do not make generalizations based on a small number of cases, and also to ensure that no classrooms included in the study are identifiable.

Table 7: Average ratings by instructional context in middle school classroom observations

Instructional Context	Number of Observations	Average Rating	Lowest rating	Highest rating
ELD classes	16	3.3	2.0	3.9
Mainstream content classes	30	3.0	1.1	4.0
Sheltered content classes	1	--	--	--
METS classes	5	3.5	3.0	3.7
Total	52	3.1	1.1	4.0

Table 8: Average ratings by instructional context in high school classroom observations

Instructional Context	Number of Observations	Average Rating	Lowest Rating	Highest Rating
ELD classes	9	2.9	1.5	3.8
Mainstream content classes	12	1.7	0.0	3.1
Sheltered content classes	12	2.3	0.8	3.6
METS classes	5	2.7	1.3	3.6
Total	38	2.3	0.0	3.8

The same pattern holds – that ELD classes and METS classes tend to have average higher ratings than mainstream and sheltered content classes. Middle school classes also have higher ratings than high school classes.

At the high school level, sheltered content classes were rated higher than mainstream content classes.

In Table 9, we present data organized by subject area. To ensure we have enough observations for analysis, we combine middle and high school classrooms in this table.

Table 9: Average ratings by content area in middle and high school classroom observations

Content Area	Number of Observations	Average Rating	Lowest Rating	Highest Rating
ELD classes	25	3.2	1.5	3.9
Language Arts	30	2.9	0.6	3.8
Math	11	3.1	1.9	4.0
Science	5	2.9	2.7	3.2
Social Studies	10	2.1	0.6	3.6
Other mainstream content classes*	8	1.9	0.0	3.5

*These include courses such as physical education, art, computer skills, music, and health.

ELD classes and math classes have the highest ratings.

Both language arts and science have ratings of 2.9. Social studies classes have a rating of 2.1, with a broad range (0.6 to 3.6). Other mainstream content classes – i.e., non-core curriculum classes – have the lowest average rating, with a rating of 1.9, and a wide range of classroom ratings, from 0.0 to 3.5.

In summary, in terms of instructional contexts, we find that middle school, overall, is an area of strength, with ratings consistently higher than 3.0 for middle school on average, and also for each of ELD classes, mainstream content classes, and METS classes. We also find that math classes in high school rate on average above 3.0.

Mainstream content classes in high school (including core and non-core curriculum classes) tend to be an area for growth, with an average rating of 1.7.

Overall Ratings of Specific Features of Sheltered Instruction

As noted, the classroom observations were conducted using the SIOP instrument, providing a rating of 0-4 (or N/A or blank, as appropriate) for 30 features organized into eight overarching components. See Table 10 below for average ratings for each feature by level (elementary, middle, high). Again, ratings of 3.0 or higher are interpreted as "strengths" and indicated with green shading below. If a feature is a strength across all school levels (elementary, middle, and high), the feature itself is shaded green (e.g., 3. Content concepts). Ratings lower than 2.0 are interpreted as "areas for growth" and shaded in red. Other areas not indicated as particular areas of strength or as in need of growth are no less important and should still be considered areas of interest when planning for professional development and curriculum and instruction. However, this report will focus on instructional strategies that are already being implemented across MCPS classrooms and on areas in need of growth, overall, as well as in specific instructional contexts.

Table 10: Average ratings of SIOP features among observed classrooms

Component	Feature	Average Rating		
		Elementary (n=229)	Middle (n=52)	High (n=39)
	Overall Rating	2.8	3.1	2.3
Lesson Preparation	1. Content objectives	2.5	2.9	2.6
	2. Language objectives	2.1	2.4	1.9
	3. Content concepts	3.6	3.7	3.2
	4. Supplementary materials	3.1	3.1	2.6
	5. Adaptation of content	2.6	3.1	2.3
	6. Meaningful activities	2.9	3.1	2.6
Building Background	7. Concepts linked to background experiences	1.9	3.3	1.8
	8. Links with past learning	3.0	3.4	1.7
	9. Key vocabulary	2.8	3.1	1.9
Compre-hensible Input	10. Appropriate speech	3.3	3.7	3.4
	11. Clear explanation of tasks	3.1	3.8	3.1
	12. Variety of techniques	2.9	3.1	2.2
Strategies	13. Learning strategies	2.9	3.0	1.2
	14. Scaffolding techniques	2.7	3.1	2.3
	15. Higher order thinking	2.3	3.0	1.9
Interaction	16. Opportunities for interaction	2.6	2.5	2.4
	17. Grouping configuration	2.7	2.4	1.8
	18. Wait time	3.0	3.8	2.8
	19. L1 clarification	2.2	3.1	2.8
Practice/ Application	20. Materials and/or manipulatives	2.7	2.8	1.8
	21. Apply content and language knowledge	2.8	3.1	2.3
	22. Integrate all language skills	2.8	2.8	2.1
Lesson Delivery	23. Lesson supports content objectives	2.6	3.7	2.7
	24. Lesson supports language objectives	2.2	3.0	1.5
	25. Student engagement	3.1	3.3	2.6
	26. Pacing	3.1	3.4	3.2
Review and Assessment	27. Key vocabulary review	2.6	2.7	1.5
	28. Key content concepts review	2.7	3.0	2.1
	29. Feedback to students	3.1	3.4	2.7
	30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning	2.6	3.3	2.3

Features with average ratings of greater than 3.0 are considered areas of strength, and coded in green; features with average ratings of less than 2.0 are considered areas for growth, and coded in red.

Turning to the specific features and components of the model, strengths observed overall across contexts include incorporating content concepts appropriate for the age and educational background level of students, use of speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels, clear explanation of academic tasks, and appropriate pacing.

Across the board, observed classrooms addressed **content concepts appropriate for the age and background levels of students** (feature 3), receiving an average rating above 3 at each level

(elementary, middle, high). Elementary classrooms were rated highest overall on this feature, with an average score of 3.7, and a rating of 4 in 69% of observed elementary classrooms.

Speech used by teachers was also a broad strength across contexts, as observers indicated that teacher talk was, largely, **speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels** (feature 10). Average ratings on this feature remained above 3 when examined for different instructional contexts (e.g., ELD classes, general education, and various content areas), except for the area of non-core curriculum and the secondary level.

Observers also indicated that teachers largely provided **clear explanations of academic tasks** (feature 11) with average ratings above 3 at all three levels (elementary, middle, and high), with middle school rating highest with an average of 3.7. This largely held across instructional contexts, with averages largely remaining above 3.

Pacing of the lesson appropriate to students' ability levels (feature 26) was generally rated high among observed classrooms, with rating averages above 3.0 at all levels—3.1 in elementary, 3.4 in middle school, and 3.2 in high school.

In elementary and middle school contexts (but not high school), we found that **links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts** (feature 8), **sufficient wait times for student responses consistently provided** (feature 18), **students engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the time period** (feature 25), and **regular feedback provided to students on their output** (feature 29) all consistently have average ratings above 3.0.

Among elementary classrooms, both individual and group feedback were reported, and feedback was often described as encouraging, through positive statements about students' schoolwork and behavior, and, at times, through actions such as fist bumps or thumbs up.

In middle school classrooms, an area of strength was that **content objectives were clearly supported by lesson delivery** (feature 25) and that there was **assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives** (feature 30).

Examples of assessment practices in highly-rated classrooms included ongoing formative assessment throughout the lesson, a numbered self-check system for students to report on their own levels of understanding, and tickets out or exit tickets.

There are no features that consistently have average ratings of less than 2.0 across elementary, middle, and high school. We do see that the feature that addresses whether **concepts are linked to background experiences** (feature 7) falls below 2.0 at both the elementary and high school level. At both elementary and high school levels, there was great variation among classrooms, indicating a need for more *consistent* background connections to be made, rather than an overall lack of the feature. For example, among elementary classrooms, this feature was not seen at all (i.e., received a rating of 0) in 23% of classrooms, but a similar number of classrooms (21%) received the highest rating of 4. Similarly, in high school, 33% of classrooms received the lowest rating, and 26% received the highest. In both contexts, a similar distribution of ratings was seen across the mid-range scores of 1-3.

Examples of observed links between concepts and students' background experiences included a variety of types of connections. Some lessons were *about* students' background experiences in a direct way, for

example, a writing assignment or project based on students' backgrounds or prior experiences. In others, teachers asked students about their prior experiences with lesson concepts, for example, the number 3, some animals being studied, or the content of an article read by the class. These links were sometimes made during the course of instruction and through smaller moments as well, for example, through questions to students about their knowledge or practices regarding a topic (e.g., whether they use the metric system at home).

Evidence of **frequent opportunities for students to interact and discuss with the teacher and each other** (feature 16) was not particularly high or low across observed classrooms at all levels. However, it is worth noting that interaction was rarely rated 0. At the elementary level, the average rating for interaction opportunities was 2.6; very few (3%) of classrooms received a score of 0 and the highest percentage of elementary classrooms received a rating of 2 (37%). Similarly, in middle school, the average rating is 2.5, and *no* classrooms were rated 0; once again, the most frequent rating was a 2 (35%). Again, in high school, interaction was rated on average 2.4; at this level there was a higher percentage of 0 ratings (8%), but the most frequent rating was a 3 (28%). Therefore, although the overall average score isn't particularly high, it was rare for *no* opportunities for interaction to be provided, particularly in elementary and middle school.

Examples of interaction in observed classrooms included pair and group work, students helping each other through use of L1, turn and talk activities, use of roles within student groups, interactive stations, Think-Pair-Share. The highest-rated classrooms often used multiple types of interaction and included peer interaction in addition to student-teacher interaction. Continuing to encourage and facilitate use of multiple forms of interaction, including with *both* teacher and peers, can help ensure EMLs are afforded access to opportunities to interact with peers and to practice different language skills with others.

Instruction in ELD Pullout/ELD Classrooms

To more clearly understand the details of ELD instruction, we examined ELD pullout/ELD standalone classrooms by feature (Table 11). Only one feature average fell below 2 among elementary ELD pullout classrooms—higher-order thinking.

Table 11: Average ratings of SIOP features among Elementary ELD Pullout and Secondary ELD Classrooms

Component	Feature	Average Rating		
		Elementary (n=36)	Secondary (n=25)	Overall (n=61)
	Overall Rating	**2.8**	**3.2**	**2.9**
Lesson Preparation	1. Content objectives	2.1	2.8	2.4
	2. Language objectives	2.1	2.7	2.3
	3. Content concepts	3.1	3.8	3.4
	4. Supplementary materials	3.2	3.3	3.2
	5. Adaptation of content	3.0	3.5	3.2
	6. Meaningful activities	3.0	3.2	3.1
Building Background	7. Concepts linked to background experiences	2.0	3.3	2.5
	8. Links with past learning	3.0	3.1	3.1
	9. Key vocabulary	2.9	3.3	3.1
Compre-hensible Input	10. Appropriate speech	3.4	3.8	3.6
	11. Clear explanation of tasks	3.0	3.8	3.4
	12. Variety of techniques	2.9	2.9	2.9
Strategies	13. Learning strategies	2.8	2.5	2.7
	14. Scaffolding techniques	2.7	3.6	3.1
	15. Higher order thinking	1.7	3.0	2.2
Interaction	16. Opportunities for interaction	2.4	2.7	2.5
	17. Grouping configuration	2.8	2.4	2.6
	18. Wait time	2.9	3.8	3.3
	19. L1 clarification	2.2	3.3	2.7
Practice/ Application	20. Materials and/or manipulatives	2.7	3.0	2.8
	21. Apply content and language knowledge	2.8	3.2	3.0
	22. Integrate all language skills	2.9	2.9	2.9
Lesson Delivery	23. Lesson supports content objectives	2.1	3.5	2.7
	24. Lesson supports language objectives	2.2	2.8	2.5
	25. Student engagement	3.4	3.2	3.3
	26. Pacing	3.3	3.6	3.4
Review and Assessment	27. Key vocabulary review	2.4	2.6	2.5
	28. Key content concepts review	2.6	3.0	2.8
	29. Feedback to students	3.4	3.3	3.4
	30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning	2.7	3.0	2.9

Features with average ratings of greater than 3.0 are considered areas of strength, and coded in green; features with average ratings of less than 2.0 are considered areas for growth, and coded in red.

Again, there are some clear areas of strength across contexts that stand out. Most of the lesson preparation features are consistently at an average rating above 3.0. Instructors were consistently building links with past learning, producing comprehensible input for students, supporting student engagement, pacing appropriately, and providing feedback to students.

At the elementary level, ELD pullout classes were rated lower overall on the inclusion of a variety of questions that promote higher-order thinking skills, with an average of 1.7. This finding suggests that ELD pullout classrooms at the elementary level need to ensure students are being asked to engage in higher-order thinking through the prompts posed to them during instruction.

Instruction in General Education and Mainstream Content Classrooms

We also wanted a broad general understanding of instruction for EML students in general education and mainstream content classes. Breakouts by these categories are provided in Table 12.

Table 12: Average ratings of SIOP features among general education and mainstream content classrooms

Component	Feature	Average Rating		
		Elem. General Education (n=184)	Secondary Mainstream Content (n=42)	Overall (n=226)
	Overall Rating	**2.8**	**2.6**	**2.7**
Lesson Preparation	1. Content objectives	2.5	2.7	2.5
	2. Language objectives	2.1	2.1	2.1
	3. Content concepts	3.7	3.4	3.6
	4. Supplementary materials	3.1	2.6	3.0
	5. Adaptation of content	2.5	2.2	2.4
	6. Meaningful activities	2.9	2.6	2.8
Building Background	7. Concepts linked to background experiences	1.9	2.6	2.0
	8. Links with past learning	3.0	2.6	2.9
	9. Key vocabulary	2.8	2.2	2.7
Compre-hensible Input	10. Appropriate speech	3.3	3.4	3.3
	11. Clear explanation of tasks	3.1	3.3	3.2
	12. Variety of techniques	2.9	2.6	2.8
Strategies	13. Learning strategies	3.0	2.4	2.8
	14. Scaffolding techniques	2.7	2.3	2.7
	15. Higher order thinking	2.4	2.8	2.4
Interaction	16. Opportunities for interaction	2.6	2.2	2.5
	17. Grouping configuration	2.7	1.9	2.5
	18. Wait time	3.0	3.2	3.0
	19. L1 clarification	2.2	2.5	2.2
Practice/ Application	20. Materials and/or manipulatives	2.7	2.2	2.6
	21. Apply content and language knowledge	2.8	2.6	2.7
	22. Integrate all language skills	2.8	2.4	2.7
Lesson Delivery	23. Lesson supports content objectives	2.6	3.1	2.7
	24. Lesson supports language objectives	2.2	2.2	2.2
	25. Student engagement	3.0	2.9	3.0
	26. Pacing	3.0	3.0	3.0
Review and Assessment	27. Key vocabulary review	2.6	2.1	2.5
	28. Key content concepts review	2.7	2.4	2.7
	29. Feedback to students	3.0	3.0	3.0
	30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning	2.6	2.6	2.6

Features with average ratings of greater than 3.0 are considered areas of strength, and coded in green; features with average ratings of less than 2.0 are considered areas for growth, and coded in red.

Across these contexts, we again see several consistent areas of strength. These include presenting appropriate content concepts, most of the features of the comprehensible input component, sufficient wait time, pacing, and feedback to students. At the elementary level, connecting concepts to background experiences is an area for growth, and at the secondary level, there was a relatively low rating for grouping configurations that support the language and content objectives.

While the overall average rating for secondary mainstream classrooms (2.6) is not an area of concern, mainstream content classes at the high school level have an average rating of 1.7, which indicates that growth is required in this context. Table 13 presents the breakdown of features across mainstream content classrooms.

Table 13: Average ratings of SIOP features among high school mainstream content classrooms (n=12)

Component	Feature	Mainstream content classes (n=12)
	Overall Rating	**1.7**
Lesson Preparation	1. Content objectives	2.3
	2. Language objectives	1.7
	3. Content concepts	2.8
	4. Supplementary materials	2.1
	5. Adaptation of content	1.2
	6. Meaningful activities	1.8
Building Background	7. Concepts linked to background experiences	1.1
	8. Links with past learning	1.2
	9. Key vocabulary	1.4
Compre-hensible Input	10. Appropriate speech	2.9
	11. Clear explanation of tasks	2.5
	12. Variety of techniques	1.8
Strategies	13. Learning strategies	1.0
	14. Scaffolding techniques	1.6
	15. Higher order thinking	1.5
Interaction	16. Opportunities for interaction	1.6
	17. Grouping configuration	1.1
	18. Wait time	1.8
	19. L1 clarification	2.2
Practice/ Application	20. Materials and/or manipulatives	1.5
	21. Apply content and language knowledge	1.6
	22. Integrate all language skills	1.4
Lesson Delivery	23. Lesson supports content objectives	2.0
	24. Lesson supports language objectives	0.9
	25. Student engagement	2.2
	26. Pacing	2.5
Review and Assessment	27. Key vocabulary review	1.2
	28. Key content concepts review	1.4
	29. Feedback to students	2.3
	30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning	1.3

Features with average ratings of greater than 3.0 are considered areas of strength, and coded in green; features with average ratings of less than 2.0 are considered areas for growth, and coded in red.

Particular components of concern include building background context for lessons, supporting learning strategies, and providing opportunities for practice and application.

Special School

Two observations were conducted at a Special School where special education services and specialized instructional settings are provided for secondary students. The first class was an ELD pullout setting in which students met individually with the instructor. The second was a science class. Both of these classes were rated between a 2.0 and a 3.0.[1]

These instructional settings rated well on some of the features associated with differentiated instruction that includes support for students with disabilities. Some of these well-rated features include use of supplementary materials, adaptation of content, meaningful activities, appropriate speech, clear explanation of tasks, a variety of techniques to make concepts clear, opportunities for interaction, providing wait time, using materials and/or manipulatives, lesson pacing, reviewing key content concepts, providing feedback to students, and assessing student comprehension.

These two classes were rated less well on some of the features associated with language supports, including incorporating language objectives, integrating all language skills, and supporting language objectives throughout lesson delivery. These classes were also rated less well on some features related to individualizing and personalizing instruction, including linking concepts to students' background experiences, linking with past learning, and providing opportunities for students to use learning strategies.

Program Focus: Two-way Immersion Programs

TWI programs fall under the dual language education umbrella and, as such, include bilingualism and biliteracy, high academic achievement, and sociocultural competence as the three main goals. In two-way immersion programs, in contrast with one-way immersion programs, there is a balance of speakers of the partner language and speakers of English who can serve as language models for each other. MCPS has a long history of one-way immersion programs, but the first two-way programs only started five years ago. Two additional programs were added the following year and a sixth program started in 2022-2023. Three veteran programs added fifth grade and will be graduating their first cohort of students in the 2022-2023 school year. Focus groups and classroom observations in the TWI programs took place in the school year 2021-2022 before the sixth program started.

Research has shown that, when carefully designed and implemented with fidelity, dual language programs benefit both EML students and their English-fluent peers, and lead to achievement (measured in English) that is similar to or higher than that of matched groups in English-only programs (Genesee et al., 2006; Steele et al., 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Given the additive nature of dual language education, EML students are provided the opportunity to acquire English at no cost to their home language (Hamayan et al., 2013).

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[1] Care was taken to ensure that our observations at this school were not overly intrusive to students. Due to the scheduling pattern at this school, our full-day observation consisted of two classrooms. We do not provide individual ratings for these classrooms as there are only two in the observation set and we want to ensure ratings cannot be matched with individual teachers.

Focus Groups

This analysis is based on seven focus groups conducted with TWI district administrators (one focus group), TWI school administrators (four focus groups), TWI classroom teachers (one focus group), and family members (1), as shown in Table 14 below. The family focus group had two participants, one of whom has students in the TWI program; the analysis in this section on TWI only refers to the responses of the family member with children in TWI. We employed a modified version of the focus group protocols, with questions revised to elicit information specific to TWI programs. Table 14 indicates the number of participants for each protocol, and the total number of participants, across the seven focus groups.

Table 14: TWI Focus Groups

Focus Group Type	Number of Participants
Protocol 1: Classroom Educators	5
Protocol 2: Administrators & Other Staff	15
Protocol 3: Students	n/a
Protocol 4: Family & Community Groups	3*
Total	23

*Only one of the three parents has a child in TWI; only the responses of this parent were included in this section on TWI.

TWI focus group participants spoke highly of the TWI program, while also noting areas where they are making necessary changes, and where they felt some additional changes were needed.

Focus group respondents largely reported that the TWI program is working well for MCPS students. One school administrator noted, "I think we serve EMLs really well," and noted students' abilities with academic Spanish. This administrator's colleagues in the same focus group similarly noted students' bilingual abilities, including translanguaging, and the benefits of being able to bridge the two languages within instructional contexts. School and district administrators also reported a number of efforts to engage and welcome families. Areas where growth is needed were identified throughout the focus groups as well, and will be discussed in sections below. Specifically, ways in which the program is working to engage and welcome TWI families will be discussed in the family engagement chapter (2.8).

Some focus group participants noted a need for greater recognition of TWI district-wide. One school-based administrator expressed a need for greater understanding of the "intricacies" of TWI programs, emphasizing the increased staffing needs, and another administrator noted that the addition of a TWI department at the district level was a step in the right direction, but that challenges remained. A teacher similarly said that "MCPS is ready for DL" but needed further guidance and sharing of lessons learned between schools, as well as outside learning from districts with more experience and opportunities to attend local conferences. There was a sense among focus group participants that progress is being made, but challenges exist, and that they'd like to see expansion of TWI within MCPS.

Language allocation

Focus group participants discussed the language allocation plan, which outlines the instructional minutes devoted to instruction in each of the two program languages by subject area, and the district approach to it. They mentioned that in the past there was not a district-wide document, and they were currently working on a new plan to provide consistency across campuses. For the 2021-22 school year,

they were using the plan in the *Elementary TWI Staff Handbook* (2021-2022). In this plan, all content areas are taught in the two languages in all grade levels on a week-to-week basis. The upcoming school year (2022-2023) is a transition year with some programs maintaining the current plan to teach all subjects in the program languages and others adopting a plan more in line with the district's new plan to alternate teaching the different content areas in different grade levels such that all areas are taught in both languages throughout the duration of the program. As reported by district administrators, the new plan will include Bridge lessons at the end of every unit for all the content areas. None of the language allocation plans reviewed by CAL included special subjects (e.g., music, art, physical education).

Focus groups with district administrators revealed that the new plan will not include language arts blocks, but rather language arts standards in both languages will be taught through the other core content areas (i.e., math, science, and social studies). One of the reasons for such a change was a shift in how they had been thinking about the different areas as silos to a more integrated cross-disciplinary approach.

School administrators' opinions on the new plan varied, with some citing the research and professional learning provided by the district as key to their support of the new plan to teach subjects in only one language at each grade level. One school administrator said that the research they received from the district TWI office indicated that the "biggest key" is the 50/50 split and grade-level expectations. An administrator from a different focus group similarly said that they previously believed that every content area should be taught in both languages "prior to our learning this year," saying that language arts is the only area in which they need to instruct in both languages and that "oracy is the most important thing." This administrator further emphasized the importance of bridging languages and having a foundation in both languages, saying that this is the reason for the shift in the model. Administrators in the same focus group shared that trying to do both languages for every content area had the unintended consequence of giving content areas other than language arts "the short end of the stick." Another participant in the same group noted that the change was also responsive to patterns of disengagement they notice among grades 3-5 students during instruction in their less comfortable language; they believe the new plan contributes to ensuring students "have to engage in every subject fully."

School administrators in another focus group defended their opinion to teach all subjects in both languages, citing the benefits of this approach in providing opportunities for bridging languages and translanguaging. This has led, in their view, to stronger teacher partnerships and an increase in dialogue among the teaching staff. One of them claimed, "it helps teachers see their students like whole children." Another said the ELD and Spanish language arts teachers provide support in this model to help content teachers teach language.

In the teacher focus group, teachers noted the benefits of students learning all subjects in both languages, citing students' progress in both languages. One teacher noted the difficulty they perceived students might encounter if a subject was only taught in one language, particularly for incoming students at older grades (e.g., grade 3) with no Spanish language skills, as well as for EMLs. One teacher noted the Spanish language development class that students will have, in which they'll be able to bridge; the teacher described this as a "happy medium," although "not enough of a solution." One of the teachers acknowledged the challenges of teaching in both languages, but said that there are "creative solutions" and that teaching all subjects in both languages allows students to "tap into their whole repertoire" and that this approach is "how you equal the playing field for all students."

Staffing

Regarding staffing, administrators from three focus groups reported a large number of Spanish-speaking teachers among their staff. One noted that more than half of the staff at their school speak Spanish. Another said that even many of their English teachers speak Spanish, and another noted that teachers have the freedom to plan in the language in which they are most comfortable. A district administrator reported "a lot of growth and improvement for our Spanish teachers," indicating a push to provide high-quality instruction in Spanish across the district. One school administrator echoed this progress: "MCPS recruitment continues to get better in finding us better candidates." Recruitment strategies for ensuring sufficient staffing of bilingual teachers, reported by participants, included recruiting overseas (e.g., Puerto Rico), and hiring bilingual interns with the goal of hiring them as staff following their internship. One school administrator said that the push for hiring bilingual educators meant that sometimes the hiring process was "more lenient with strong Spanish-speaking teachers."

This push toward increasing the number of qualified bilingual instructors, however, was reported as ongoing and at times still a struggle. A district administrator said that "TWI get first pick" for Spanish-speaking teachers, and that "all the schools are fighting for the same candidates." Administrators at the school level similarly reported this challenge on their end to ensure they are sufficiently staffed with Spanish-speaking bilingual educators, which has a direct impact on program planning and instructional practices. Administrators from one school reported that staffing allocations impacted their language allocation plan, because the availability of bilingual instructors changed from year to year. Even so, they listed a large number of bilingual staff, noting that "it's been a journey and takes some time to get there."

The availability of paraeducators was also a theme among TWI focus groups, impacting program planning and implementation. Administrators in one school said that the availability of bilingual paraeducators helped them to be able to provide instructional support in Spanish. In the classroom educators focus group, teachers reported that paraeducators help them with differentiation; however, availability of paraeducators remained a challenge, with two teachers reporting that the paraeducator working with them was assigned to five teachers, and one teacher noting that it was their first year working with a paraeducator.

Special education in TWI Programs

TWI focus group participants also mentioned the need for bilingual staff beyond teachers and paraeducators. In particular, they identified special education services as an area in need of growth given its current focus on English. A district administrator said that "IEPs are developed around English language development. This is an area that we have to get better at." A school administrator echoed this sentiment: "We're still very English-focused. You need to have special education educators. We implement IEPs in both language classrooms, but (they are) still provided through a monolingual lens (e.g., foundational skills)." Their colleague in the same focus group agreed, saying that all IEPs are written in English "through an English lens," and adding, "There's no best practices or guidance on how to provide those services in the two languages and differences between them. We are also measuring them in one language only. There's a lot of work that needs to be done. Goals must be written in both languages and measured in both languages." They did add that their school provides some Spanish reading intervention and tutoring after school, "but not a system like we have in English." Two parents in the family focus group similarly reported insufficient bilingual staffing to support special education services broadly, but also specifically within TWI programs. One indicated that they knew several

families of children with IEPs who do not feel that their children are well-supported, particularly in Spanish.

School-level administrators in three focus groups shared that they have bilingual staff working with students with disabilities, and that these staff are able to provide some bilingual support for students, albeit often in a limited capacity given the English emphasis within special education services. Positions in which they reported having bilingual staff supporting students with disabilities include special education staff, ELD instructors, counselors, speech pathologists, and paraeducators. In one focus group, school administrators shared that some of these bilingual staff are available to provide intervention and support in both English and Spanish. In another focus group, despite availability of bilingual support staff in areas other than special education, a school administrator noted that special education services are conducted solely in English, although some bilingual support from paraeducators is available within these contexts. They further noted that for some students, their English skills are rather strong, perhaps indicating a belief that English-only special education services are sufficient for some EMLs with disabilities in the TWI program.

A teacher in the TWI educator focus group indicated that special education services at their school are in fact supposed to be provided half in English and half in Spanish. However, despite this goal of bilingual special education services, they reported that the bilingual staff—an ELD teacher and a special educator—who provide these services are often pulled in other directions for responsibilities such as testing, so they are unable to provide the needed support.

School administrators in one focus group noted that there are students with severe socioemotional needs who are served through special education services, and they expressed a desire to see those students mainstreamed within TWI programs.

The need for more bilingual support staff was also expressed by two school administrators, in different focus groups, who expressed a desire for bilingual reading specialists, one noting that expertise in bilingual reading, including foundational skills and comprehension, would be an asset for their program. A parent at a TWI school expressed concern about the lack of a Spanish-speaking reading specialists in their children's school. One school administrator noted that they, along with colleagues, "fought for a TWI coach for next year" who is bilingual and has experience with the TWI program.

Professional learning

Participants reported robust past support and professional preparation with regards to TWI programming and implementation, but also reported a need for more preparation. School administrators in two focus groups noted good professional learning opportunities, one noting, "They do provide us a lot of PD," and the other noted some work done by a former consultant that was "robust" and impactful. Participating teachers noted many professional learning opportunities they've received, including the same opportunity with the consultant that was noted by the school administrator. Opportunities being explored for future professional learning include certificate programs for teachers. One district administrator said they would like to see a system put in place wherein teachers could take classes in teacher preparation programs and receive certifications.

At the same time, participants also expressed a desire for more (or different types of) of learning opportunities, either from a content perspective or with regard to the mode of delivery. Content suggested for future professional learning included assets-based education (1 school administrator);

language teaching strategies, e.g., comprehensible input in both languages (1 school administrator); translanguaging (1 teacher); and guidance on curriculum implementation and interventions in both languages (1 school administrator). Modes of delivery suggested by participants included ongoing support and opportunities for follow-up (2 school administrators, 1 teacher); modeling (1 teacher); external sources of professional learning, e.g., conferences and social media (1 teacher); and visits to other schools within the district (1 teacher). These content and delivery themes were reflected in one teacher's comments: "I feel like with a lot of the trainings, there is a lot of theory, but not so much what does that look like in the classroom?" They described some of the trainings as "too much," with little guidance on how to apply the learning.

Challenges to providing professional learning reported by participants included funding and availability of substitutes, as reported by two district administrators. One of the district administrators said, with regard to funding, "Every year the program grows and we need more funding… (The) budget for TWI needs to be increased as we increase." They also noted that funding for professional learning should be part of the local budget rather than Title III. One school administrator, though, noted funding as a strength in their program: "We've been provided with a large budget to be able to provide training and resources, planning time."

Resources

Regarding material resources, educators expressed concern about the availability of authentic instructional and assessment materials in Spanish. One teacher who shared about Spanish language resources conveyed a mixed picture, praising some of the authentic texts that reflect some students' home cultures, while expressing a need for more high-quality Spanish language curricular and assessment resources.

Secondary and post-secondary success

When asked about pathways for post-secondary success, some TWI focus group participants discussed a need to build a pathway for TWI students into secondary schools, one noting, "we are getting there." Two school administrators noted the plan for sixth-grade former TWI students to take two courses in Spanish—social studies and language/reading. A district administrator, as well as one school-level administrator, also reported that there is an in-process effort to build a pathway for TWI students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy, but also described the challenges for getting TWI students and EMLs the credits to earn the Seal, arguing that TWI students should have access to the accelerated pathway. According to ?, the challenges arise, in part, from the program being overseen by World Languages rather than TWI or EML administrators.

Survey

There were 55 respondents to the survey, or 7.7% of respondents in total, who indicated that they worked in or with a school with a TWI program. The table below (Table 15) provides some detail on beliefs of these respondents. Note that the table includes only respondents who indicated that they worked in or with a school with a TWI program.

Respondents were confident that the TWI schools were welcoming and supportive of Spanish-speaking families (93.33% agreed or strongly agreed) and welcoming and supportive of families who spoke languages other than Spanish or English (88.40% agreed or strongly agreed).

Educators recognized both the importance and the challenge of the aims of TWI programs, with 78.67% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it is important for TWI students to learn all subjects in both languages, and 85.43% agreeing or strongly agreeing that this is a challenge for TWI teachers.

Survey respondents indicate that cross-linguistic coordination is happening in TWI schools, with 75.49% agreeing or strongly agreeing that partner teachers meet frequently to coordinate instruction. This number goes down slightly when looking at collaboration between classroom teachers and support services teachers (59.32% agree or strongly agree). Almost 70% were confident that EML students from Spanish-speaking homes are provided support services in Spanish. This contrasts with the information gathered in focus groups.

Respondents were split on their assessments of family involvement for Spanish-speaking families. Only 59.52% felt that the voices of Spanish-speaking families were given equal weight to the voices of English-speaking families, with almost 15% indicating that they "strongly disagreed."

Slightly more than half of the respondents indicated that they were familiar with the WIDA Spanish language development standards (54.14% agree or strongly agree). Fewer than half felt that they could easily access materials in Spanish that meet their instructional needs (45.65% agree or strongly agree), or that they had access to Spanish language assessment materials (45.00% agree or strongly agree). Finally, only 35.76% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they had familiarity with the Common Core en español standards.

Table 15: Survey respondents' beliefs about TWI programs in MCPS

Thinking about TWI programs in MCPS, please rate the following statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average
Partner teachers meet frequently to coordinate instruction.	25.49%	50.00%	20.59%	3.92%	2.03
Classroom teachers and support services teachers meet frequently to coordinate instruction.	16.95%	42.37%	34.75%	5.93%	2.3
Emergent multilingual students from Spanish-speaking homes are provided support services in Spanish.	15.67%	53.73%	20.90%	9.70%	2.25
I can easily access materials in Spanish that meet my instructional needs.	7.97%	37.68%	40.58%	13.77%	2.6
I have access to assessment materials in Spanish.	7.86%	37.14%	38.57%	16.43%	2.64
My school welcomes and supports Spanish-speaking families.	38.33%	55.00%	5.56%	1.11%	1.69
The voices of Spanish-speaking families have equitable weight to the voices of English-speaking families.	20.24%	39.29%	25.60%	14.88%	2.35
My school welcomes and supports families who speak languages other than English and Spanish.	33.70%	54.70%	6.63%	4.97%	1.83
I am familiar with the Common Core en español standards.	7.95%	27.81%	44.37%	19.87%	2.76
I am familiar with the WIDA Spanish language development standards.	15.29%	38.85%	32.48%	13.38%	2.44
I think it is important for TWI students to learn all subjects in the two languages in every grade level.	32.00%	46.67%	16.00%	5.33%	1.95
I think offering all subjects in the two languages in every grade level is challenging for TWI teachers.	41.06%	44.37%	9.27%	5.30%	1.79

We also examined the subset of survey respondents who work in TWI programs that responded to the question on professional learning and effective TWI practices (

Table 16). Almost 65% noted that they had received some PD on these topics, with only 11% not having received any PD on these topics.

Table 16: Subset of survey respondents who work in TWI programs by the proportion who have received PD on effective TWI programmatic or instructional practices.

For the topics listed below, please indicate which have been covered in in-service professional development activities in which you've participated in the past five years.

	Yes, extended coverage	Yes, some coverage or mention	No	Don't know/ Not applicable	Weighted Average
Effective TWI programmatic and/or instructional practices	37.04%	27.78%	11.11%	24.07%	2.22

The 40 responses to the open-ended survey item on TWI programming themes included the benefits and positive views respondents have of TWI programs, as well as their desire to see the programs expanded. Respondents also acknowledged existing issues, particularly with regards to inequities between the languages, with respondents noting higher quantity and quality of English-speaking teachers and English-language materials and assessments.

Advocacy for expansion of TWI

The most reported theme in responses to the open-ended survey question on TWI program benefits and expansion (10 respondents) was a desire to see more TWI programs established. One stated, "I would like to see many more TWI programs offered across the county. All students should have the opportunity to become biliterate and bilingual. All students should be taught sociocultural competence as part of their schooling." An additional respondent said that the program should be expanded to middle and high school, and another shared a story of trying to refer a student to TWI but being told that there was not space.

The benefits of TWI programs were touted by five respondents, one noting, "I think students benefit from the TWI programs immensely," offering a qualification that these benefits sometimes take time to show. Another noted, "This program is about what is best for students learning two languages, not what is easiest for the adults."

Two respondents suggested that more information about TWI and its impacts should be shared with the MCPS community, one noting that more people should understand the value of the program and the other suggesting that data on program impact should be shared more broadly.

To the open-ended question on the inclusiveness of diverse students in TWI programs, three survey respondents commented about participation of different subgroups of students. One noted that SLIFE students are sometimes enrolled at TWI schools, adding, "I wonder about leveraging this to promote their growth." Another noted that non-Spanish-speaking EMLs can feel excluded within TWI programming, and stated that "non-Spanish-speaking newcomers should not be forced into dual-language or TWI programs just because some data point says they work."

Staffing and professional learning

Regarding educator assets and supports, four respondents commented on teacher qualifications, supports, and professional learning. One stated that ELD and classroom teachers need to meet before the school year starts to align lessons, and that there needs to be more teacher support in ELA and math. Another respondent noted the lack of interventions or special education services in Spanish. A specials teacher stated that they would like more guidance and direction around Spanish instruction in their area. Two respondents discussed teacher quality, one noting that "MCPS is called to properly staff schools with these programs with qualified teachers and with teachers with the right mind/belief set to engage in this work." The other stated that Spanish-speaking teachers are being hired with lower qualifications due to the need for Spanish-speaking educators in the program, and expressed fear about students' trajectories with acquiring biliteracy, adding, "It's fine to teach two languages, but the teachers need to be top-notch in both languages and better vetted for linguistic ability in the foreign language."

Program implementation

Respondents commented on a number of issues related to the methods and model of TWI programming, including the curriculum, materials, instructional supports, assessment, language allocation plan, scheduling, and class sizes.

One respondent expressed issues with the curriculum: "The new English curriculum for EML students in level 1 does not emphasize the building blocks of a traditional ESOL curriculum; therefore, students are struggling at this level. It assumes that students are entering with the necessary prior education to be able to understand the complexities of literature." They go on to discuss the role of interruptions and differences in students' prior educational experiences and the difficulties they encounter with reading literature. Regarding level 2 students, they said, "The level 2 students who have completed our traditional level 1 curriculum are ready to tackle this curriculum, but with modifications." They also critique the reading excerpts, saying they do not "give the students the joy of reading a text where they can follow the story from beginning to end."

Regarding instruction and materials, one respondent noted additional support being needed in TWI classrooms to help students access the curriculum. Two respondents reported inequities in materials, noting that more instructional materials are provided in English, and that what is available in Spanish is often created by teachers. Another respondent noted issues with translation, saying that "a lot of times, translation made during class doesn't perfectly translate the instructional concepts or questions from students due to cultural differences between two languages," suggesting that "it is better to modify materials and curriculum for ELLs in English, unless there is a perfectly-established bilingual system."

Balance of the two program languages was raised by three respondents. One said that their model for next year is still being developed, but that they "will not be teaching all subjects in both languages at the intermediate grades (3/4)." Another respondent advocated for teaching all subjects in both languages: "Offering all subjects in the two languages at every grade level is challenging but not impossible. It takes VERY STRONG leadership, a well-articulated plan of support AND high-quality authentic materials in both languages." Another respondent expressed a desire to have literacy taught in both languages simultaneously.

The challenge of English-focused assessment practices was raised by two survey respondents. One stated, "Assessment for dual language learners is a challenge. We have access to monolingual

instruments that do not consider the influence of the other language. When it comes to assessment, we rely on two different monolingual instruments and try to make sense of the data. Districtwide MUST change some of the guidelines and cut up scores." The other respondent said, "We (TWI programs) sometimes feel like the forgotten stepchildren because decisions are made for the county as a whole without regard to how the decisions will affect the TWI programs. For example, evidence of learning measures are almost always given in English. Early Entrance to Kindergarten assessment is only offered in English, even though we have had many applicants whose first language is not English who may have been deemed eligible if the assessment had been given in Spanish. These types of policies seem to reinforce the narrative of English is the preferred language, rather than on equal footing with Spanish. I feel like we have a long way to go in terms of becoming an antiracist and culturally responsive school system. TWI programs need to expand and be considered when decisions are made about assessments, achievement, instruction, etc."

Regarding coursework and scheduling, one respondent suggested offering Spanish literacy as a special, saying that this "would build students' reading skills and appreciation of their home language and culture." Another noted the challenges of sufficiently addressing the necessary content in the half day allocated within their school for each language, stating, "It is very difficult to complete everything when you have only half a day in one language." Another cited issues with block scheduling within TWI, saying that "TWI programs should not be restricted to the traditional 'block' schedules of other programs." Another noted challenges with class size: "The TWI classrooms at my school are very large and make teaching more challenging for their teachers."

Observations

School visits to all five campuses with a TWI elementary program in the 2021-2022 school year took place in late May and early June of 2022 before the new language and content allocation plan was in place. The purpose of the visits was to conduct 20-30 minute observations to gather data on instructional practices in the TWI classrooms. Forty-eight classroom observations were scheduled by the district so that every grade level at every campus with a TWI program could be observed during Spanish and English instruction. Due to unforeseeable circumstances (field trips, teacher absences, testing, etc.), the total number of observations conducted was 41. There were 22 conducted during Spanish instruction and 19 during English instruction. Table 17 summarizes these observations. To conduct classroom observations in TWI schools, we used a CAL-designed dual language classroom protocol aligned with the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (see Appendix F for a copy of the protocol). It is important to note that classroom observations represent a snapshot of a subset of classrooms that provides general trends.

While there was variation across and within schools in the practices observed, a focus on students' socioemotional well-being, the embracing and celebration of bilingualism and cultural diversity, and the acceptance of language varieties were evident in the vast majority of the classrooms visited. This attention to the third pillar of dual language education, sociocultural competence, by teachers engaging in practices that provided students with opportunities to build or enhance their background around a topic and connect what students were learning with students' own experiences (e.g., using popular songs and poems) was observed rather widely.

Table 17: TWI classroom observations by language of instruction

Schools	Spanish Instruction	English Instruction	Total
1	5	5	10

2	4	4	8
3	4	3	7
4	4	3	7
5	5	4	9
Total	22	19	41

An important aspect of TWI instruction includes fidelity to the language allocation model and, in particular, attention to language use by the teacher and the students. Classroom visits revealed that the majority of teachers primarily used the target language during Spanish and English language instruction showing fidelity to the model. One notable exception was one teacher who engaged in translating back and forth during most of the 30 minutes of the observation, a practice that has been found to be ineffective with EMLs (Howard et al., 2018). A few bilingual teachers were observed engaging in translanguaging practices and encouraging students to use their whole linguistic repertoire, a practice that when intentionally planned has been found to be effective for EMLs (García et al., 2016).

There was some variation across schools in terms of the language that students were using during classroom observations. In general, students primarily used English during English instruction, but they used both English and Spanish during Spanish instruction. Some exceptions to the use of English by students during English language instruction were encountered primarily in two schools that appeared to have a larger number of newcomer Spanish-speaking students. Regarding the language used during Spanish language instruction, there were some general differences between Spanish- and English-dominant students in that the former tended to use Spanish to engage with the content and English mainly for social interaction, while English-dominant students tended to use English also for engaging with the content.

The language instruction observed was, for the most part, attentive to the language in question (e.g., lots of work at the syllable level in K-1 Spanish language arts classrooms) and accepting of different language varieties (e.g., regionalisms). Regarding the integration of language and content, the use of sheltered instructional strategies to make the content in both program languages accessible to all students and provide them with the support they need for language production represents well documented, current best research practices identified in the literature on effective practices with EMLs (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2017; Larsen-Freeman & Tedick, 2016). There was a lot of evidence of the use of sheltered instructional strategies to facilitate access to content by teachers in the classrooms visited. Among the strategies observed were the use of visual aids, gestures and movement, graphic organizers, modeling using the whiteboard, and breaking down information into smaller chunks. Much less common, however, were the use of language-embedded supports for sustained language use by students who needed them to productively engage with the content orally or in writing. The lack of language supports was particularly evident in upper elementary classrooms during Spanish instruction, where many students unable to participate in the discussion in Spanish resorted to doing so in English.

Many of the lessons included language and content objectives. This was particulary evident in language arts lessons in the early grades. In some classrooms, teachers were observed going over the objectives with students. Moreover, in some classrooms, in two of the schools in particular, students seemed used to language education terminology such as language domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and metalanguage, as well as the three pillars of dual language education. Instruction that focused on

language features was observed in some classrooms, especially during language arts (e.g., sílaba tónica, digraphs, alliteration, agentive suffixes, conjunctions). Academic vocabulary was also highlighted in many classrooms in content areas other than language arts (math, science, and social studies). However, with a few exceptions, there was very little focus on language beyond the word level and few supports provided for students to be able to produce language at the sentence level and beyond. As a result, as mentioned earlier, students who lacked the proficiency level in the target language to engage in sustained language use were observed resorting to their dominant language. This phenomenon was observed during both Spanish and English instruction, but it was more common during Spanish instruction, especially at the upper elementary grades.

While color-coded bilingual anchor charts and cognate word walls were present in many classrooms and many teachers and some students were observed making spontaneous connections between the two languages (primarily at the word level to identify cognate words), there was little intentional connection of the two languages to point out similarities or differences between them in the instruction observed. Likewise, only a few teachers, most of whom taught in both languages, were observed building on what students had learned during instruction in the other language.

In many classrooms there was whole-group instruction by the teacher with students on the carpet and the teacher eliciting responses from individual students and providing feedback. This was followed by students going back to their desks to apply the concepts covered or put into practice the task explained by the teacher. In a few classrooms, teachers used strategies such as "talking sticks" to call on students or purposefully called on individual students, but in most classrooms, students volunteered to participate in the whole-group discussion. Some teachers also engaged students in turn and talk interaction while on the carpet, but without supports or intentional groupings, some students were unable to complete the task in the target language. This was particularly the case with English-dominant students during Spanish language instruction. During the application phase, for the most part, students worked independently to complete a task (typically a worksheet or advance organizer) with the teacher walking around to check on their work and providing assistance as needed. Very few instances of structured peer-to-peer interaction and purposeful groupings to maximize opportunities for students to benefit from peer models were observed in the classrooms visited. Even in cases in which students were working in centers, the interaction that took place was primarily spontaneous and it lacked the language supports that some students could have benefited from to be able to engage in sustained language use in the target language.

Teachers used a variety of techniques to check for students' understanding and provide feedback. They noted whether students were attentive and comprehending during whole-group discussions, circulated around the classroom when students were engaged in independent practice, and listened in during peer interactions. Additionally, they used a variety of instructional strategies in their lessons to aid students with comprehension of oral and written language, such as pictures, manipulatives, Total Physical Response, dramatization, and wait time. Teachers allocated time for students to think and sometimes write down their ideas before expecting oral production, provided graphic organizers to help students break down the input or aid them with writing a response to what they had learned, modeled tasks, and provided clear, step-by-step directions which they projected on the white board. For the most part, teachers also engaged in practices that provided students opportunities to build or enhance their background around a topic and connect what students were learning with students' own experiences.

The productive use of technology by teachers (e.g., white board, audiovisual instructional materials) was evident in most classrooms. Teachers used the whiteboard to support students in following instruction or in understanding lesson expectations by projecting lesson objectives, task instructions, texts, and other instructional materials. Some teachers also used videos to build background knowledge or illustrate concepts. The use of technology by students was much less evident, understandably so, as the tasks in which they were engaged usually did not require it. The few instances in which we observed students using Chromebooks were either for taking an assessment or doing a presentation.

Findings

Are current classroom methods and models tailored to suit the needs of the current EML population?

Our analysis of instruction shows that, for the most part, instructional techniques within individual classrooms are generally appropriate for EML students, with some variation, and some exceptions to this general trend.

Overall, we find that instruction in MCPS classrooms is responsive to the needs of EML students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with average ratings of 2.8 (elementary school), 3.1 (middle school), and 2.3 (high school). The SIOP rating scale runs from 0-4, with ratings higher than 3.0 considered areas of strength and ratings lower than 2.0 considered areas for growth.

We disaggregated our data across contexts. We found that, in particular, middle school instruction is an area of strength, with average classroom ratings above 3.0 overall. Ratings are also above 3.0 for ELD pullout/ELD classes, mainstream content classes, and METS in middle school. We also see that ELD classes in secondary schools (middle and high school combined) stand above 3.0. METS classes overall have a rating of greater than 3.0, as do secondary math classes.

An area for growth is high school mainstream content classes, with an average classroom rating of 1.7.

We saw several features of instruction that were consistently observed across classrooms, with average ratings of greater than 3.0. These included presenting content concepts appropriate for the age and background levels of students, delivering speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels, providing clear explanations of academic tasks, and lesson pacing. We also saw that classrooms consistently provided frequent opportunities for students to interact with the teacher and each other, with few ratings of 0 on this feature. We did not see any features of instruction that were consistently not observed across all contexts.

As mentioned above, looking at instruction in ELD pullout/ELD classrooms, secondary ELD classrooms were a particular area of strength. Across both elementary and secondary ELD pullout/ELD classrooms, we observed strong average ratings for most features of lesson preparation, as well as for building links with past learning, providing comprehensible input for students, supporting student engagement, pacing appropriately, and providing feedback to students. We did note that at the elementary level, promoting higher-order thinking skills was an area for growth in ELD pullout.

One limitation of our observational method is that schools selected classrooms for our observers to visit (within some pre-provided parameters), so schools may have selected their most proficient instructors.

As is appropriate for a school system of its size and diversity, MCPS provides a broad range of program models for EML students. In the elementary school setting, MCPS documentation lays out five distinct models that schools may use, including plug-in/push-in ELD, where an ELD teacher is present to support EML students in a general education classroom; pullout ELD, where students work with an ELD instructor in standalone classrooms; the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model, which can be used in either pullout or general education contexts; two-way immersion; and hybrid models, in which schools may use more than one of these models.

While there is flexibility in the models that schools use, we were not able to find evidence of systematic monitoring or accountability measures that were in place to confirm that schools had appropriately selected and implemented particular models.

At the secondary school level, fidelity to the appropriate instructional model is achieved via course pathways aligned with students' EML levels. While some flexibility is in place for students at WIDA level 3, for the most part, instructional pathways are fixed. In middle school, students participate in ELD classes. In high school, students participate in ELD classes, and students at lower ELP levels participate in sheltered content classes. A particular highlight is that high school ELD classes are aligned to state ELA standards, and so can count toward graduation credits (although students may only count two sheltered courses toward graduation credit).

As is the case with elementary schools, while secondary schools report student schedules back to DELME, there are typically no system-level analyses that would flag any lack of fidelity to the schedule guidance.

Are current methods and models appropriate within TWI programs?

MCPS recent efforts to strengthen and expand its TWI programs are commendable, especially considering that TWI programs are still in their infancy. Following the 2019 internal evaluation of its TWI programs and the move of TWI to the DELME office in SY 2020-2021, the district embarked on a number of efforts to provide a unified vision and more consistency to the program structure and implementation across its campuses. These efforts have been captured in documents such as the TWI Program Description and the Elementary TWI Staff Handbook. Because it is a work in progress, focus groups and school observation data collected in 2021-2022 provide some evidence of the state of flux in which TWI programs stand at this moment in time. Focus group data and the FY23 Language Allocation Plan by School document provide further evidence of the district's continued efforts towards consistency while allowing some differences based on specific needs and advocacy from school leadership.

As MCPS moves towards finalizing the new language allocation plan for its TWI program, a few observations are in order. The proposed plan, as it has been described by district administrators in focus groups, maintains a 50/50 split by language when it comes to the core content areas, but, like previous plans, it does not include special subjects. Including specials in the plan would assure that the model is truly 50/50. Furthermore, the new plan differs from previous ones in some important ways. Perhaps the most important is the fact that it will not include language arts blocks, but rather language arts standards will be taught through the other core content areas following an integrated cross-disciplinary approach. While the use of thematic, cross-disciplinary learning approaches has been found to be effective for EML students (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017), incorporating them into current standards-based curricula, which often segregate instruction and

learning by subject matter, can create challenges for program leaders and teachers (Howard et al., 2018).

Another difference in the new plan is the fact that all core content subjects will no longer be taught in both languages. While this change adheres to the guiding principles of dual language education, many focus group participants, particularly the teachers, strongly believed that it was important for TWI students, and in particular EMLs, to learn all subjects in the two languages in every grade level. Similarly, more than three-quarters of the TWI educators who took the survey agreed that it is important for students to learn in both languages in every grade level. Some schools will already be implementing this feature of the plan in the 2022-2023 school year and will be able to gain experience with it, but it will be critical for the district and school leadership to support teachers during this transition.

Regarding fidelity to the language allocation plan, classroom observations showed that for the most part teachers adhered to the language allocation plan, using the target language during instruction with a few teachers translanguaging at times. There was a noted exception of one teacher who constantly engaged in translation practices. As far as instructional methods go, there was a lot of evidence of the use of sheltering strategies to facilitate access to content by teachers in the classrooms visited, including the productive use of technology. Language-embedded supports were missing in many classrooms, however, particularly in the upper elementary grades during Spanish language instruction. Similarly, while there was evidence of bilingual anchor charts in many classrooms, there was little intentional connection of the two languages to point out similarities or differences between them in the instruction observed. Finally, teachers made use of a variety of techniques to check for students' understanding and provide feedback. They also allocated time for students to think about their ideas before expecting oral production.

Specifically, how are content areas well-supported for EML students by the current methods, models, and curriculum areas, and are there grade-level/content areas that could use additional support?

Examining both elementary general education and secondary mainstream content classes, the average rating on our observational scale (ranging from 0-4) was 2.7 overall, with average ratings of 2.8 in elementary settings and 2.6 in secondary settings.

Considering general education and mainstream content classrooms, we again saw several areas of strength across all school types. These include presenting appropriate content concepts, most of the features of comprehensible input, sufficient wait time, appropriate pacing, and feedback to students. We note two areas for growth here. At the elementary level, average ratings for connecting concepts to background experiences falls below 2.0, and at the secondary level, grouping configurations that support the language and content objectives falls below 2.0.

Content classes at the middle school level were an area of strength, with average ratings of 3.0, as were secondary math classes, with average ratings of 3.1.

As mentioned above, instruction in secondary mainstream content classrooms was an area of growth, with an average rating of 1.7 across these classrooms. In particular, we observed that educators in these contexts were not consistently building background for lessons, incorporating strategies like scaffolding, creating opportunities for higher-order thinking skills, or providing sufficient opportunities for practice and application of the lessons.

In terms of program models, secondary program models are managed via recommended scheduling guides. At the secondary level, EML students take ELD classes aligned to the state ELA standards. This practice allows students to stay with grade-level ELA content, and supports students' ability to meet graduation requirements without adding courses to students' schedules.

At the high school level, students at ELP levels 1 and 2 take sheltered content area classes in science, social studies, and math. At present, work to align sheltered science and sheltered social studies to grade-level standards is underway.

At the middle school level, EML students at all ELP levels take mainstream math, science, and social studies. One area of concern is the extent to which content area teachers have training to scaffold these classes, especially for students at ELP levels 1 and 2. Scheduling guidelines for students at ELP 1 recommend an ELD co-teaching model in math, but not in other content areas.

We observed concern from research participants that some curriculum was too challenging for secondary students. Participants also observed that more diverse representations across the curriculum would better reflect and support EML students; participants particularly mentioned StudySync.

Do models ensure that EML students have ample opportunity to engage with their peers?

Ensuring that EML students are not segregated from their fluent English-speaking peers is critical for both social and linguistic purposes.

Arias (2007) lays out the ugly history of school segregation for Latino/a students, which historically used language as a justification for segregated models of schooling: "'Mexican schools' were maintained on the grounds that the separation was beneficial to Mexican American children, separating them from Anglo students in order to address their language needs. It was said that Mexican children had a language handicap, needed to learn English and be Americanized before mixing with Anglos." (Arias 2007, p.1). Segregation for Latino/a and EML students can occur at multiple levels including at the district level, the school level, and also at a level within a school if EML students are placed predominantly in isolated classrooms (Carnock & Ege, 2015). The US Department of Education's Office for English Language Acquisition, citing Gandara and Orfield (2010), notes that "research shows that when placed at length in segregated settings, ELs may be at risk for school failure, delayed graduation, and negative academic self-concepts (OELA 2017, Ch.5, p.1).

In addition to concerns around segregation, peer interaction is also important for language acquisition. Language acquisition experts refer to "comprehensible input" as the needed exposure to language that is slightly more advanced than the current level of the student (Krashen, 1982). Students need input that they can understand, and also infer new understandings from, in order to progress in language acquisition. According to the US Department of Education's Practice Guide *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*, "Students in heterogenous (ELP ability) groups are likely to benefit from hearing opinions or oral language expressions from students at different proficiency levels" (Baker et al., 2014, p.62).

At the elementary school level, models include push-in and TWI instruction in which EML and non-EML students are instructed in the same setting. They also include pull-out ELD instruction, in which elementary EML students are instructed in standalone settings. While we do not see any evidence of

concern around the amount of pull-out programming, we note that one area in which MCPS does not collect data is around the numbers of schools which are implementing each of these models.

We find that MCPS is attentive to and has implemented programs in which EML students experience minimal within-school segregation from fluent-English peers at the secondary level.

The secondary education model provides sheltered ELD classes for EML students at ELP levels through 2.9, and for some students in levels 3.0 – 3.9. Please see Chapter 2.1 of this report for detail on the number of students at each ELP level, by school type.

In middle school, 38% of EML students fall between ELP levels 1.0 and 2.9, and 43% of EML students are between levels 3.0 and 3.9. In high school, 53% of EML students fall between ELP levels 1.0 and 2.9, and 35% of EML students are between levels 3.0 and 3.9.

In the secondary model, students at lower levels of ELP receive standalone ELA/ELD courses but are otherwise scheduled in classes with fluent-English peers. MCPS's secondary model has a "program-related, educational justification" (OELA, 2017, Ch.5, p.1) for these standalone courses, with clear guidelines for when students should exit sheltered ELD classes. Furthermore, MCPS' efforts to assure standards alignment with ELA standards support students' on-grade learning in language arts.

Student participants in focus groups expressed that they prefer to be in mainstream/general education classrooms rather than standalone ELD classes. Students also highlighted challenges in access to some curricular and extra-curricular activities.

One challenge which emerges from this model is ensuring that students are adequately supported to access challenging instruction and curriculum in English. In focus groups, we observed concern by educators and students that classroom work was overly challenging for students and that this led to disengagement. We also received feedback that more diverse representation across the curriculum would be a welcome support for student engagement; educators expressed specific concerns with StudySync and its lack of such representation.

Our classroom observation instrument has a component directly related to opportunities for interaction in the classroom. This feature was observed to be implemented across classrooms. There were very few instances in which classrooms were rated "0" on this feature. One instructional context that deviates from this trend is mainstream classrooms in high school. We find that opportunities for interaction is an area for growth in this context.

Our TWI classroom observation explicitly attended to peer engagement. Our data show that while some teachers engaged students in turn-and-talk interactions or had them work in centers, very few instances of structured peer-to-peer interaction or purposeful groupings to maximize opportunities for students to benefit from peer models were observed in the classrooms visited.

Are EML students afforded the opportunity to access curricular and extracurricular activities, comparable to their peers, such as access to the arts, technology, and physical education?

We find evidence from our analysis of recommended schedules and from classroom observations that EML students are included in non-core curricular classes, such as arts, technology, and physical education (specials).

One observation from our analyses of recommended schedules is that students at ELP level 3 in middle and high school do not have a world languages class on the recommended schedule.

Students in focus groups expressed concerns about inclusion in afterschool activities, particularly activities that conflict with paid or caregiving work. Students also observed that some sporting opportunities were not available for older students as they have aged out of eligibility.

Are staffing models and structures appropriate to support EML students and student growth? How are schools translating their staffing allocations into individualized programs of instruction?

Staffing ratios for ELD instructors are based on students' ELP levels, however, ELP levels are not known until the results of the prior year's ACCESS testing are available. This represents an area of challenge for schools, as they often are not able to have a clear picture of the staff required until close to the onset of the new school year.

Results from our engagements with educators underscore that educators feel that additional resources are needed. In particular, educators spoke to the need for dedicated time for co-planning, as well as the need for more bilingual staff, particularly more bilingual counselors.

Our examination of recommended schedules for secondary pathways indicates that for content classes in middle school and for non-sheltered (i.e., mainstream) content classes for students at higher ELP levels in high school, ELD instructor support is not available to support content learning.

Are staffing models and structures appropriate within TWI programs?

One of the largest factors impacting staffing for TWI programs is the availability of qualified bilingual educators. Focus group participants conveyed an overall shared sense of the importance of bilingual educators and reported efforts to ensure staffing was appropriate for TWI. They also shared areas for growth. In general, focus group participants reported that the district had made a lot of progress in the hiring of qualified bilingual TWI teachers and paraeducators. They noted, however, that the process had been slow and that there was a need for more support staff such as reading specialists, special education teachers, and paraeducators to help with differentiated instruction.

Regarding professional learning opportunities for TWI teachers, the document with the TWI professional learning time portrays a five-year plan (2017-2022) that includes PD on topics such as promoting academic language and literacy in Spanish and biliteracy instruction, job-embedded coaching, PLCs, and opportunities for conference attendance. The various stakeholders participating in TWI focus groups agreed that there had been many opportunities in the past on a variety of topics specific to TWI. District administrators reported new opportunities being explored, such as certificate programs for teachers. At the same time, there was a sense among focus group respondents that more preparation may be needed to support pedagogical language knowledge, bilingual reading expertise, and guidance on translanguaging pedagogical practices. Classroom observation data corroborate the need for improvement in these particular areas.

Regarding material resources, some educators expressed concern about the availability of authentic instructional and assessment materials in Spanish, in both focus groups and surveys. Current MCPS practices for selection of classroom literature include rigorous evaluation and selection processes. MCPS staff explained that these processes had a protective purpose, serving as a bulwark against efforts to apply ad hoc censorship to classroom materials, as has been seen in other school districts. Nonetheless,

this process is a bottleneck to the availability of Spanish language materials, as there are not sufficient Spanish-proficient staff who can devote time to the evaluation of Spanish language materials.

Finally, MCPS has added a new elementary program in 2022-2023 and is planning on offering a pathway into middle school to all TWI students who wish to continue in the program beyond fifth grade. Currently only one of the elementary programs offers a continuation of the TWI program into middle school and there are no high schools with a TWI program. Adding new TWI programs will provide much-needed opportunities for the many EML students in the district who currently do not have the option to maintain and continue to develop their home languages in their neighborhood schools. As MCPS embarks on the expansion of the program, it is imperative that it continues its efforts towards consistency and fidelity to the model. This means hiring qualified bilingual staff, and streamlining the process of acquiring resources in Spanish, as research has found that the higher the quality of implementation and the longer the duration of the program, the stronger the results of dual language over English-only instruction for EML students (Genesee et al., 2006; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). Thus, it is critical that the expansion of the program occurs in tandem with a focus on developing a consistent, sustained TWI program, ideally one with a preK-12 pathway.

Are staff members who are responsible for ELD programs sufficiently supported? Is their role diluted with too many responsibilities?

Please see Chapter 4 for further detail on the need for dedicated staff to coordinate administrative work and activities across ELD instructors, especially at the middle and elementary school levels.

Recommendations

2.1. Increase support from MCPS central office to elementary schools to ensure that appropriate program models are in place in elementary schools.
- While we did not find evidence that schools are not implementing appropriate models, we recommend increasing accountability to ensure that all schools are appropriately implementing MCPS's program models in elementary schools.
- MCPS central office should consider periodic and regular reviews of samples of elementary schools to confirm that schools are implementing program models appropriately. Appropriate resources should be provided to ensure that this can be executed effectively.

2.2. Increase support from MCPS central office to secondary schools to ensure that EML students are being appropriately scheduled.
- Institute a scheduling review process and ensure that processes are in place to reschedule any students who are not in appropriate classes. Ensure that adequate staffing resources are available to support this effort.
- Create an accountability feedback loop to ensure that schools are staffed to support recommended levels of ELD support.

2.3. At the secondary level, continue efforts to align sheltered classes in core content areas (science, social studies, and math) to grade-level standards so that students can receive graduation credits from these classes.

2.4. To support a model in which EML students are instructed in mainstream classes in secondary schools, increase ELD instructional supports in mainstream content classes in middle and high school.

- Provide support from qualified ELD instructors in middle and high school mainstream content classes.
- Ensure that mainstream content educators receive regular opportunities to engage in PD around instructional practices for EML students.

2.5. Engage content area educators to enhance diverse cultural connections in content area curricula.

2.6. Ensure that content area educators in non-core curriculum areas (e.g. arts, music, physical education) receive support on instructional methods for EML students.

Recommendations: Two-Way Immersion Programs

There are many promising practices that MCPS and school staff can build on, as well as some areas for growth that, if pursued, would strengthen its TWI program and enhanced its ability to achieve its goals of educating bilingual, biliterate and socio-culturally competent individuals who are college and career ready. Recommendations for the improvement of the TWI program are described below under the pertinent strand of the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard et al., 2018):

2.7. Enhance TWI program structures

- Continue the efforts towards achieving consistency across elementary school campuses and clearly communicate those efforts and the rationale behind them to the various stakeholders.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are made available in order to incorporate the language arts standards into the curriculum of the other three core content areas and teachers have received training around the new language and content allocation plan and have a good understanding of how to execute it with fidelity before implementation begins.
- Monitor the implementation of the new language and content allocation plan to ascertain that foundational language and literacy skills in the two languages are being taught and that students have the opportunity to engage with literary and informational texts in all content areas.
- Include specials in the language allocation plan to ensure that 50% of total instructional time is facilitated in Spanish.
- Continue the progressive expansion of the program by adding elementary programs, continuing to expand into middle schools and eventually offering a PreK-12 pathway for TWI students

2.8. Enhance TWI Instruction:

- Provide carefully planned and structured opportunities for students to engage in extended oral discourse with peers in pairs or small groups strategically created in such a way that students must work interdependently, with individual and group accountability for all group members and social equity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).
- Carefully consider the language demands of academic content during lesson preparation and incorporate differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use.

- Seek opportunities to bring the two program languages together to point out similarities and differences between them at different dimensions of language (sound/letter, word/phrase, sentence, and discourse) to promote cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in EML students in all content areas. This practice will be even more important when the new language allocation plan starts being implemented and content areas are taught in one program language only by grade level and should take place in addition to end of the unit Bridge lessons

2.9. Enhance staff quality and professional development in TWI programs

- Continue to provide professional learning opportunities for TWI staff that focuses on moving away from approaching instruction, assessments, and support services through a monolingual lens, and toward adopting a holistic approach to language and literacy development that considers students' whole linguistic repertoires.

- Provide PD and job-embedded coaching to TWI teachers and support staff that focuses on purposefully enacting opportunities for the development of language and literacy in and through teaching the core curricular content to enhance their pedagogical language knowledge (Galguera, 2011) with an emphasis on the following areas:
  - Promoting structured peer-to-peer interaction that incorporates differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use;
  - Fostering cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in EML students to facilitate the use of their whole linguistic repertoire; and
  - Translanguaging practices at different grade levels (an area teachers identified as needed)

2.10.   Enhance TWI support and resources

- Continue efforts to hire bilingual staff including support staff (e.g., special education educators, reading specialists) who can provide services in both languages, including reviewing Spanish language materials. In particular, research on the education of EMLs has shown that EMLs who receive instruction in their native language and English should receive reading interventions in their native language (National Academies, 2017). One way to contribute to these efforts is to consider hiring teachers from Spanish-speaking countries and providing them with the support system needed to acclimate to the U.S. educational system and MCPS culture.
- Continue to provide funding for TWI programs that is commensurate with the program's vertical and horizontal growth. Ensuring that adequate human and material resources are in place (including in the partner language) before adding more programs will be critical to the continued success of the program and its expansion into middle school and beyond.

3. Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students

Summary of Recommendations

3.1 Continue to strengthen and expand antiracism and antibias work in MCPS by explicitly including attention to anti-Latino/a bias and to linguistic bias.

3.2 Strengthen this antibias position by ensuring educators have access to professional learning opportunities that focus on the assets of EML students, and to the deep connections between students' linguistic repertoires and their identities.

3.3 Offer Spanish for Spanish Speakers Level 3 as an Honors-level class.

3.4 Expand multilingual library resources and ensure that there are sufficient multilingual staff allocated to the review of titles in languages other than English.

3.5 Continue to monitor discipline disparities. Identify if there are particular schools in which Latino/a or EML students are more likely to experience negative disciplinary consequences, and target these schools for additional support.

3.6 Continue protective socioemotional interventions to support decreases in discipline disparities.

3.7 Continue the work to diversify the educator pool. Monitor recruitment, retention, and promotion of multilingual and Latino/a staff.

3.8 Carefully continue to grow TWI programs, taking into account the need for consistent program structure, enhanced instruction, professional learning, and support and resources as outlined in Chapter 2.

Background

For many years, researchers have stressed the need to bring an assets-based approach to multilingual and multicultural students. These approaches typically focus on the strengths and resiliencies that students bring to school, value students' multiple complex identities, and stand against so-called deficit approaches which focus on what students cannot do. In contrast to deficit perspectives, we understand assets-based perspectives to be culturally sensitive and culturally sustaining, taking a respectful and celebratory stance toward students' linguistic and cultural identities, with an eye toward nurturing students' strengths.

We agree with Dr. Geneva Gay's view of a culturally-sensitive school environment:

> *Research on effective schools has consistently shown that students are more successful when they are engaged in a positive school that is orderly and safe, has a warm and caring community, and facilitates learning. Students and teachers benefit when the school (and each*

classroom) is a caring community, particularly in schools with a large number of English learners, ethnic minorities, or students who live in poverty (Gay, 2010).

Educators who implement culturally and linguistically responsive instruction must focus on numerous and varied opportunities for student-centered, collaborative learning that reflects students' backgrounds, assets, and strengths, and genuinely and consistently connects with students' families and communities.

There are many factors beyond instruction that affect students' success in the classroom and beyond. Classroom-level factors include teachers' backgrounds and the ways in which they relate to students, particularly to linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Teachers can also learn from students' families and communities in order to better understand their students, tap into their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), and thus be able to more effectively engage these students in the learning process. Students' identities are complex and multifaceted and play a critical role in how they participate in classroom activities and, consequently, the degree to which they succeed academically (Bucholtz, 1999; Rymes & Pash, 2004; Wortham, 2006). Students' roles within their families and communities are an important part of their identities, but teachers may not be aware of these roles. However, when teachers better understand their students in the contexts of these broader communities, they are better equipped to teach them effectively. We understand culturally sustaining pedagogy in Alim & Paris's (2017) terms as pedagogy that "seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain— linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation." We further recognize the congruence between Alim and Paris's call for outcomes of learning as additive rather than subtractive, with approaches to additive bilingualism that push back against deficient perspectives.

In this chapter, we explore how the identities of multilingual and multicultural students, including their complex and emerging linguistic identities, are recognized and celebrated. As TWI programs emerge from and are intrinsically linked to assets-based and culturally sustaining approaches, we briefly consider the reach of these programs across the EML and Latino/a student body (but the bulk of our examination of TWI programs is in Chapter 1.2, included with our discussion of instructional methods and models). Finally, we examine the schooling experience of EML and Latino/a students from the perspective of school climate, we review data on disciplinary practices, and we examine the availability of multilingual titles in the MCPS library catalog.

Results

Focus Groups

Several key themes emerged from the diverse focus group participants. Students expressed that, for the most part, they had warm relationships with educators. There were mixed expressions of the value accorded to student language backgrounds, with some participants recognizing strengths and others pointing out potential areas of improvement. Students feel welcome at school, but have expressed concerns about physical safety and building security. Participants welcomed the anti-racist and anti-bias work of MCPS and viewed work to support an asset lens for EML students as deeply aligned with the anti-racist and anti-bias work.

One key way students are recognized and celebrated that came through during focus groups is through the relationships they have with their teachers. Students in both student focus groups said that there

were many teachers who had good relationships with students. In one group, most students said they felt that they can trust and depend on their teachers. One shared, "They always help me and treat me well. They take time out to help us with whatever we need, not just the academics." In the other student focus group, students shared a more varied picture of teachers' relationships with their students, saying many have good relationships and inspire students to do better, while other teachers maintain some space between themselves and the students, or have "favorites." One student said it depends on the teacher, but singled out their English teachers, saying, "I can talk to them, get their support, and they don't make me feel like a nobody."

A parent in the family focus group shared that the district celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month, but they said they'd like to see Hispanic and Latino/a families represented within the curriculum year-round.

Multilingualism and students' language backgrounds were described explicitly as assets by one school administrator and one ELD teacher. Other participants conveyed a valuing of students' linguistic repertoires in less direct ways. For example, a teacher, in describing cultural nights provided for students and their families, said that they "validate their cultures and languages." Students also reported that staff spoke to their families in their home languages. Also, as described in the TWI section, TWI focus group participants conveyed a clear sense of the value of students' linguistic abilities, including bi-/multilingualism and translanguaging.

A critique from a participating parent, though, is that educators can at times miss non-linguistic abilities with which students enter the school system. They mentioned that some children from Latin America enter MCPS well-prepared in mathematics, but that this strength is missed because of the focus on language.

Overall, student focus group participants reported feeling welcome at their schools, saying they felt greeted and accepted when they first came to MCPS, and that staff were friendly and helpful. They said they were provided resources and that staff spoke to families in their native language. One student said that the counselor "gave me the confidence I needed to apply to the school." Another student shared that they have siblings in the TWI program and that their family likes the program because it supports the students and their family, adding, "It's difficult because they are learning both English and Spanish, but they help us even if we are Muslim. In the bilingual program everyone is equal." Another student, when asked for any final or additional comments, shared, "I love being here. My family and I love this country and this district, all the opportunities we are given. The teachers care and always help. My country has English, but not like here. Here I have an opportunity to learn more English. It's so much better. I have no complaints; I just want more opportunities for the future."

With regards to physical safety, the students in one of the focus groups reported security concerns at some schools. One student said, "Look at me, I came right in today. Nobody asked me for a pass or ID, and I don't go here. With everything that is happening now-a-days, the schools need more security." Although most students reported feeling welcome by staff, some of the students have concerns regarding physical safety.

Focus group participants shared a number of perspectives about the racial and ethnic climate within MCPS and efforts to promote equity.

A few participants noted bias about EMLs. One school administrator said that there are some challenges with bias about what ELD is, and what people believe about the students. They said that teachers push back on accommodating EML students, and that the leadership is trying to work to overcome this. In the CREA educator focus group, teachers reported significant issues with the image of CREA students within the district, saying that others view CREA students as "bad kids," even though they see their students as hard workers who are working to support their families; they said they are trying to change the mindset of others about CREA students. ELD teachers in another focus group, in discussing PD on EMLs and sociocultural competence, said that "not all staff get it," while citing a number of efforts on the part of the district to work on cultural understanding.

Other participants mentioned bias about Hispanic or Latino/a students specifically, one special education teacher sharing a belief that there is bias toward Hispanic families but not toward other racial minority groups. Similarly, a parent shared that the county has brought in an "anti-racist lens," but that they would like to see the Latino/a community "likewise elevated." They said, further, following discussion of the lack of translation during PTA meetings, that Latinos "cannot be an afterthought." As part of the solution, the parent suggested increasing the number of Latinos in leadership positions, particularly in high positions within the central office. They noted a need for deeper cultural proficiency and understanding with regards to Latino/a families, including inclusivity and greater understanding with regards to families coming from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds within Latin America.

Other participants also mentioned recent efforts to promote anti-racism. As noted above, one family member did not appear to view the anti-racism efforts as addressing the elevation of Latino families, indicating more needs to be done to that end. However, others seemed to include EMLs and Latino/a students as part of anti-racist training and initiatives. ELD teachers in one focus group noted professional development on culturally responsive instruction, anti-racism, equity, and implicit bias, while also indicating that efforts need to continue. They said that the ELD team is very intentional about using an equity lens, and that training was revamped to address white supremacy. One school administrator reported on recent anti-racist efforts: "We just went through an anti-racist audit, and the results were questionable. It needs to be a priority to support the EMLs. We need anti-racist supports before anything else. EMLs are not seen as assets, and until the deficit point of view is eliminated, we won't see this school system progress."

There is significant variation in focus group responses with regard to how students are viewed. It is clear the district is making efforts to elevate EMLs and Latino/a students, and also clear that efforts need to continue in order for all staff to demonstrate an assets-based perspective toward all students.

Two-way immersion (TWI)
Some focus group participants noted a need for greater recognition of TWI district-wide. One school-based administrator expressed a need for greater understanding of the "intricacies" of TWI programs, emphasizing the increased staffing needs, and adding "we have much more going on." Two administrators in a different focus group shared similar concerns, noting the relative size of the program compared with other programs and initiatives, adding, "We are often an after-thought. We are not considered." The other administrator noted that the addition of a TWI department at the district level was a step in the right direction, but that challenges remained. Another school administrator expressed a desire for an increase in TWI programs across the district, noting, "I know we are changing minds. I see the impact on our kids." A teacher similarly said that "MCPS is ready for DL" but needed further

guidance and sharing of lessons learned between schools, as well as outside learning from districts with more experience and from participation in local conferences. There was a sense among focus group participants that progress is being made, but challenges exist, and that they would like to see expansion of TWI within MCPS.

Survey

Survey responses provide evidence that MCPS educators have positive dispositions toward students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and that they value cultural and linguistic difference (Table 1). The majority (89.09%) agreed or strongly agreed that their school and MCPS works to provide a welcoming environment, and that students feel welcomed (84.75%).

A concerningly large proportion (40.89%) said that physical safety was a concern for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

With respect to linguistic diversity, while the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that students benefit from using their home language in the classroom (88.98%), 9.32% of those surveyed (more than 75 individual respondents) *disagreed* with the statement. This may explain, in part, why respondents were not unanimous in agreement that home languages and cultures are respected in MCPS (with almost one-fifth of respondents, 19.86% disagreeing with the statement).

Table 1: Survey respondents' attitudes and beliefs around culture, language, and school environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A	Weighted Average
I believe that my school and MCPS generally works to provide a welcoming environment for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.	27.46%	61.63%	8.87%	1.80%	0.24%	1.85
I believe that students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel welcomed at my school and in MCPS generally.	22.69%	62.06%	12.85%	1.44%	0.96%	1.93
Physical safety is a concern for culturally and linguistically diverse students at my school.	10.13%	30.76%	33.29%	21.71%	4.10%	2.69
The home languages and cultures of students in MCPS are recognized and respected.	19.86%	59.69%	16.85%	3.01%	0.60%	2.03
I believe that students benefit when they can use their home language in the classroom.	46.85%	42.13%	7.63%	1.69%	1.69%	1.64

Responses to open-ended survey questions centered on professional learning that supports an assets-based approach.

Professional Learning on Assets-Based Approaches

A key part of an assets-based approach to instruction is incorporation of students' home languages, and this was mentioned as a professional learning need by six respondents. These respondents mentioned incorporation of students' home languages in instruction (3), bilingual instruction (2), and translanguaging (1). One of these respondents noted, specifically, the use of Spanish language development standards in planning instruction, and another said they'd like to better understand how to use Spanish literacy skills as a bridge to English literacy for their students. Another stated, "All teachers in this county need a clear briefing on how we moved past the 'English only in my classroom' instructional approach."

Others noted a need for better understanding of students, and their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Five suggested professional learning opportunities targeting knowledge of their students and their backgrounds, one suggesting annual updates for teachers on their incoming students, including cultural backgrounds, needs, and feedback from their prior teachers. One said the district has provided a lot of information on Spanish-speaking students, but that they'd like to know more about students from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Five respondents cited a need for learning about sociocultural differences, one stating, "I would love more training on sociocultural aspects. We are always told that we need to be mindful that students of different cultures/backgrounds might have different mindsets when it comes to getting to class on time, completing work, etc. but no one ever explains what those mindsets are." Two respondents said they would like an opportunity to learn students' home languages.

Two respondents mentioned learning needs regarding creating a school or classroom environment that reflects a welcoming, assets-based approach, one stating that professional learning should help teachers create "multicultural learning environments" and the other noting a desire for all staff to "embrace EML students." Two noted wanting to learn how to better support students, citing needs such as transitions to new schools and parents who face challenges in supporting their children's education.

Addressing racism and implicit bias within schooling was noted by two respondents. One said there is a need for "opportunities aimed at fighting stigmatization through language and origin." Another cited persistent racism and bias within the district, with an emphasis on ensuring attention is paid to all racial and ethnic minorities within MCPS.

Document Review and Quantitative Data

In this section, we consider documentation and quantitative data that supports our understanding of the reach of the TWI programs in MCPS, as well as data on disciplinary practices and disproportionalities in the out-of-school suspension rate.

Reach of TWI Programs

As of the start of the 2022-23 school year, MCPS currently operates six TWI programs in elementary schools. Of these, four are fully operational through fifth grade; however, three of these four began fifth grade in the 2022-23 school year, and the fourth began fifth grade in the 2021-22 school year. Of the remaining two, one will begin fifth grade next year, and the other is in the first year of inception (including kindergarten and grade 1) in the 2022-23 school year. The rollout of new programs is illustrated in Table 2, with fully expanded K-5 programs indicated in green cells.

Table 2: Elementary Schools with TWI programs and year of roll-out

School	Oakland Terrace	Rolling Terrace	Washington Grove	Brown Station	Kemp Mill	Gaithersburg Elementary
2017-18			Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Kindergarten & Grade 1	
2018-19	Kindergarten	Kindergarten & Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 2	
2019-20	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 3	
2020-21	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 4	
2021-22	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 5	
2022-23	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5	K-5	Kindergarten & Grade 1
2023-24	Grade 5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	Grade 2
2024-25	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	Grade 3
2025-26	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	Grade 4
2026-27	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	Grade 5

Table 3 provides the numbers of students enrolled in these schools. Note that these are not the numbers of students enrolled in TWI programs currently, as some schools have not yet fully expanded TWI programs through all grades.

Table 3: Students enrolled in schools with TWI programs

School Name	Total number of students	Hispanic/ Latino/a students	EML students
Washington Grove Elementary	397	246	177
Gaithersburg Elementary	774	604	403
Brown Station Elementary	604	357	233
Oakland Terrace Elementary	493	170	72
Rolling Terrace Elementary	718	536	412
Kemp Mill Elementary	417	348	245
Total number of students in schools with TWI programs	**3,403**	**2,261**	**1,542**

In order to assess the reach of these six programs, we use data from the 2021-22 school year to approximate the total number of students who would be served by TWI programs once these programs are fully rolled out. We project that given steady levels of enrollment, once they are fully operational K-5, these schools could serve around 6% of the EML population, and around 4% of the Latino/a population in MCPS.

Disciplinary Rates

To further understand the extent to which students feel welcome and valued, we looked to understand if there were disparities in disciplinary rates – specifically, the rate of out-of-school suspensions.

MCPS provided CAL with out-of-school suspension rates, disaggregated by subgroup, for SY 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. We provide relevant data in Table 4.

Table 4: Out of school suspension rates, 2018, 2019, and 2020, by select student subgroups

	2018		**2019**		**2020**	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All students	2,557	1.62%	2,642	1.66%	2,038	1.62%
White	293	0.65%	315	0.71%	236	0.54%
Hispanic/Latino	1,187	1.83%	1,160	1.92%	895	1.41%
EML students	375	1.39%	399	1.42%	324	1.12%
EML students with disabilities	110	2.37%	147	2.91%	115	2.18%

Rates are compared to the rate for White students. Rates that are at least one and one-half times the White rate are displayed in blue; those at least double the rate of White students are displayed in purple; those at least three times the rate of White students are displayed in red.

In Table 5 through Rates are compared to the rate for White students. Rates that are at least one and one-half times the White rate are displayed in blue; those at least double the rate of White students are displayed in purple; those at least three times the rate of White students are displayed in red.

Table 7, we provide the same data for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Table 5: Elementary out-of-school suspension rates, 2018, 2019, and 2020, by select student subgroups

	2018		**2019**		**2020**	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All students	199	0.27%	197	0.27%	162	0.22%
White	28	0.14%	24	0.12%	23	0.12%
Hispanic/Latino	44	0.19%	54	0.23%	39	0.16%
EML students	31	0.17%	36	0.19%	24	0.13%
EML students with disabilities	13	0.44%	19	0.62%	11	0.36%

Rates are compared to the rate for White students. Rates that are at least one and one-half times the White rate are displayed in blue; those at least double the rate of White students are displayed in purple; those at least three times the rate of White students are displayed in red.

Table 6: Middle school out-of-school suspension rates, 2018, 2019, and 2020, by select student subgroups

	2018		**2019**		**2020**	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All students	1,000	2.77%	1,138	3.09%	889	2.35%
White	95	0.89%	122	1.18%	85	0.84%
Hispanic/Latino	371	3.51%	432	3.83%	319	2.64%
EML students	142	4.17%	192	5.03%	149	3.43%

EML students with disabilities	66	7.27%	84	8.05%	55	4.65%

Rates are compared to the rate for White students. Rates that are at least one and one-half times the White rate are displayed in blue; those at least double the rate of White students are displayed in purple; those at least three times the rate of White students are displayed in red.

Table 7: High school out-of-school suspension rates, 2018, 2019, and 2020, by select student subgroups

	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All students	1,284	2.67%	1,257	2.56%	947	1.87%
White	164	1.14%	165	1.13%	123	0.85%
Hispanic/Latino	441	3.11%	454	3.10%	365	2.35%
EML students	192	3.49%	165	2.95%	140	2.36%
EML students with disabilities	26	3.71%	42	5.12%	38	4.01%

Rates are compared to the rate for White students. Rates that are at least one and one-half times the White rate are displayed in blue; those at least double the rate of White students are displayed in purple; those at least three times the rate of White students are displayed in red.

Latino/a students consistently see rates of out-of-school suspension that are markedly higher than White students across all stages of schooling – in middle school, at least three times the rate of White students; in high school, at least double the rate of White students.

Likewise, EML students (many of whom are Latino/a) see similarly outsized rates of discipline. Again, in middle school EML students are suspended at rates at least three times those of White students; in high school, at rates that are at least double those of White students.

EML students with disabilities are, across the board, at least three times as likely than White students to face out-of-school suspension.

Finally, it is also worth noting that boys typically face higher rates of these disciplinary actions than girls. While we did not disaggregate the data on Latino/a, EML, or EML students with disabilities by gender, we urge that any action be sensitive to the disproportionate impact of out-of-school suspension on male students.

Opportunities for Honors classes in Spanish and English
A member of the Stakeholder Commission noted that there are disparities in honors designations in World Languages classes between Spanish classes and Spanish for heritage learners.

CAL examined the 2022-23 MCPS course bulletin for World Languages.[1] The district offers World Languages classes with Honors at Level 3 and Level 4. Honors courses accrue a weighted GPA (i.e., a grade of A on an Honors class confers more points toward the overall GPA than a grade of A on other classes).

MCPS also offers Spanish for Spanish Speakers at levels 1-3. According to the MCPS website, "Spanish for Spanish Speakers 3 is an advanced-level course designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Spanish Language or Advanced Placement Spanish Literature exam." This class, despite

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[1] https://coursebulletin.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/CourseLists/Index/70/

standing at Level 3, does not have an Honors designation and does not offer students the opportunity to take advantage of the weighted GPA option.

The same member of the Stakeholder Commission also offered the observation that: "At the secondary level it is astounding how many native speakers are in Spanish classes rather than higher-level Spanish for Spanish speakers classes due to the assumptions about students and their abilities."

In language arts, a similar situation applies. An Honors designation is available for English 9 and English 10. In some schools, EML students at ELP 3 are placed in standalone ELD classes (aligned to the ELA standards). Other schools do not offer these standalone classes and place students at ELP 3 in mainstream classes – these students are afforded the opportunity to enroll in Honors classes, while their peers who are in standalone ELD classes are not.

Media Collection: Books in Students' Home Languages
We asked our Stakeholder Commission members to provide us with any background on analyses of MCPS media that examined the representation of students' identities in ELA readings, library texts, or any other media surveys. While the members mentioned that they had seen evidence of some school-based efforts, we were not able to uncover any centralized systemic review of media.

While a full review of media is outside of the scope of our inquiry, we were able to examine the scope of multilingual titles in the MCPS library system, as well as the process for acquiring new titles.

A Stakeholder Commission member addressed some challenges around the process for approval for Spanish language books. MCPS maintains a robust process for the selection and approval of library resources in which newly nominated materials go through a period of 30-day review, and must be evaluated prior to purchase.[2] One challenge is that there may not be sufficient staff on review teams who are proficient in languages other than English to ensure a diverse multilingual library collection. Another contributor expressed concern about current national trends around the censorship of reading materials in schools, and stressed that the selection and evaluation process had a protective effect against censorship.

To understand the impact of this policy, we examined the MCPS media collection in Destiny Library Manager.[3] We used the collection search feature to filter the collection by publication language, to gauge numbers of titles in the collection for different languages (

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[2] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/media/evaluation.aspx
[3] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/media/destiny/

Figure 1).

Figure 1: Screenshot of filtered media collection

Numbers of titles by language and by targeted grade level are provided in Table 8. Note that targeted grade-level bands are not mutually exclusive (i.e., PK-2 and 1-5 both contains Grade 1 and Grade 2 titles) and that titles may be included across more than one band. Although there are few titles in the languages indicated in Table 8, it is notable that the numbers of titles decrease significantly in the upper grades. It is also noticeable that among the remaining five of the top seven languages in MCPS, numbers of titles are negligible (Amharic, not available to filter; Chinese, 11 (Cantonese, 3); Korean, 0; Portuguese, 1; Vietnamese[4], 0).

Table 8: Numbers of titles in MCPS library catalog, by language and targeted grade level.

	Collection Total	PK-2	1-5	4-8	7-12
Total titles	62,434	29,131	23,670	24,053	23,198
Spanish	1,064	622	312	224	142
Bilingual (English/Spanish)	759	555	347	88	44
French	388	180	149	112	51
Bilingual (English/French)	32	25	15	1	1

Findings

How are multilingual students recognized and celebrated?

As might be expected in a large school district with many thousands of students and educators, results on this question are mixed.

On the positive side, educators spontaneously described students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds as assets, indicating that they have internalized this viewpoint. More than 80% of survey

> "I love being here. My family and I love this country and this district, all the opportunities we are given. The teachers care and always help."
>
> - Student participant in a focus group

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[4] There is one book tagged as Vietnamese/English bilingual, however this appears to be a cataloging error.

respondents agreed that their school, and MCPS in general, work to provide a welcoming environment for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Students feel welcome and expressed that they were able to rely on trusted adults in school, particularly ELD teachers, despite not necessarily having consistently good relationships with all teachers.

> "EMLs are not seen as assets, and until the deficit point of view is eliminated, we won't see this school system progress."
>
> - MCPS educator in a focus group

Less favorably, educators also noted that sometimes students' assets were overlooked, particularly academic skills in students who were not proficient in English. Educators expressed that it was important for their colleagues to understand the full depth of EML students' abilities, rather than just to see a deficit. Focus group participants also raised concerns over bias against EMLs and anti-Latino/a bias. Participants also expressed the need to see more Latino/a individuals in leadership in MCPS as a way to increase the depth of cultural proficiency in the district.

Are the full linguistic repertoires (including translanguaging abilities) of students recognized and respected?

All of us use language to express the varied facets of our identities, and students – especially adolescents – use the breadth of their language repertoires in complex ways to negotiate their nascent and changing identities with peers, educators, and other individuals in the school environment (Bucholtz, 1999; Rymes & Pash, 2004; Wortham, 2006). Affirmation of students' multiplelanguage practices is a culturally sustaining practice (Irizarry, 2017) – "when empowered to shape the linguistic texture of the classroom, students seemed to move effortlessly within and across languages, often drawing from multiple languages to maximize meaning-making" (p. 87).

Focus group participants largely expressed recognition of the value of translanguaging and bilingualism. Students' bilingualism and translanguaging abilities were cited as reasons in favor of various programmatic approaches. However, teachers expressed the need for more professional learning on translanguaging and what it looks like at different grade levels.

Survey responses reflected the general pattern of respect for students' full linguistic repertoires; almost 90% of respondents agreed that students benefit from using their home language in the classroom, and almost 80% agreed that home languages and cultures are respected in MCPS. There were, however, a non-negligible number of respondents (just over 9%) who disagreed that students benefit from using their home language, and almost 20% of respondents disagreed that home languages and cultures are respected in MCPS.

An area of particular strength was the TWI program. Multiple participants in TWI focus groups cited cultures of bilingualism in their school. Furthermore, as mentioned elsewhere, during visits to the five TWI programs, a focus on students' socioemotional well-being, the embracing and celebration of bilingualism and cultural diversity, and the acceptance of language varieties were evident in the vast majority of the classrooms observed. Finally, survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the TWI schools were welcoming and supportive not just of Spanish-speaking families but of families who spoke languages other than Spanish or English as well.

An important component of linguistic respect is linguistic representation. Bishop (1990) writes:

> When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be places where all the children from all the cultures that make up the salad bowl of American society can find their mirrors.

Our examination of linguistic representation in the library catalog indicates that students from diverse linguistic backgrounds may not see their linguistic identities reflected in school libraries. A barrier to this is the challenges experienced when there are not sufficient multilingual staff to review books for linguistically diverse students.

Finally, as mentioned above, at the behest of a member of the Stakeholder Commission, we examined Honors designations for language classes. We found that while Spanish Level 3 can carry an Honors designation (which results in higher weights for grades on a student's GPA), the parallel course Spanish for Spanish Speakers Level 3 does not have an Honors designation.

How are resources assigned to two-way immersion programs? Should two-way immersion programs be expanded, and if so, what barriers or obstacles exist?

Research consistently shows the benefits of TWI programs for EML students. Students in dual language programs have been found to be more likely than their peers in other programs to complete high school, take Advanced Placement courses, have positive attitudes toward school and bilingualism, and have a greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures (de Jong & Bearse, 2011). Students benefit cognitively; numerous studies have shown the enhanced executive functioning associated with bilingualism (Esposito & Baker-Ward, 2013; Ball, 2010; Espinosa, 2013; Sandhofer & Uchikoshi, 2013; Barac et al., 2014). Developing proficiency in more than one language enhances career opportunities, promotes cross-cultural understanding, and improves communication skills (Tochon, 2009; Rumbaut, 2014). Research shows that EMLs benefit from continuing to learn in their native language (Ball, 2010; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; Steele et al., 2017); oral proficiency and literacy in a student's first language facilitates English literacy development (August & Shanahan, 2006); and EMLs are less likely to fall behind in core subject areas if they are able to continue learning grade-level content in their home language while acquiring proficiency in English (Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014). Spanish-speaking learners benefit particularly, as demonstrated by a study conducted by Relyea & Amendum (2019), in which stronger early Spanish reading in kindergarten was related to greater English reading growth by 4th grade, despite the fact that these students had lower English oral proficiency levels at the start.

There are currently six emerging TWI programs in the district; once fully rolled out, we project that these programs will have the capacity to serve approximately 6% of EML students and 4% of Latino/a students.

While the benefits of TWI programs are clear, for these programs to work well, it is important that they be of high quality, have clear goals, and demonstrate a vision of bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence that is shared by the school community (Howard et al., 2018).

We address programmatic implementation of TWI in Chapter 4, Methods and Models, where we provide a set of specific recommendations for program improvement.

Are there disparities in disciplinary practices between EML and Latino/a students, and the general population of students?

Nationwide, there are broad discrepancies in disciplinary practices, with minoritized students and students with disabilities more likely to experience disciplinary actions (National Academy of Sciences, 2019). There is concern around the discriminatory nature of these practices (in other words, the concern that under similar behavioral circumstances, some students are more likely to be harshly punished than others), and concern also about the impact of discipline on opportunities to learn (particularly the impact of out-of-school suspension on students' access to instruction). Students who are suspended are more likely to drop out of school (National Academy of Sciences, 2019).

In MCPS, Latino/a and EML students are suspended more than twice as often as White students. In middle school, Latino/a and EML students are suspended at more than three times the rate of White students. These disparities are less pronounced in elementary school.

EML students with disabilities are more than three times more likely to face suspension than White students in elementary, middle, and high school.

Research uncovers a variety of factors that are linked with disparities in disciplinary practices, as well as recommendations for change. Educator bias is a potential correlate with disciplinary disproportionality, at both the classroom and administrator level (Skiba et al., 2011).

Specific recommendations to mitigate these disparities include implicit bias training for educators, paired with alternate discipline strategies (Amos, 2021; IES REL Mid-Atlantic, October 2019). Researchers have also studied the impact of diversity in the educator pool. One study showed that non-White kindergarten to grade 5 students taught by same-race/ethnicity teachers had 19% fewer suspensions per year (Holt & Gershenson, 2015; for further information, see IES REL Mid-Atlantic, May 2019). Researchers also recommend the implementation of protective interventions such as socioemotional learning interventions or culturally responsive approaches (See National Academy of Sciences, 2019, p. 109, for a review of relevant literature).

Do EML and Latino/a students experience nurturing and safe school climates?

In focus groups, students expressed that they had warm relationships with teachers.

Educators expressed challenges around biases against multilingual students, particularly older students struggling with graduation requirements. Educators expressed that they had heard the perception that these were "bad kids." The educators who expressed this pushed back and noted that many of these students were extremely hard-working young people who were working toward an education while simultaneously participating in the paid workforce.

Students expressed concerns for physical safety, especially with respect to controlling access to school buildings. Slightly more than 40% of survey respondents also noted that they believed that physical safety was a concern for culturally and linguistically diverse students. This is consistent with national findings – according to the Pew Research Center, the majority of teens (57%) are worried or very worried that a shooting could happen at their school, with Hispanic teens identified as the subgroup with the most concern (73%) (Graf, April 2018).

Recommendations

3.1 Continue to strengthen and expand antiracism and antibias work in MCPS by explicitly including attention to anti-Latino/a bias and to linguistic bias.

3.2 Strengthen this antibias position by ensuring educators have access to professional learning opportunities that focus on the assets of EML students, and to the deep connections between students' linguistic repertoires and their identities.

3.3 Offer Spanish for Spanish Speakers Level 3 as an Honors-level class.

3.4 Expand multilingual library resources and ensure that there are sufficient multilingual staff allocated to the review of titles in languages other than English.

3.5 Continue to monitor discipline disparities. Identify if there are particular schools in which Latino/a or EML students are more likely to experience negative disciplinary consequences, and target these schools for additional support.

3.6 Continue protective socioemotional interventions to support decreases in discipline disparities.

3.7 Continue the work to diversify the educator pool. Monitor recruitment, retention, and promotion of multilingual and Latino/a staff.

3.8 Carefully continue to grow TWI programs, taking into account the need for consistent program structure, enhanced instruction, professional learning, and support and resources as outlined in Chapter 2.

4. Educator Assets and Supports

Summary of Recommendations

4.1 Expand professional learning on strategies for EML students to include all teachers, not just ELD teachers.
- Distribute responsibility for professional learning on topics related to EML students so that teachers who are supported by the College and Career Readiness programs and the PreK-12 Curriculum office receive appropriate training in supporting EML students.
- Ensure that school leaders also receive appropriate training in supporting EML students.
- Monitor progress to understand the extent to which general education and content area teachers have received professional development in how to support EML students.

4.2 Expand professional learning to include training in sociocultural competence (including anti-bias training) and support for trauma-informed education.

4.3 Attend to equity of educator credentials and experience, implement measures to retain educators at schools with majority EML and Latino/a student populations, and continue efforts to expand the diversity of the teaching force.

4.4 Consider implementing or expanding paraeducator-to-teacher pathways, and incentivize recruitment into these programs for Latino/a and multilingual professionals.

4.5 Ensure that there are clearly identified ELD coordinator positions, at all levels (elementary, middle, and high school) within (or across) schools to support professional learning, mentoring, and the administrative work that pertains to EML students, such as identifying students, managing testing, and engaging with families.

4.6 Increase ELD teacher allocations in staffing formulas to reduce the ratio of EML students to ELD instructors.

Background

In this chapter, we consider the assets of the MCPS educator workforce as well as additional supports that are needed to ensure EML and Latino/a students have opportunities to reach their full potential. We find that MCPS educators bring care, passion, and responsibility to supporting these student groups, but that work needs to be done to ensure that this level of care is shared equally across all educators, not just those who teach English language development (ELD). Indicative of the level of professional commitment is the clear call from educators for increased professional development to support students. Equally clear is the evidence that educators are stretched thin and need additional resources.

Results

Focus Group Results

This section reports on the assets brought by different staff members, and on the supports they need for high-quality education of EMLs and Latino/a students, as shared by focus group participants. Focus group participants included classroom educators—both content and mainstream educators—and also ELD educators and special educators. School administrators, including principals and assistant principals, school counselors, and coaches were also participants in focus groups.

Educator Dispositions

Many participating educators noted the benefits of bi/multilingualism, spoke to their commitment to equity for Latino/a and EML students, and expressed a desire to support students and connect with families and communities, demonstrating evidence, broadly, of an assets-based mindset among focus group participants.

From the review of educators' comments on professional learning, it is clear that MCPS educators in our focus groups were invested in their own professional learning. In particular, the comments around the need for additional training in sociocultural competence and in trauma-informed instruction for newcomer students (see below) are indicative of the level of care and professionalism that MCPS educators bring to their students.

Focus group participants overall noted that ELD teachers are knowledgeable about and skilled in working with EMLs, one ELD teacher saying, "We have amazing colleagues with tremendous knowledge." However, ELD teachers expressed a need for more support, one reporting that many of her colleagues are leaving ELD, or thinking of leaving ELD, due to the lack of support and preparation.

One observation by the focus group facilitators was that even in the focus groups that did not explicitly target ELD educators, participants disproportionately held English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certifications or had previously been ELD teachers. For example, all of the attendees at the Assistant Principal focus group had formerly been ELD teachers and held certification in this area.

It was noted that more preparation is needed for general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators. Administrators in one group noted that school-based administrators lack preparation around EMLs and rely on staff for knowledge about how to work with these students. One of the school administrators said, further, "Kids are put into programs and classes where teachers are not prepared," and that "there's no sheltering for these kids. It's sink or swim."

Professional Learning

Focus group participants' comments around professional preparation and professional learning were often intertwined, for example, citing good professional learning opportunities that prepared them well for the classroom.

There were many descriptions of beneficial professional learning experiences that prepared MCPS teachers to work with EMLs, while a number of suggestions were also made regarding gaps in certain kinds of content. Suggestions were also made with regard to format. These different areas will be discussed in turn.

In seven of the focus groups, six teachers and six administrators noted benefical professional learning opportunities that had been provided by the district. One of the teachers, an ELD teacher, said that "the ELD Department does a great job on professional development," noting one school that had all teachers trained in ELD. However, another ELD teacher said training on EMLs is offered by the county, not the ELD Department, and that the trainings "pale in comparison to what other departments give." Many of the comments about beneficial PD offerings were followed by qualifications or suggestions for future professional learning efforts. Participants in five focus groups (7 teachers and 3 administrators), further described a lack of professional development, with some indicating that opportunities have decreased in the preceding years. One ELD teacher said that opportunities are available, but communication about these opportunities needs to improve: "Teachers are not aware of what trainings there are. There are huge downloads of information that teachers are not aware are available. The county needs a different way of communication and dispersing information." To this point, a content teacher in another group reported being unaware of any offerings related to sociocultural competence, whereas ELD teachers in the same group noted trainings on the topic. A few teachers expressed a desire for some of the opportunities provided for ELD teachers to be provided for content teachers. Therefore, although many participants noted a lack of professional development, this may be related not only to quantity offered, but also to the audience to which it is offered, as well as the ways in which training is offered and communicated to staff, which will be discussed further below.

Four teachers (2 ELD, 1 content, 1 SPED) reported seeking out professional development on their own, one saying, "most of my training was either on my own or ad hoc," and another noting they take personal days in order to participate in the training they need. Two participants in a single focus group noted that variation in training opportunities often happens at the school level, as some schools opt into trainings, or use team meetings or study circles for professional learning.

Some participants noted that when PD was provided it was not effective. One school administrator said that there were too few strategies or take-aways, as well as too many different programs. An ELD teacher in another focus group noted, similarly, that a training they received "was a fly-over, and was not very helpful." A CREA teacher in another group expressed a desire for deeper connections and relevance for MCPS' student population, saying, "I find that the training is very generic, in-depth in its repetitiveness. There's a missing part. A deeper meaning is needed. The trainings missed the deeper connection with our students' needs."

Teachers in one focus group discussed training related to teachers switching positions, expressing a need for training for general education teachers who want to become ELD teachers. They noted that a test is required, but expressed that more training is needed so that teachers are well-prepared for these positions.

There were a few contextual factors noted as affecting participation in professional learning around EML education. One content teacher noted that spots were limited in some trainings, so they were not able to attend some trainings that they had tried to sign up for. An ELD teacher pointed out that teachers hired closer to the beginning of the school year may miss out on PD offered right before the school year starts. A district administrator noted the struggle to hire enough substitute teachers for teachers to be able to attend PD sessions.

Focus group participants mentioned some specific content that has been included in professional learning opportunities, and also noted areas in which more preparation is needed. Participants overall (8

focus groups, including administrators and teachers) noted a need for more PD on EMLs. One school administrator said the district needs to "elevate teachers so all teachers become teachers of language and academic content."

Some noted the need for more preparation around EML instruction in conversations that also touched on staffing challenges, so it should be noted that these two areas are intertwined—if ELD teachers and paraprofessionals aren't available to support students and their general education teachers, then it is more imperative that content teachers have a robust toolbox for working with EMLs. A school administrator in one focus group noted, in response to a question around professional learning, that they only have one ELD teacher, with another administrator adding that there is "lots of variability in instructional practices." The connection between staffing and professional learning was made clear in a number of focus groups.

Focus group participants reported attending professional development sessions including the following topics:

- ELD methods
- Understanding of student populations (countries and cultures of origin)
- Students' home languages and dialects
- Cultural differences
- Sociocultural competence
- Anti-racist practices
- Implicit bias
- Culturally responsive instruction
- Trauma-informed education

Some areas in which focus group participants expressed a desire for more training include the following:

- ELD strategies
- Language development
- Reading instruction
- Assets-based vs. deficit-based
- Understanding of student populations (countries and cultures of origin)
- Sociocultural competence
- Special education for EMLs
- Implementation of new curriculum
- Trauma-informed education

Regarding sociocultural competence, teachers in one focus group noted trainings on students' home languages, one noting that staff meetings include time to "create awareness of differences in Spanish dialects and cultural differences." One ELD teacher in another group noted that trainings had focused more on scaffolding and encouraging student participation than sociocultural competence, and that ELD teachers had "talked about this, but nothing was seen." However, ELD teachers in another focus group reported that MCPS had put forth a great degree of effort in this area, including trainings on culturally responsive instruction, anti-racist practices, and implicit bias, and even paid for a graduate course on EMLs and cultural perspectives. Even so, they said that implementation varies by school, that "not all staff get it," and that the complexity of topics like implicit bias "requires a deep dive." Special education

teachers in another focus group similarly said that "it's talked about a lot," but that there needs to be more training and supports for improving implementation; one suggested having a "go-to person" to support staff in these efforts.

Training on trauma-informed educational practices was another theme among focus groups. One counselor reported receiving training on trauma-informed care a few years ago, and an ELD teacher said that MCPS had provided classes on unaccompanied minors and students with trauma, adding, "Those were very helpful and made it possible to provide informed teaching." Others stressed the need for more training on trauma-informed instruction. One school administrator said they're "not equipped" for the number of SLIFE students they're serving, and indicated they are looking for training on serving students with trauma. Six CREA teachers in a single focus group emphasized the need for trauma-informed training. One noted, "CREA has the best interest of its students in mind. We need more trauma-informed instruction and other support training. We need more systems support for the teachers on how to give their students individualized support and attention." Another teacher in the group emphasized this need for individualized support, including academic, socioemotional, and other forms of support for students. One of the other teachers added that they would like to see professional learning and support around self-care for teachers in light of the intense and complex work they do with these students who have experienced trauma: "There are some issues the teacher can't do anything about at all, so we need wellness PDs on how to take care of ourselves, as well as the kids."

Focus group participants also had feedback about the format of professional learning opportunities. Some emphasized the importance of staff collaboration through peer-to-peer learning and team-based training. One school administrator suggested forming PLCs across schools by type of role, in order for staff to receive targeted support specific to their functions within schools and learn alongside colleagues filling similar roles. Three ELD teachers in one focus group emphasized the benefits of learning directly from their colleagues, not just alongside them, one stating that "most of the best training has come from colleagues." Two of them said that working with other teachers was more effective than any PD they've received from the district and the third referred to their colleagues as "untapped resources by the central office." A content teacher in another focus group reported working closely with ELD teachers as a form of professional learning. Participants in three additional focus groups suggested that teams need to be trained together (2 teachers and 1 coach) as a way to ensure consistency in instructional practices, build relationships among teachers, and support team collaboration and planning.

A few participants noted professional learning opportunities outside of MCPS. A TWI teacher noted that MCPS could do more learning from successful programs and mentioned attending conferences and learning from other educators on social media. Two ELD teachers mentioned university partnerships, graduate credits, and certificate programs that have been beneficial for them and provided through MCPS.

Staff Positions
As noted above, focus group participants conveyed a need for more professional learning about EMLs for staff in positions other than ELD. Teachers in one focus group and a school administrator in another group noted that ELD teachers are able to get more training around EMLs compared with other teachers, and that some opportunities for learning about EML education are not made available to general education teachers. The school administrator said that general education teachers "get the minimum," noting that the availability of some training is due to the co-teaching model in which general

education and ELD teachers work together, but that the teachers were not trained as teams and ELD teachers received more. In a third focus group, a counselor and a teacher both noted that general education teachers were not trained to work with EMLs, and, due to related staffing issues—no ELD paraprofessionals and ELD teachers with very limited allocation at the school due to low numbers of EMLs—students "spend most of their days lost and not aware of what is being taught." The counselor further expressed a desire for training for counselors on working with EMLs, particularly as a way to support EMLs in low-incidence schools. Special education teachers in one focus group also expressed a need for more preparation around working with EMLs.

School administrators in two focus groups also noted the need for professional learning around EMLs for administrators. One stated, "All school-based stakeholders are well trained in working with Special Education, but unless there is a large population of ELLs at a school, the ELL teachers do not receive the same quality of training. Administrators receive none." They added, "I know it's logistically challenging, but it can be done. In all my years as a [school administrator], I am not aware of a single training where school-based leaders are asked to attend. We are expected to rely on those who attend." In the other group, administrators noted that, in their experience, assistant principals don't have any ELD background, and one said training that is for school-based administrators would be helpful, since it could address their specific responsibilities with regard to EMLs.

Resources

Educators in two focus groups expressed a need for more resources and support (3 ELD teachers, 1 content teacher, and 1 counselor). A counselor reported having "no ESOL resources," limiting their ability to provide support to teachers who come to them for support. An ELD teacher in the same group said they have some preparation, but "tremendous problems with little support." Both emphasized the need for more resources. Two ELD teachers in another focus group stressed the lack of resources, one noting the difficulty with current curricular resources (e.g., Study Sync), saying that students "tend to do better with the teacher-created resources." They said that they are still learning as an educator and need more resources and support. A teacher in another group suggested that teachers share the resources they create as one part of the solution, reiterating concerns about the appropriateness and difficulty of some of the resources currently provided.

Some educators also expressed a desire for more and better Spanish-language resources. A content teacher reported having no materials in Spanish to provide support for students with low levels of English proficiency. A TWI administrator and a TWI teacher, in separate focus groups, reported that teachers are creating their own resources, which is challenging and time-consuming. The teacher emphasized the need for developmentally and linguistically appropriate authentic texts for students.

An additional observation was around the challenges in accurately predicting the number of staff needed for ELD programs. Due to the timing in receiving the prior year's assessment results, schools may not know until late in summer the precise number of EML students or EML students by level. This makes it challenging for schools to staff according to formulas based on numbers of students or numbers of students by level.

Survey Results

As we note in Chapter 2, Methods, survey respondents tended to be disproportionately ELD teachers and teachers with ESOL certifications, which was consistent with the findings from focus groups. Among

survey respondents, there was an underrepresentation of general education and mainstream content area teachers and an overrepresentation of teachers holding ESOL certifications. Results in this section, therefore, should be interpreted as reflective of the participants in the survey who, in general, are more likely to be invested in, trained in, and practicing in the field of EML education than are MCPS educators as a whole. In this section, we look first at educators' experience, background, and credentials. We then examine responses around questions pertaining to professional learning. We also provide a snapshot of educators' general dispositions toward EML students as well as their beliefs about opportunities for this student group.

Educators' Experience and Background

We examined four relevant aspects of educators' experience and background, as informed by our research questions and framework: number of years of experience, level of credentials, educators' race and ethnicity, and educators' home language practices. For the first two of these, we also break down results by the proportion of EML students and Latino/a students that these educators serve.

We report first on the years of teaching experience of survey respondents. Educators who responded to the survey were typically seasoned professionals, with more than half of the respondents having ten or more years of experience. Table 1 provides the self-reported experience levels of all survey respondents.

Table 1: Survey respondents' years of teaching experience

Please select your number of years of experience as an educator (including teaching, school administration, and/or other school support roles).

Answer Choices	Responses	
None of the above	0.79%	-
0-5	11.33%	100
6-10	13.59%	120
11-15	18.57%	164
16-20	21.74%	192
21 or more	33.98%	300

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

In addition, we asked educators to estimate the proportions of students they serve who are EML students, and who are Latino/a students. Table 2 and

Table 3 show educators' self-reported years of service by the estimated proportion of EML and Latino/a students they serve.

Table 2: Proportions of EML students served, by educators' years of service, for survey respondents

Estimated proportion of EMLs that the educator serves	Years of Service					
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 or more	Total
Fewer than one-third	16	32	38	37	79	**202**
One-third to two-thirds	40	36	54	68	117	**315**

More than two-thirds	40	49	68	79	98	**334**

Table 3: Proportions of Latino/a students served, by educators' years of service, for survey respondents

Estimated proportion of Latina/o students that the educator serves	Years of Service					
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 or more	Total
Fewer than one-third	12	15	26	25	58	136
One-third to two-thirds	40	37	66	84	130	357
More than two-thirds	46	68	68	78	106	366

In Figure 1, we show the cumulative proportions of years of service by the proportion of EML students served.

In settings where educators estimate that fewer than one-third of students are EML students, there tend to be fewer novice educators (8% who indicate 0-5 years of service, versus 13% and 12% for settings with one-third to two-thirds, or more than two-thirds, respectively). In addition, settings with fewer numbers of EML students tend to have greater proportions of veteran educators. Where there are fewer than one-third of EML students, 39% of educators report that they have 21 or more years of service, but where more than two-thirds of students are EML students, this drops to only 29%.

Figure 1: Educators' estimates of the proportion of EMLs they serve, by educators' years of service
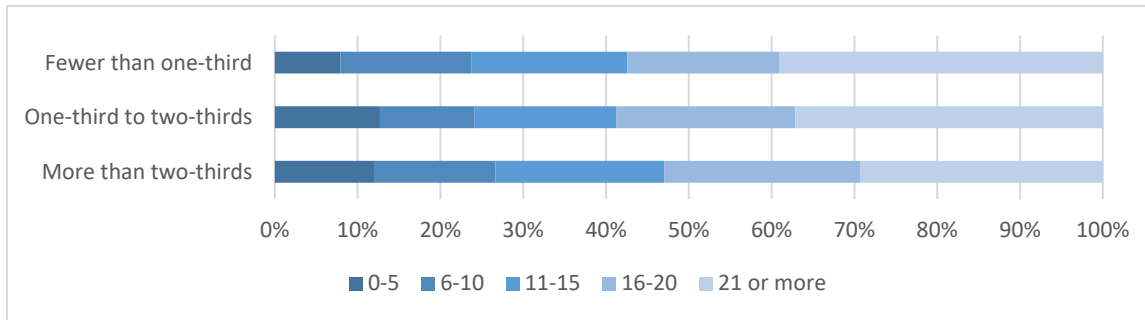
When we examine the data in the same way for educators' estimates of students who are Latino/a, we see a similar trend. In settings where there are larger proportions of Latino/a students, as estimated by the educators who responded to the survey, educators tend to have fewer years of experience. Figure 2 clearly shows this trend. In settings with fewer than one-third of Latino/a students, the proportion of educators with ten or less years of experience is 29%. This rises to 33% in settings with one-third to two-thirds of students who are Latino/a, and 44% where the proportion of these students is more than two-thirds.

Figure 2: Educators' estimates of the proportion of Latino/a students they serve, by years of service
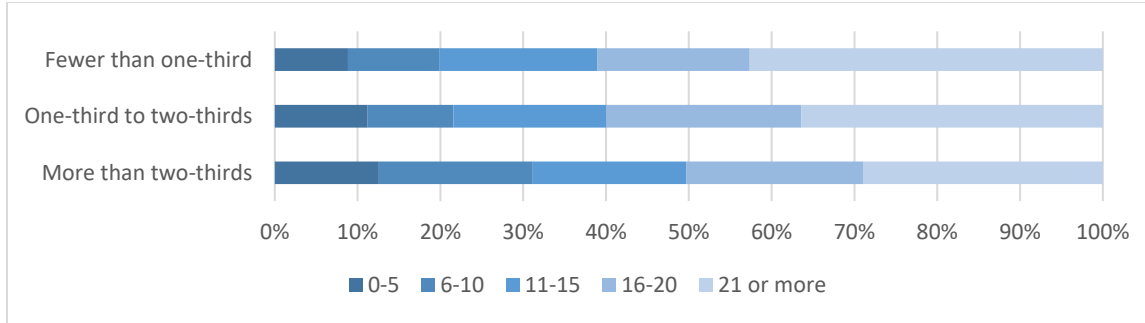
In addition to years of experience, we also asked respondents to provide us with details on their teaching credentials. Our analysis includes five educator credential types as defined by the state of Maryland. These are described in Figure 3.

Of the educators who held one of these types of certificates, more than 70% of survey respondents held the Advanced Professional Certificate.

Figure 3: State of Maryland educator credential types

Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC)
- Valid for 5 years
- Issued to an applicant who meets all certification requirements and is not currently employed in a MD local education agency or a publicly funded nonpublic school

Conditional Certificate (CDC)
- Valid for two years
- Issued only to an applicant employed in a MD local education agency or publicly funded nonpublic school who does not meet all professional certification requirements

Standard Professional Certificate I (SPC I)
- Valid for 5 years
- Issued to an applicant who meets all certification requirements and is employed by a MD local education agency or a publicly funded nonpublic school

Standard Professional Certificate II (SPC II)
- Valid for 5 years
- Issued to an applicant who completes the SPC I, is employed by a MD local education agency or publicly funded nonpublic school, and submits the following:
    1. verification of 3 years of satisfactory school-related experience
    2. 6 semester hours of acceptable credit; and
    3. a professional development plan for the Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)

Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)
- Valid for 5 years
- Issued to an applicant who submits the following:
    1. 6 semester hours of acceptable credit
    2. verification of 3 years of satisfactory school-related experience; and
    3. meets one of the following standards:
        a. earned a master's or higher degree from an IHE in a certification area directly related to public school education, including 6 semester hours related to the teacher's specific discipline or the specialist's specific assignment;
        b. earned at least 36 semester hours of approved content or professional education coursework directly related to public school education, earned after the conferral of the bachelor's or higher degree, including at least 21 graduate credits, of which at least six credits shall be related to the teacher's specific discipline or the specialist's specific assignment; or

> c. obtained National Board Certification and earned a minimum of 12 semester hours of approved graduate course work, earned after the conferral of the bachelor's or higher degree and related to the teacher's specific discipline or the specialist's specific assignment
>
> https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/Certification-Types.aspx

We analyzed educator credential types in relation to the estimated proportions of EML and Latino/a students that educators serve. Because there were so few educators with Conditional Certificates or Professional Eligibility Certificates, we combined these categories to ensure that no survey respondent could be personally identified.

In addition, we asked educators to estimate the proportions of students that they serve who are EML students, and who are Latino/a students. Table 4 and Table 5 show educators' self-reported years of service by the estimated proportion of EML and Latino/a students that they serve.

Table 4: Proportions of EML students served, by educators' level of credentials, for survey respondents

Estimated proportion of EMLs that the educator serves	Educator Credential				
	Conditional Certificate (CDC) or Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC)	Standard Professional Certificate I (SPC I)	Standard Professional Certificate II (SPC II)	Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)	Total
Fewer than one-third	-	15	12	103	**136**
One-third to two-thirds	14	34	12	149	**209**
More than two-thirds	14	45	14	175	**248**

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Table 5: Proportions of Latino/a students served, by educators' level of credentials, for survey respondents

Estimated proportion of Latino/a students that the educator serves	Educator Credential				
	Conditional Certificate (CDC) or Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC)	Standard Professional Certificate I (SPC I)	Standard Professional Certificate II (SPC II)	Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)	Total
Fewer than one-third	-	-	-	64	**85**
One-third to two-thirds	12	37	15	176	**240**
More than two-thirds	16	49	16	188	**269**

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show cumulative distributions by level of credentials for estimated proportions of EML students and Latino/a students.

Although the majority of students are served by educators with Advanced Professional Certificates, there are differences among schools by their proportion of EML students. In schools with fewer than one-third of students who are EMLs, 76% of respondents held the APC, compared with schools where more than one-third of the students were EMLs. In both categories (one-third to two-thirds, and more than two-thirds), 71% of the educators held the APC. Students in schools with smaller proportions of

EML students were also less likely to be served by educators with conditional or eligibility certificates (4% at schools with fewer than one-third EML students; compared with 7% where these students constitute one-third to two-thirds of the population, and 6% where EMLs are more than two-thirds of the population).

Figure 4: Educators' estimates of the proportion of EML students they serve, by credential type
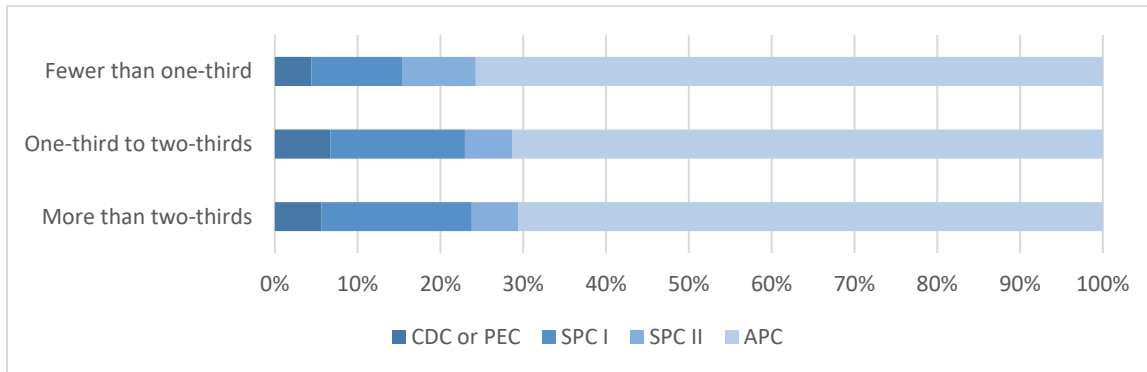
A similar pattern holds for the relationship between educators' credential types and the proportion of Latino/a students they serve. For schools with majority Latino/a populations (more than two-thirds), the proportion of educators with the Advanced Professional Certificate stands at 70%, rising to 73% in schools where Latinos comprise one-third to two-thirds of students, and to 75% for schools where fewer than one-third are Latinos.

Figure 5: Educators' estimates of the proportion of Latina/o students they serve, by credential type
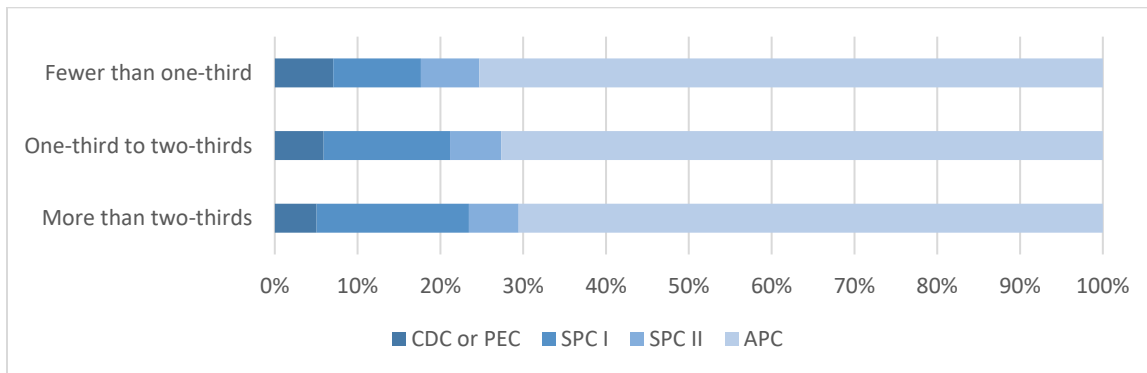
We also looked at the race and ethnicity of the educators in MCPS as a whole and among the survey respondents.

MCPS teachers are approximately 73% White, 12% Black or African American, 7% Hispanic or Latino/a, 6% Asian, and 2% American Indian, Pacific Islander, or of two or more races (MCPS Public Announcement, October 29, 2018). Our survey respondents included a greater proportion of Latino/a (16%) and Asian (9%) respondents, and a smaller proportion of White (62%) respondents than the general population of MCPS educators. Table 6 (also included in the methods section) shows the race and ethnicity of the survey participants.

Table 6: Race and ethnicity of survey respondents

Which of these groups do you identify with? Select all that apply to you:

Answer Choices	Responses	
I prefer not to answer.	6.28%	55
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.80%	-
Asian	9.02%	79
Black or African American	11.99%	105
Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic	15.87%	139
Middle Eastern or North African	2.74%	24
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.46%	-
White	61.76%	541
Some other race, ethnicity, or origin (please specify)	2.17%	19

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Almost 10% of the respondents to our survey were paraeducators. This group is notably more parallel to the student body in its ethnic and racial makeup. Among paraeducators (Table 7), 23% of the survey respondents where Latino/a or Hispanic, and 46% were White.

Table 7: Race and ethnicity of paraeducators among survey respondents

Which of these groups do you identify with? Select all that apply to you:

Answer Choices	Responses	
I prefer not to answer.	4.60%	-
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.15%	-
Asian	18.39%	16
Black or African American	13.79%	12
Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic	22.99%	20
Middle Eastern or North African	9.20%	-
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	-
White	45.98%	40
Some other race, ethnicity, or origin (please specify)	3.45%	-

To ensure that survey respondents are not identifiable, we suppress n-counts for categories with fewer than 10 respondents.

Finally, we consider language practices of survey respondents. Around 15% of the respondents speak Spanish at home or with family, and around 12% speak some language other than English or Spanish. We also consider the group of paraeducators separately, finding that this group is more likely to speak languages other than English at home and less likely to speak English at home. Of this group, 18% spoke Spanish at home, 18% spoke some other language, and one in five did not speak English at home. These results are provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Language practices of survey respondents, for all educators and for paraeducators

Please indicate which languages you speak at home or with your family. Select all that apply to you:

Answer Choices	All Educators		Paraeducators only	
I prefer not to answer.	3.08%	27	0.00%	0
I speak English at home and with my family.	87.12%	764	80.68%	71
I speak Spanish at home or with my family.	15.05%	132	18.18%	16
I speak another language at home or with my family. (please specify)	11.63%	102	18.18%	16

Professional Learning

The survey participants were active in professional learning, with almost 85% of participants engaging in professional learning activities twice or more in a year, and almost half engaging in professional learning more than four times per year (Table 9).

Table 9: Proportions of survey respondents who participated in any professional development activities

In the past five years, approximately how often have you participated in in-service professional development activities?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Not at all	3.03%	23
About once a year	12.24%	93
2-4 times per year	39.08%	297
More than 4 times per year	45.66%	347

We probed for the inclusion of topics specific to the instruction of EML students in this data (Table 10). The following topics had been covered in professional learning to some extent (either extended coverage, or some coverage or mention) for at least 60% of respondents:

- Teaching language through content
- Literacy strategies for EML students
- Incorporating language objectives into content instruction
- Creating language objectives
- Sociocultural competence

Between 40% and 60% of respondents had participated in professional learning covering the following set of topics:

- Writing strategies for EML students
- Supporting newcomer students
- Oral language development for EML students

There were, however, three topics where more than 40% of respondents had not engaged in any professional learning around the topic:

- Identifying or supporting gifted and talented EML students
- Supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)
- Family engagement strategies for multilingual families

Table 10: Survey respondents with professional development covering select topics of relevance to EML students

	Yes, extended coverage	Yes, some coverage or mention	No	Don't know/ Not applicable
Creating language objectives	21.46%	40.85%	26.00%	11.69%
Incorporating language objectives into content instruction	21.35%	42.84%	24.79%	11.02%
Oral language development for EML students	14.48%	39.48%	34.15%	11.89%
Literacy strategies for EML students	15.60%	49.66%	24.29%	10.45%
Writing strategies for EML students	11.87%	47.75%	28.79%	11.60%
Teaching language through content	19.27%	46.68%	23.74%	10.31%
Family engagement strategies for multilingual families	7.87%	37.31%	46.81%	8.01%
Sociocultural competence	16.21%	44.23%	30.91%	8.65%
Identifying or supporting gifted and talented EML students	3.30%	20.47%	65.38%	10.85%
Supporting newcomer students	11.14%	43.89%	38.72%	6.25%
Supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)	8.70%	32.20%	48.51%	10.60%

Our survey also included an open-ended question about professional development: *Are there any areas where you would like additional professional learning to support EML students? What topics do you feel you need more support with?* Of the 888 survey respondents, 260 (29%) responded.

A wide range of professional learning needs were reported in these open-ended survey responses. Respondents' comments were first categorized by our eight areas of inquiry and then further analyzed within these areas. See Table 11 below for the number of comments indicating professional learning needs related to each area. Respondents to the open-ended question on professional learning reported needs most often in the methods and models area (95), with an emphasis on instruction in content classrooms. The next most frequently cited areas of need were supporting newcomer students (45), particularly SLIFE; assets-based approaches (31), including use of students' home languages and a better understanding of students' languages and cultures; and family engagement (27). Some respondents (16) also cited professional learning needs regarding ELs with disabilities. A few also mentioned achievement outcomes and opportunities (8), including use of data and reporting; college and career readiness (7), including advanced courses and gifted EMLs; and supports for educators (2).

Table 11: Professional learning, by area of inquiry, reported as a need in open-ended survey responses

Area of Inquiry	Number of Open-Ended Survey Responses on Professional Learning
Achievement Outcomes and Opportunities	8
Methods and Models	95
Assets-Based Approach	31
Educator Assets & Supports	2
College & Career Readiness	7
Newcomer Students	45
EMLs with Disabilities	16
Family Engagement	27

To support triangulation of data that leads to clear recommendations, we will address the comments related to instructional methods and models and to educators' assets and supports in this chapter. Survey results on the other areas of inquiry are found in their respective chapters. We include the results for instructional methods and models in this chapter (rather than in the Methods and Models chapter) as these results are more closely aligned with the research question around pedagogical knowledge, and we feel that inclusion in this section leads to more clearly stated recommendations around topics of professional learning. We also incorporate two comments that were not easily classified into other areas and that are listed under "Educator Assets & Supports" in the table.

A theme among open-ended survey responses on professional learning was the need for EML support in content classrooms. This was expressed by content teachers themselves, as well as staff in other roles. Related concerns were described regarding the curriculum, standards, and expectations for EMLs, recent changes in program structure, and lack of time for adequately differentiating instruction for a diverse group of students within a single classroom. These themes resonate with findings from the other research activities within this study and were described alongside these reported professional learning needs in many responses.

With regards to professional learning needs to help teachers support EMLs in classroom instruction, survey respondents suggested a number of instructional topics. See Table 12 below for the instructional areas mentioned by survey respondents as needs for professional learning. Note that individual respondents may have mentioned one or more of these areas. Some of these areas will be further explained below, while others were often not further articulated within responses and do not necessarily warrant explanation within this context (e.g., differentiation, scaffolding, language objectives).

Table 12: Open-ended survey responses reporting EML instructional needs

Topic	Number of Responses	Topic	Number of Responses
Literacy instruction	27	Scaffolding	3
EML instruction, broadly	21	Instruction in TWI settings	3
Teaching content	14	Teacher collaboration	3
Differentiation	11	Incorporating/addressing standards	2
Integrating language and content	10	Assessment, progress monitoring	2
Oral language instruction	8	Preschool/early childhood	2
Second/English language acquisition/development	6	Instruction for students with different English proficiency levels	2
Making curriculum and grade-level content accessible	6	Long-term EMLs	2
Instruction for students at lower ELP levels (1-2)	6	Secondary content instruction	2
Language objectives	5	Vocabulary	1
Managing time and balancing instructional responsibilities	4	Comprehensible input	1
Classroom management, environment	4	Materials selection	1

As demonstrated in Table 12, literacy instruction was the most frequently cited need for professional learning on instruction. Reading was mentioned specifically by 11 respondents, and writing by 9 respondents. A few respondents mentioned literacy instruction as a particular need for instructing students with lower literacy skills, including "struggling readers" (1), students without first/home language literacy (1), or students with "initial" literacy (1).

The next most frequently cited instructional need for professional learning was instruction for EMLs broadly. These comments referred to a need for more teachers to learn instructional strategies for EMLs, often without citing specific strategies or sub-topics. They often referred to content instruction, in part due to mainstreaming of EMLs.

Another area mentioned frequently was the need for guidance on teaching content to EMLs. Most of these comments referred to content/general education classrooms broadly, while three respondents reported a need for guidance on content instruction for EMLs within specials courses specifically (e.g., music, art, physical education).

Closely related to the comments indicating a need for instructional strategies for teaching content were those that specifically mentioned *integration* of language and content. A number of comments suggested topics representing different *ways* to integrate language and content, or teach content classes to EMLs, for example, differentiation, scaffolding, incorporating language objectives, vocabulary, comprehensible input, and making accommodations for different English language proficiency levels.

Some respondents also noted a need for professional learning around time management and balancing instructional responsibilities. Four respondents emphasized practicality and a desire for guidance

regarding how to plan lessons that integrate content and language and support for EMLs. One noted wanting to make lessons "meaningful" in addition to addressing basic instructional needs, and another stated, "I would also like more support in balancing foundational skills instruction with engaging and challenging grade-level content. I know how to teach all of these things. It's finding the time in the day to do it."

The four respondents who cited needs regarding classroom environment and management emphasized creating a learning environment wherein students are engaged, motivated, respectful, and resilient. They noted challenges such as language barriers and difficulty managing some students.

Two responses referred to supports for educators that did not fall clearly into any of the other focal areas, but bear mentioning. One comment, from an ELD teacher, referred to challenges completing "all the extra work" on top of their teaching load, and requested help with how to manage these many responsibilities. This comment was echoed in the other responses noted above with regard to instruction, but those responses mentioned balancing multiple instructional goals, while this one noted balancing instruction with responsibilities outside of instruction.

Another respondent said they'd like professional learning on how to organize a team meeting with all the teachers of struggling EML students, indicating a desire for collaborative strategies and connections across instructional roles. They also mentioned wanting training on using communication tools like Synergy, Outlook, or Slack to send messages, along with best practices for documentation.

Educator Dispositions and Beliefs

We also examined the knowledge, dispositions, and beliefs of survey respondents (Table 13). Overall, respondents were confident in their understanding of ELD standards and their knowledge and ability to use their own students' ELD levels (more than 70% strongly agreed or agreed).

Table 13: Select knowledge, dispositions, and beliefs of survey respondents

Please rate each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I am familiar with the ELD standards.	29.88%	42.50%	17.26%	4.25%	6.11%
I am familiar with my students' levels of ELD and I use data on ELD level to differentiate instruction.	30.53%	40.80%	13.07%	2.13%	13.47%
I enjoy supporting Emergent Multilingual students.	64.46%	29.05%	1.06%	0.13%	5.31%
I have challenges with supporting Emergent Multilingual students.	12.42%	48.60%	22.96%	10.01%	6.01%
I know about the language backgrounds of the Emergent Multilingual students that I serve.	35.88%	47.52%	9.10%	1.87%	5.62%
I have met the families of the Emergent Multilingual students that I serve.	15.05%	37.68%	30.76%	9.45%	7.06%

The survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that they enjoy supporting EML students, with a very small number (n<10) responding "disagree" or "strongly disagree." However, more than 60% indicated that they experienced challenges in supporting EML students. Participants indicated that they were

knowledgeable about students' language backgrounds (83.40% strongly agreed or agreed), and most educators had met the families of their multilingual students (52.73%).

Data and Document Review

In this section, we examine evidence emerging from data and MCPS documents around three issues. First, we review district-level data on educators' average years of experience, and cross reference this with proportions of EML and Latino/a students by school. Next, to further understand educators' concerns over workload, we examine select position descriptions. Finally, we look at documentation of current professional learning options from MCPS, to supplement our understandings drawn from the focus group and survey data.

Educator experience and student population

To shore up our understanding of the relationship between educators' levels of experience and the populations of students that they serve, we requested that MCPS provide, for each school, the average number of years of experience for all educators, and the average number of years of experience for ELD educators.

Average years of experience, by school, for all educators, ranged from 6 years to 18 years. For ELD educators, average years of experience ranged from 2 years to 34 years.

Next, we examined the proportions of EML and Latino/a students at each school in relationship to the average years of experience of all educators.

Figure 6 shows the relationship between the proportion of EML students at a school and the average number of years of experience of all educators at that school. Each dot on the graph represents one school. This graph shows a significant but slight negative relationship; schools with higher proportions of EML students tend to have, on average, less experienced educators.

Figure 6: Average years of experience of all educators by proportion of EML students, by school
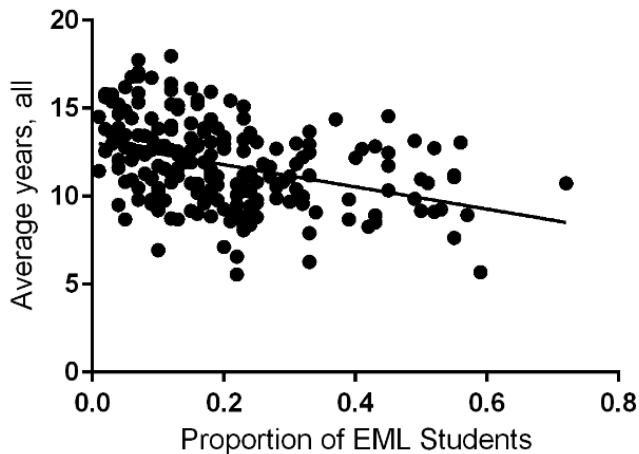
Weak inverse relationship. $R^2 = 0.1344$, $p < 0.0001$

In Figure 7, we show a similar pattern applies by proportion of Latino/a students. There is a slight but significant negative relationship between the proportion of Latino/a students in a school and the average years of experience of all educators in the school.

Figure 7: Average years of experience of all educators by proportion of Latino/a students, by school
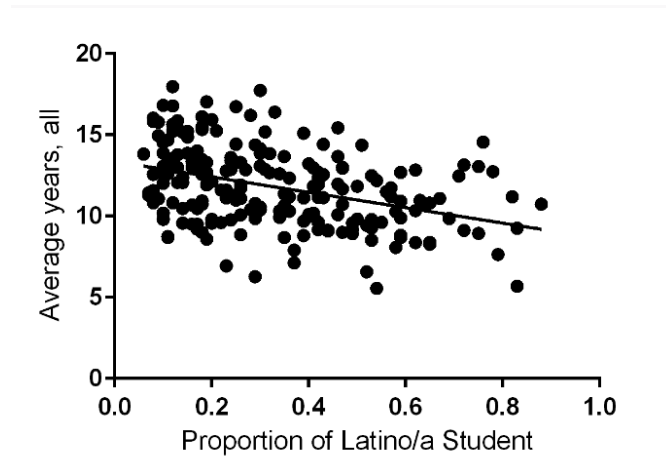
Weak inverse relationship. $R^2 = 0.148$, $p < 0.0001$

Figure 8 shows the relationship between the proportion of EML students in the school and the average years of experience of ELD educators. There is no significant relationship between these values, indicating that EML students at schools with higher proportions of EML students are no more or less likely to have highly experienced or inexperienced ELD teachers than EML students at low-incidence schools. Put otherwise, both experienced and inexperienced ELD educators are well-distributed across schools. [1]

Figure 8: Average years of experience of EML educators by proportion of EML students, by school
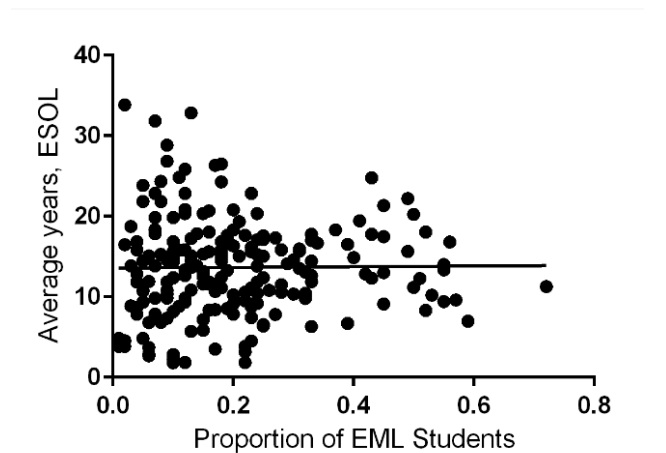
No significant relationship. $R^2 = 0.0001$, $p = 0.8917$

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[1] For completeness, we also examined the relationship between experience of ELD teachers and proportion of Latino/a students. This relationship is not significant – the proportion of Latino/a students in a school does not have a relationship with the average number of years of experience of its ELD teachers.

Staffing Levels

Stakeholder discussions uncovered that one area of need for additional staffing was at the school level, coordinating across ELD instructors, especially at the elementary level.

At the middle school level, schools may have an individual in the role of ELD Content Specialist, and at the high school level, schools may have an ESOL resource teacher. These individuals serve as instructional leaders and support ELD instructors school-wide. No parallel position exists at elementary schools. Figure 9 provides the job descriptions for these two positions.

Figure 9: Job descriptions for MS Content Specialist and HS ESOL Resource Teacher

Teacher, MS Content Specialist
The Middle School Content Specialist has the responsibility for his/her department and builds the capacity of the department to analyze achievement data for improved instruction. The Middle School content specialist ensures that accelerated and enriched instruction and intervention support is available for all students. The Middle School content specialist contributes to building and sustaining a community of learners. The Middle School content specialist is an exemplary teacher and has demonstrated success in increasing student achievement. The content specialist works directly with adults to support the implementation of the instructional program and observes teachers to assist them in improving teaching and learning. He/she focuses on coordination of the instructional program and collaboration among teachers within departments and across teams. The content specialist needs to be certified in his/her content areas. For the Arts/PE content specialist, the person needs to be certified in one of these areas. In order to support these additional responsibilities, he/she is provided with additional time and compensation.

Teacher, ESOL Resource
Provides leadership to teachers in the ESOL department within high schools under supervision of school administration. Supports ESOL teachers in the instructional program, serves as an instructional role model, supports the development of a professional learning community within the department and school, observes and analyzes instructional practices related to teachers' professional growth and evaluation, collaborates with supervisors and colleagues on instructional issues, takes a leadership role in the handling of instructional resources, supports the development of the master schedule, keeps current on content and best practices in the specified subject field, and serves as a liaison to the ESOL office and the school to ensure that all federal and state mandates for English Language Learners are understood and implemented at the local school level. Serves as a liaison with the parents and school community as an advocate for ESOL students and programs.

Source: MCPS Job Classification Information: https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/personnel/classification/

Note that the Content Specialist role is generic and not specific to ELD. In other words, schools may have Content Specialists across multiple subject areas. One Middle School Content Specialist noted that there were specific duties within the ELD Content Specialist role that were not necessarily included in all other Content Specialists' positions. For example, the ELD Content specialist is responsible for scheduling and data review, ensuring that Newcomer students are appropriately identified if they are EML students, advocating for EML students, managing EML folders, coordinating ELD refusal from parents, managing ELD testing at the school level, and supporting accommodations as needed on MCAP testing.

CAL examined staffing ratios of EML students to ELD instructors via review of district-level data, and review of the ELD instructor staffing formula. A limitation of our approach is that we did not have the capacity to verify with schools that these formulas were implemented as directed. Based on our analyses, we estimate that the ratio of EML students to instructors, outside of special programs, generally ranges somewhere between 20-88 students per ELD instructor.

The overall ratio of EML students to ELD instructors, district-wide, for FY 2022 is 38 students per instructor. This number is the total number of EML students in the district divided by the total number of ELD educators, inclusive of the classifications "Teacher, ESOL" and "Teacher, ESOL Resource," as shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Overall ratio of EML students to ELD educators

	Number of ELD teachers	Number of EML students, 2021-22	EML student to ELD instructor ratio
Teachers, ESOL	725.8		
Teacher, ESOL Resource	17		
Total teachers	**742.8**	**28,420**	**38**

Data provided by DELME

Instructional ratios for individual teachers vary according to the school level (elementary, middle, or high school) and the ELP level of students. There are separate formulas for Title 1 schools and focus schools. MCPS uses separate full-time equivalent (FTE) formulas for each of these conditions. There is also a base ratio in place for schools with low numbers of EML students (a "minimally compliant" program).

We analyzed these formulas by computing the FTE teacher ratio for each condition (i.e. the base ratio divided by the FTE equivalent). For example if a formula specifies a base ratio of 10 students and an FTE equivalent of 0.5, a teacher at this ratio would have a caseload of 20 students (10 divided by 0.5). This gives us an approximate range of students per FTE ELD educator. Data are provided in Table 15. (Note that there are no Title 1 High Schools or Focus High Schools in the district).

Table 15: FTE ratios as computed from FY2023 MCPS staffing formula for ELD educators

Type	Base ratio	% FTE	FTE ratio	Type	Base ratio	% FTE	FTE ratio
Minimally compliant				**Title 1 - Elementary**			
Elementary	20	0.4	50	ELP1	7	0.2	35
Middle	35	0.4	88	ELP2	7	0.18	39
High	40	0.8	50	ELP3	7	0.16	44
				ELP4	8	0.14	57
Non-Title 1/Non-Focus - Elementary				**Title 1 - Middle**			
ELP1	7	0.2	35	ELP1	7	0.2	35
ELP2	7	0.2	35	ELP2	7	0.18	39
ELP3	8	0.16	50	ELP3	7	0.16	44
ELP4	10	0.2	50	ELP4	8	0.14	57
Non-Title 1/Non-Focus - Middle				**Focus Schools - Elementary**			
ELP1	15	0.7	21	ELP1	7	0.2	35
ELP2	15	0.5	30	ELP2	7	0.18	39
ELP3	19	0.3	63	ELP3	7	0.16	44
ELP4	19	0.3	63	ELP4	9	0.14	64
Non-Title 1/Non-Focus - High				**Focus Schools - Middle**			
ELP1	14	0.7	20	ELP1	7	0.2	35
ELP2	14	0.5	28	ELP2	7	0.18	39
ELP3	19	0.3	63	ELP3	7	0.16	44
ELP4	19	0.3	63	ELP4	9	0.14	64

The highest ratio was for educators in minimally compliant middle school programs, which require 0.4 FTE for every 35 students, or 88 students per FTE. The lowest ratio was for students at ELP level 1 in non-Title 1/non-Focus High schools, which require 0.7 FTE for every 14 students, or 20 students per FTE. We stress that these figures are not based on actual teacher caseloads, but rather based on analyses of staffing formula ratios. In practice, each school will have a mix of students at different ELP levels and must staff according to the students who attend the school.

Despite these limitations, our analysis allows us to understand the potential range of FTE caseloads for ELD instructors, which ranges from 20 students, to 88 students, with a total county average of 30 students.

Nationwide, the ratio of English learners to EL instructors was about 12 students per each licensed or ceritified EL instructor (U.S. Department of Education, 2021, p. 61, p.108), although the range among states was very broad.

Documentation of Professional Learning

CAL received data on professional development offerings from DELME at both the elementary and secondary levels, dating back to 2018. Data shared included the year the PD session was offered, the title, the number of hours, the number of sessions, the total number of teachers who participated, and the number of ELD and content area teachers.

The DELME office has extensive PD offerings. To understand the reach of the offerings, we selected a representative recent year, and considered offerings from summer 2022 and school year 2022.

At the elementary level, there were a total of 82 sessions offered across topics including WIDA standards and assessment, support for first- and second-year teachers, support for specific curriculum items (e.g., Lexia, Eureka math), and support for SLIFE students. A number of the offerings were specific to TWI programs. For elementary school, based on the DELME data, roughly two-thirds of the participants in person-hour hours (length of session x number of sessions x count of teachers) were ELD teachers, and around one-third were content teachers.

At the secondary level, there were a total 33 secondary professional development sessions offered. The course "EB-60: Teaching ESOL Students in the Mainstream," had the greatest reach of any of the courses listed, with 480 content teachers participating in the 45 hours of PD. This course accounts for almost three-quarters of the total person-hours of DELME-offered professional development. Most of the secondary professional development has content teachers, rather than ELD teachers as the audience. Frequently offered topics include collaborative planning and co-teaching, literacy, and general support for educators of EML students. There are also several sessions specific for educators of newcomer students and students in the METS program.

Findings

What assets do the cadre of MCPS educators bring with respect to education for EML and Latino/a students? What supports are needed?

Almost 30% of MCPS educators use more than one language at home. This number rises to 36% among the group of paraeducators who responded to the survey.

Across our dataset, there is clear evidence of a level of care and responsibility that MCPS educators feel toward their students. Educators enjoy supporting their students and have positive feelings toward these student groups. They actively work to seek out professional learning that enables them to enhance their craft, and in our survey and focus group responses, we see them advocate for additional professional learning that enhances their proficiency.

We observe that survey and focus group respondents tended to be disproportionately ELD teachers and teachers with ESOL certification (see Chapter 2, Methods, for further detail). Among survey respondents, there was an underrepresentation of general education and mainstream content area teachers and an overrepresentation of teachers holding ESOL certification.

Two findings emerge from this observation. First, the survey results should be viewed as more closely representative of the views, understandings, and dispositions of ELD teachers and teachers with ESOL certification than they are representative of the general MCPS educator population.

Second, the lack of response from general and content educators is in and of itself a data point; it suggests that these educators may not see that they have a primary responsibility for EML students. We further understand that professional development offerings pertaining to EML students are offered primarily through the DELME office to ELD teachers, but that there are challenges in finding space in the schedules of content area teachers to engage with professional learning that specifically supports EML students.

Are the teachers of EML and Latino/a students comparable in their years of experience and level of credentialling to the general population of teachers?

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine propose three measures of Disparities in Access to Effective Teaching (indicator 10) that can be used to monitor educational equity:

- Teachers' years of experience
- Teachers' credentials and certification
- Racial and ethnic diversity of the teaching force

Nationally, Black and Latino/a students as well as students identified as EMLs are more likely to be served by novice teachers.

> "schools serving the highest percentages of Black and Latino students in their school district are more likely to employ teachers who are newest to the profession. These schools reported 6 percent of their teaching staff as being in their first year of teaching in any school, compared with 4 percent in schools with the lowest percentage (bottom 20%) of black and Latino students in their districts (Rahman et al., 2017). Of the nearly 5 million English learners nationwide, 3 percent attend schools where more than 20 percent of teachers are in their first year of teaching, compared with 2 percent of non-English learner students."

> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019, p. 93)

In addition, there are disparities in students' access to certified teachers, with Latino/a students twice as likely as their White peers to attend schools where 20 percent of teachers at the school have not met all certification and licensing requirements (3.7% of Latino/a students, and less than 2% of White students attend such schools nationwide) (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019, p. 94).

The National Academies also note that there is clear evidence that students see more optimal educational outcomes—including test scores, academic attitude, fewer disciplinary incidents, and dropout protection—when there is a racial/ethnic match between students and teachers. Furthermore, nationally, White students are more likely to have educational experiences where they see a preponderance of educators who look like themselves, as the national teaching corps is 80% White, compared with the population of public school students who are 49% White. In addition to considering the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the teaching corps, our investigation also included attention to the linguistic backgrounds of educators.

In our examination of trends in MCPS, we found:

- Latino/a and EML students may be more likely to served by novice educators, and less likely to experience classes with veteran teachers, than non-Latino/a students and students who are not identified as EML.
- Latino/a and EML students may be less likely to have teachers with Advanced Professional certification, and more likely to have teachers with Conditional Certification or a Professional Eligibility Certificate than other students.
- Latino/a students do not see themselves proportionally reflected in the MCPS corps of educators–while 33% of students in MCPS are Hispanic or Latino/a, only 7% of educators are.
- The corps of paraprofessionals are more racially and ethnically diverse than the general pool of educators, and more likely to be multilingual.

These findings should be interpreted with the caveat that they are drawn from the pool of survey respondents' estimates of proportions of EML and Latino/a students in their schools.

Do educators in the district have preparation in the pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013) needed to support multilingual learners?

In general, supports for pedagogical language knowledge are available and educators participate in professional learning on these topics; however, we believe ongoing PD continues to be needed.

OELA's toolkit notes that "LEAs must provide adequate professional development and follow-up training in order to prepare EL program teachers and administrators to implement the EL program effectively." While more than half of the educators surveyed had participated in recent professional learning that covered key elements needed to support EML students, there were still large numbers of educators who did not participate in such ongoing professional learning.

The disparities in which educators feel the most responsibility for EML students extend to participation in professional learning; ELD teachers are more likely to seek out and value professional learning that centers EML students, while content and general education teachers are less likely to do so. As one administrator who participated in focus groups expressed: "elevate teachers so all teachers become teachers of language and academic content." Focus group participants also stressed that administrators were an important group to target for professional learning.

What opportunities are available for professional learning to support Emergent Multilingual Learners (EML students) in the content areas, and what opportunities are needed?

DELME provides extensive professional development offerings to educators across the course of a school year. Offerings include general orientation to foundational topics in EML education, as well as sessions specific to co-teaching, literacy, particular curricular elements (Lexia, Eureka math), WIDA standards and assessment, SLIFE and METS students, and TWI programs.

Many of the educators who participated in our survey and focus groups had explored professional learning opportunities to expand their own professional toolkit – a clear indication of the strong passion and care that these educators bring to their work. Educators were also clear in their needs and provided many topics about which they wish to learn more.

The clearest findings here emerge around needs for training in sociocultural competence (including anti-bias training) and in trauma-informed education. In addition, we saw requests for the following topics:

- Newcomer students
- ELD strategies
- Language development
- Reading instruction
- Assets-based vs. deficit-based
- Understanding of student populations (countries and cultures of origin)
- Special education for EMLs
- Implementation of new curriculum
- Identifying or supporting gifted and talented EML students
- Supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)
- Family engagement strategies for multilingual families

There is also a clear consensus that general education teachers are in need of additional support to clearly understand and implement their responsibilities for EML students. Additional groups that were suggested for further targeting included special education teachers and administrators.

Finally, we note that a subset of educators expressed that they learned best with structured peer learning or professional learning communities.

Do educators bring an assets-based mindset to supporting EML students?

Our findings are mixed. There is evidence that many educators appreciate and build upon the assets that EML students bring to school; there is also evidence of bias against EML students and Latino/a students.

Our analysis provides evidence that MCPS educators have an appreciation of the benefits of multilingualism. They express commitments to support their students and to build connections with students' families. Survey respondents overwhelmingly express that they enjoy their interactions with EML students. They are also engaged with students. Almost 85% of survey respondents indicated that they were knowledgeable about students' language backgrounds. Focus group participants also identified the alignment between anti-racist and anti-bias work and the work to support an assets-based approach to EML students.

On the other hand, we also uncovered evidence of potential biases against EML or Latino/a students. There were focus group participants who explicitly called out concern over bias against Latino/a students and their families. A school administrator in a focus group was blunt in their assessment: "EMLs are not seen as assets, and until the deficit point of view is eliminated, we won't see this school system progress."

Do educators have tools to implement culturally sustaining approaches to Latino/a students and to students from immigrant backgrounds?

Chapter 5 of this report provides more depth around questions of how MCPS educators (and the system as a whole) recognize the assets of multicultural and multilingual students from culturally sustaining perspectives.

A key finding from our assessment of educators' perspectives is the need for additional professional learning around sociocultural competence. This was expressed directly in focus groups and in survey

responses. We also gathered comments from educators concerned about bias against EML and Latino/a students, further reinforcing the need for such professional learning.

We also note that our findings regarding the diversity of the educator workforce have a bearing on this question.

Additional Finding: Educator Workload

We include one additional finding that emerged from the evaluation work and was not included in our initial set of research questions. It pertains to educator workload.

Survey and focus group participants clearly articulated their concerns with the level of workload taken on by ELD instructors to support EML students. In our examination of staff roles, we find that while there is a dedicated role at the high school level for a staff member to coordinate activities and administrative work across ELD teachers, the "Content Specialist" role at the middle school level may or may not support (or exclusively support) ELD teachers, and there is no dedicated role at the elementary level. We examined staffing formulas (ratios of EML students to ELD instructors) and find that the variation in student to teacher ratios ranges from 1:20 to 1:88. The ratio of EL students to ESOL instructors nationally is broad, and the national averages is one instructor per 12 students (U.S. Department of Education, 2021, p. 61, p.108).

We also found challenges around the timing of information needed to staff ELD programs. Staffing ratios are based on numbers of EML students, and in many cases, on numbers of EML students per level. Due to the timing of assessment results, students' ELP levels may not be known until late summer, which means that ELD program staffing levels are not finalized until close to the beginning of a school year.

Recommendations

4.1 Expand professional learning on strategies for EML students to include **all teachers**, not just ELD teachers.
- Distribute responsibility for professional learning on topics related to EML students so that teachers who are supported by the College and Career Readiness programs and the PreK-12 Curriculum office receive appropriate training in supporting EML students.
- Ensure that school leaders also receive appropriate training in supporting EML students.
- Monitor progress to understand the extent to which general education and content area teachers have received professional development in how to support EML students.

We find that while there is general support for and interest in professional learning that supports ELD students from the MCPS educators who participated in focus groups and our survey, content teachers (as opposed to ELD teachers) were less likely to be engaged with or respond to our evaluation. Respondents indicated that they would welcome co-teachers and other content or general education personnel engaging in more professional learning to support EML students. Central Office staff expressed challenges in uptake for professional learning that supports EML students outside the cohort of ELD teachers. While DELME staff have expert content knowledge on how to support EML students, it is important that other branches of the central office ensure that all educators take part in professional learning that supports EML students.

4.2 Expand professional learning to include training in sociocultural competence (including anti-bias training) and support for trauma-informed education.

Although there were many professional learning topics raised by educators in our study, these two were the most consistently identified across multiple data collection efforts.

4.3 Attend to equity of educator credentials and experience, implement measures to retain educators at schools with majority EML and Latino/a student populations, and continue efforts to expand the diversity of the teaching force.

4.4 Consider implementing or expanding paraeducator-to-teacher pathways, and incentivize recruitment into these programs for Latino/a and multilingual professionals.

Our evaluation finds that for schools with larger proportions of EML students and Latino/a students, there are more early-career educators, fewer veteran educators, and fewer educators that hold the Advanced Professional Certificate. We recommend continuing to attend to these data over time to understand what factors might cause change. Additionally, we recommend that measures be put in place to retain educators at schools with majority EML and Latino/a student populations. Finally, we recommend that MCPS continue their efforts to diversify the teaching workforce.

> "From an equity standpoint, the biggest concern is that teachers with more experience and credentials are currently not distributed equally or equitably among schools with different student populations."
>
> - National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019, p.9)

We note that the group of paraeducators who responded to the survey are more diverse in their racial and ethnic makeup, and more closely reflect the MCPS student body. They are also more likely to be multilingual. We suggest a targeted examination of paraeducator-to-teacher pathway programs, and work to target and incentivize recruitment into these programs for Latino/a and multilingual professionals.

4.5 Ensure that there are clearly identified ELD coordinator positions within (or across) schools to support professional learning, mentoring, and the administrative work that pertains to EML students, such as identifying students, managing testing, and engaging with families.

Educators expressed clear concern over the burden of effort borne by ELD teachers. We recommend expanding staffing to ensure that classroom teachers have a first-line experienced professional who can support building-level professional learning and the work of ensuring clear documentation and accountability for EML students.

4.6 Increase ELD teacher allocations in staffing formulas to reduce the ratio of EML students to ELD instructors.

5. College and Career Transitions

Summary of Recommendations

5.1 Set benchmarks for improvement of EML and Latino/a four- and five-year graduation rates as a matter of urgency.

5.2. Track and communicate graduation rate data for the following subgroups:

- Students who are former EMLs and have exited services. One way to examine whether ELD services are appropriately supporting students is to confirm that once students exit services, they are on track for academic success without the support of ELD services.
- Students dually identified as EML students and students with disabilities.
- Newcomer students.
- Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).

5.3 Improve accountability around scheduling to support graduation rates for EML students.

- At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, begin a process to provide each entering ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade EML student a personalized outline of graduation requirements, with detail on which requirements should be met in which of their remaining school years. Review and revise this outline at the end of each semester.
- If EML students enter MCPS mid-year after the beginning of ninth grade, provide a personalized outline of graduation requirements and detail on which requirements should be met in which of their remaining school years within 90 days of enrollment.
- Prioritize constructing schedules for EML students as early as possible in the scheduling process.
- Examine the schedules of every EML student in high school to ensure that all required courses are included within students' schedules for the year.
- Require each high school to provide an annual report to DELME and other relevant MCPS offices charged with supporting students' success toward graduation indicating how many, if any, EML students have schedules that are missing courses that are included in those students' personalized graduation requirements for the year.

5.4 Prioritize investment in nurturing relationships for EML and Latino/a students.

- Allocate additional culturally and linguistically competent counseling staff to support these recommendations.
- Empower counseling staff to escalate the need for a scheduling change if a student is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements due to scheduling issues.
- Ensure that students are included in the process and understand their own graduation requirements and provide caring and nurturing systems that support students who are not on track.

5.5 Improve outreach to families around graduation requirements and college and career opportunities.

- Ensure key information about graduation requirements is provided to families in a language that they can understand. Routinely seek feedback from families to ensure that the information is received and accessible.
- Conduct college and career information sessions for multilingual families, including information about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), in a language that families can understand.
- Ensure that all relevant staff share responsibility for multilingual communication on college and career opportunities, not just ELD teachers.
- Ensure that college and career meetings are accessible to students who are in the workforce.
- Train MCPS staff to be sensitive to students' diverse immigration statuses when communicating about college and career opportunities.

5.6 Examine specific graduation requirements identified as barriers.

- MCPS has an elective requirement for graduation which may be fulfilled by 2 credits of the same world language. Explore avenues to waive this graduation requirement for EML students, who, by definition, have fluency in a language other than English, while ensuring that advanced course-taking opportunities in world languages are open to those who wish to pursue them.
- Explore the state Student Service Learning (SSL) requirements to understand ways in which the SSL requirement can be met by students currently experiencing challenges in meeting these requirements. If hours are pro-rated for students who enroll in MCPS after the ninth grade, ensure that students, families, and counselors have a clear understanding of the pro-rating model.

5.7 Support the assets of EMLs and former EMLs in advanced coursework.

- Target EML students for participation in relevant advanced world language classes and examinations.
- Continue to promote the Seal of Biliteracy, especially to EML students. Integrate DELME staff into efforts to promote the Seal of Biliteracy.

5.8 Examine school accountability systems and ensure that such systems do not penalize schools for allowing newcomer EML students to graduate in five years. Examine flexibility around graduation requirements for counting first year of high school for newcomer students who enter MCPS midway through the ninth grade.

5.9 Examine staffing for the CREA program to ensure that sufficient staff are available to accommodate the increase in applicants and students, and to ensure that there are staff able to support the community connections to healthcare, legal, housing, and other services to support adult students.

Background

This chapter examines the transition point at which students leave high school and transition to the world of young adulthood, moving into higher education or the workforce. We examine the extent to which data illustrate whether or not Latino/a and EML students are appropriately prepared for this

transition and are able to move out of MCPS with access to a range of higher education or workforce choices. In this chapter, we consider students' and educators' impressions of the patterns and needs around successful college and career transitions. We also examine graduation rate data. We supplement our examination of graduation data with a review of data on advanced course-taking patterns in high school. We conclude with a short review of the current assets and challenges of the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) program.

Results

Focus Groups

MCPS educators felt that the students in MCPS are provided with a variety of programs and supports for transitioning to college and careers, with one counselor saying there are "lots of opportunities." Two ELD teachers suggested that MCPS talk to or find information about former graduates, to see how their time at MCPS prepared them, and how things went as they transitioned to college and careers.

The Seal of Biliteracy was mentioned by school administrators in four focus groups as a beneficial aspect of MCPS' college and career preparation programming. One administrator added that they were very excited about the number of TWI programs capitalizing on students' native languages, and a TWI administrator said they were "working on building a pathway" for the Seal of Biliteracy. It is, however, worth noting that the Seal of Biliteracy was mentioned only by administrators, and not by any participating teachers, families, or students.

Credit Requirements and Scheduling Challenges

Three focus groups discussed EML scheduling for ensuring students are on track to graduate. In one focus group, an ELD teacher said that curriculum and course adjustments are needed for ELD students, suggesting an abbreviated daily schedule for those who need to work, eliminating some unnecessary course requirements, and affording additional time for students to graduate, without penalty to the schools. Another ELD teacher in the same group reiterated the desire for students to be allowed five or more years to graduate.

A longer discussion of scheduling occurred in the focus group with assistant principals, who have particular insights into student scheduling. They reported that the process of scheduling involved working with counseling, creating a grid, and showing the progression. They said they provided the information very early but had to wait an additional three weeks to get an initial set of schedules for students. They said that "it felt like the EML students were put to the end of the line, while students who need a special kind of structure should be slotted in first."

They said that staffing is also a scheduling issue, and that staffing is not keeping pace with increasing enrollment, including a lack of paraeducators to provide support in content courses for METS students and other EMLs. They said this is also a challenge because ELD teachers are hired over the summer due to the fact that they don't have numbers of EMLs early enough to determine staffing. Staffing issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, Educator Assets and Supports.

Another issue for scheduling that the assistant principals discussed was the process for managing international transcripts when these are available. They said this can be a challenge if they have difficulty receiving transcripts from students' home countries and they are trying to place and schedule students with limited information on their prior schooling, even though, in some cases, students may have had a lot of experience and done very well at their previous school. The assistant principals in the

focus group suggested that it is challenging to manage this information and sometimes proceed with missing transcripts.

They concluded the conversation on scheduling by saying they would like to have a better understanding of which policies are MCPS policies, and which are from the Maryland State Department of Education, so that they know what can be changed at the district level.

A principal in another focus group echoed some of these same issues, saying there is state pressure for students to graduate "on time" and move forward. They said students are put into programs and classes where teachers are not prepared, and students are academically overwhelmed. All these participants shared a need for students to have time and accommodations available for them to graduate, and for greater understanding of the situations of EML students to be taken into consideration as students are enrolled and placed into courses.

The assistant principals also discussed the issue of world language course requirements. They reported that some EML students were not allowed to take world language courses even though they need two credits for graduation. They said that unfortunately the rationale—that students should not take another language while they are learning English—is still pervasive. One said it had changed at their school, but had been a norm, and may still be a practice in other schools within MCPS.

In a different focus group, one ELD teacher described the challenge facing some EMLs, especially CREA students, of earning sufficient SSL hours for graduation, due to the fact that they work full-time in addition to attending school. The teacher suggested that the requirement that SSL hours must be volunteer hours should be adjusted for these students, allowing work hours to contribute to the SSL graduation requirement for these students. Some participants also described challenges with regard to pressure to graduate "on time."

One final observation around credit requirements was that Naviance, the online platform that monitors schedules and gives detail on credits needed is challenging for students to use.

Student Voices

The participating CREA students said they were prepared for careers, but maybe not college, although they said the GED program can open doors to college. Students in both focus groups, representing both CREA and general education, reported feeling fairly well-prepared, but said that they wanted more information about types of opportunities and pathways available to them.

CREA students shared that they are not afforded opportunities to enroll in honors or advanced placement courses. Two general education students shared that a primary barrier to participation in honors and AP courses is communication. One shared, "We have opportunities, those of us learning English, to be part of the advanced English classes, but how to be part of honors or advanced placement, they don't tell us how to join."

CREA students and teachers shared that the program prepares students well for careers. Students also expressed a desire for more opportunities and additional career tracks, as well as more information about different pathways that might be available to them.

Graduation cohort and ninth-grade date of entry

A concern that was raised among stakeholders was that newcomer students who enter MCPS at the end of ninth grade must meet the high school requirements within the remainder of their high school career. For example, a ninth grade student who enters MCPS at the end of May has only three years (plus the few remaining weeks of the school year) to meet all of the high school graduation requirements.

Survey

There were 501 respondents to the survey, or 70.66% of respondents in total, who indicated that they worked with high school students. Table 1 (below) provides some detail on beliefs of these respondents as they pertain to the transition out of MCPS. Note that the table includes only respondents who indicated that they worked with high school students.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that EML students and families have access to clear information on how to access school counselors for support, although almost one-quarter (23.42%) disagreed. However, more than 30% of respondents expressed that they did not agree that EML students and families had clear information about what is needed for graduation.

The Seal of Biliteracy is an assets-based certification that celebrates and recognizes the bilingual skills of multilingual students. Almost one-third of the educators (30.47%) did not feel confident that students and families were able to access clear information about this qualification.

Application processes for community college and college also appeared to be unclear to students and families, according to survey respondents. There were 38.65% of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that EMLs and families can access clear information on how to apply for community college, and 43.43% who disagreed or strongly disagreed that these groups can access information on how to apply for college.

Respondents also expressed that advanced educational opportunities that support college attendance, such as AP, IB, or dual enrollment, may not be clearly understood (44.40% disagreed or strongly disagreed that that information on IB or AP is accessible, and 47.50% disagreed or strongly disagreed that information on dual enrollment is accessible).

Likewise, respondents did not have confidence around the accessibility of information on career opportunities such as internships or apprenticeships (48.78% disagreed or strongly disagreed). Almost half (49.17%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that information about costs and funding opportunities for college or community college was accessible to EML students and their families.

Table 1: Survey respondents' beliefs about transitions out of high school in MCPS

Emergent Multilingual students and their families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand about the following:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average
What is needed for graduation	15.21%	53.23%	24.33%	7.22%	2.24
How to apply for college	12.75%	43.82%	31.08%	12.35%	2.43
How to apply for community college	13.15%	48.21%	27.49%	11.16%	2.37
Costs and funding opportunities for college or community college	11.98%	38.84%	34.30%	14.88%	2.52
Career opportunities such as internships or apprenticeships	12.20%	39.02%	35.37%	13.41%	2.5
How to access school counselors for support	18.96%	57.62%	17.10%	6.32%	2.11
Dual enrollment opportunities	10.83%	41.67%	31.67%	15.83%	2.53
Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) classes	13.20%	42.40%	31.60%	12.80%	2.44
The Seal of Biliteracy	17.17%	52.36%	20.17%	10.30%	2.24

Survey respondents also provided commentary on these questions.

The overwhelming message among those who responded to the open-ended question was that more needs to be done to provide equitable access for EMLs and their families to information and support that can help prepare EMLs for college and careers.

Two respondents said there is a lot of college and career preparation for EMLs, and one said their school does a lot to help students in this area. However, overall, survey respondents reported that there is a lack of college and career preparation for EMLs (21 respondents) and that families need more information and support (15). They further said that when resources *are* provided, the information is sometimes unclear (4), family members may not receive or read the materials (4), and that resources need to be better promoted (2). Five respondents shared that EML students are excluded from college and career preparation, receiving no support from some staff (while these same staff members provide support to other students who are not EMLs) or attending events only to discover they are ineligible for the opportunities being presented. One other respondent shared that timing of college and career preparation events may prohibit participation for some students, suggesting that more evening and flexible scheduling options should be available for EMLs who are working to help support their families.

A related issue to college and career preparation is students' immigration status. Two respondents said this should be considered when providing guidance to students and families, one stating, "Be open about the reality of their situation and what is in their reach, and based on that, teach them how to make plans accordingly." A third respondent expressed a desire to learn how to better support undocumented students and their families: "I would like to learn more about agencies that exist to support families and students after high school that do not require citizenship or a certain 'status'."

College vs. Career

There were a variety of opinions on whether preparation needs to improve for EML students with regard to careers vs. college. Three respondents felt that EMLs and their families needed information on careers. One said "They wish to work and that should be respected," and stated that some EMLs or Latino/a students may not "qualify" for college. Another respondent shared that EMLs were sometimes told that they will not be able to attend college and should be provided with information about all options, saying, "We encourage and support as much as we can as ELD teachers, but there is not a systemic approach that is fully engaged with students. There are many students who hear and believe that they will not be successful at a four-year institution. I strongly disagree with this. They need to be supported in exploring their options, and this must be part of the system, not an add-on to the classroom teacher."

Deficit Mindset

Related to the debate of college- versus career-oriented preparation is the issue of how students are viewed. Three respondents reported that there is a deficit-based mindset toward EMLs, leading to limited options offered to EMLs and generally lowered expectations among MCPS staff for EML students. One respondent said, "The deficit mindset is pervasive and seriously negatively impacts families." Another respondent shared that this mindset can exist among EMLs themselves, but tied this to a lack of appropriate and necessary instructional supports: "EML students often see college and career as something 'out of their reach' because classes in high school are 'too hard' since the appropriate scaffolding is not provided to them."

Staff Providing Information and Support

Survey responses described which staff members are observed providing support to EMLs. Some respondents (3) directly mentioned counselors, and the guidance department generally, as being primarily responsible for providing college and career preparation for EMLs. However, ten respondents said that teachers and staff assigned to work with EMLs—ELD teachers in particular (9), as well as SLIFE coaches (1), and the International Admissions office (1)—provide this information because preparation from elsewhere is limited and insufficient. One respondent shared, "My EMLs were basically left out of most things...it was up to me to find out as much as I could and relay it to them. Some teachers were unwilling to accommodate them or invite them to participate in the Seal of Biliteracy." Another said, "EML students at my school depend on the ELD teachers to support them with college applications, FAFSA, MSDE scholarships, and so on." A SLIFE coach shared, "It is so ON the individual school or teacher, if they know or are able to do so. It is SO time-consuming. We DO NOT actively work on reducing barriers so families/students can access." One contributing factor for this is likely the workload of counselors; two respondents said that counselors are spread thin and challenged in providing support to all students.

An EML teacher and several counselors (3) also suggested the need for additional professional learning around supporting EMLs in this area. Two respondents specifically expressed a desire to learn more about how to help prepare EMLs for college and careers.

Language Access to College and Career Information

The fact that ELD teachers feel responsible for providing information about college and careers for EMLs may be connected to issues around the availability of linguistically and culturally responsive preparation from the guidance office and the district broadly. Four respondents raised the issue of materials not

being provided in multiple languages. Three shared that this is a particular concern with languages other than Spanish. However, two other respondents reported that documentation *is* provided in other languages. One of them pointed out that the county has parent coordinators who speak other languages, and that interpreters are available, adding, "There is a lot done to make sure parents receive communication in their own language."

Family literacy was also raised as a concern with regard to accessibility of written materials (1), along with the use of complicated jargon that could inhibit understanding of documents even for families with English literacy skills (1).

Another respondent raised the issue of cultural sensitivity, suggesting that families' home cultures should be better understood, specifically with regards to families' priorities and values around postsecondary options, and that this should inform college and career preparation within the district.

EML Access to Opportunities that Contribute to College and Career Preparation
Survey respondents mentioned a number of opportunities that are part of MCPS academic programming as available to EMLs to varying degrees, either contributing to or inhibiting EMLs' preparation for college and careers. Three respondents reported EMLs having access to advanced coursework, for example, while four noted that EMLs were excluded or inhibited from participation. One respondent said EMLs should be encouraged to participate in dual enrollment programs. Regarding SSL, one respondent said that EMLs struggle to access opportunities to fulfill this graduation requirement. Three respondents mentioned the Seal of Biliteracy, one suggesting that information about this opportunity should be shared with families as early as Pre-Kindergarten, another reporting that other educators were excluding EMLs from attaining the seal, and the third saying that EMLs learn about attaining the seal if they "make it as far as Spanish for Spanish Speakers 3."

Suggestions for Improving College and Career Preparation for EMLs
Survey respondents made a number of suggestions for improving college and career preparation for EMLs. Suggestions already reported above include flexible timing for events, professional learning for counselors, and increased access to academic programs that can support students in reaching their college and career goals. Other respondents (2) suggested that programs aimed to support students in postsecondary preparation (e.g., AVID, ACE) should be implemented, and another said a course on college and careers should be provided for EMLs. Two respondents said more events are needed to support students and families, for example, college info nights in Spanish, a FAFSA night in Spanish, or a REG night for families. A number of respondents (6), including elementary and middle school educators, suggested that preparation should begin earlier, and that elementary and middle school staff should know how to help set students on various paths toward graduation, college, and careers.

Professional Learning on College and Career Readiness
Seven respondents cited professional learning needs related to supporting EMLs with college and career readiness, including facilitating EML access to advanced coursework (3), gifted EMLs (3), and college and career information for students (1). The respondent who mentioned college and career information for students noted that they'd like to learn how to provide this information beginning in ninth grade.

Of the three respondents reporting learning needs regarding EML access to and success within advanced coursework, two said they'd like to know how to better support EML students within these courses, one noting the challenges with courses that are "language-focused" such as English and Social Studies, and

the other noting students who need support with literacy skills. The third respondent reported wanting to know how to help ensure EML have access to opportunities to participate in challenging courses, as well as how to help their families understand and support their entrance and participation in magnet programs.

Quantitative Data and Document Review

Graduation Rates

Table 2 and Table 4 provide, respectively, the four-year and five-year cohort graduation rate for MCPS for 2019, 2020, and 2021, for all students, Hispanic or Latino/a students, EML students, and White students. The cohort graduation rates are defined as the percentage of a school's cohort of first-time ninth grade students who graduate within four or five years, adjusted for students who transfer in and out of the cohort after ninth grade.

Table 2: MCPS four-year cohort graduation rate for 2019, 2020, and 2021, and 2018-19 national rate

	MCPS rates			National rate, 2018-19
	2019	**2020**	*2021*	
All students	88.66%	89.25%	*91.37%*	*86%*
Hispanic or Latino/a	76.14%	77.14%	*82.53%*	*82%*
Emergent Multilingual Learners	52.84%	55.86%	*67.43%*	*69%*
White	≥ 95.00%	≥ 95.00%	*≥ 95.00%*	*89%*

Data sources: MCPS rates from Maryland State Department of Education; national rates from Table 219.46, De Brey, Snyder, Zhang, & Dillow (2021).
Note: 2021 data should be interpreted with caution – see below.

While we report data from the 2021 school year for the sake of completeness, we do not use this data in our findings. Data from 2021 must be interpreted with caution due to the impact of COVID. In particular, Table 2 should not be interpreted to show that there was a substantial jump in the academic outcomes or performance of EML students in 2021. Rather, the 2021 graduation figure for EML students is influenced by several factors emerging from the COVID pandemic.

In 2020 and 2021, MCPS adjusted graduation requirements to support students graduating during the height of the pandemic. MCPS graduation requirements were adjusted to align with the graduation requirements decreed by the Maryland State Board of Education and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).[1] In practice, for students graduating in these years, this meant that credit requirements were reduced, testing requirements were waived, and SSL requirements were waived. There is a modest increase in graduation rates for all subgroups between 2019 and 2020.

The increase in graduation rates from 2020 to 2021 is more pronounced, for all subgroups, and most of all for EML students. There is a two-percentage-point gain for all students; a six-point gain for Latino/a students; and an eleven-point gain for EML students.

The cohort of the class of 2021 is likely not comparable to prior years, as there are fewer students in this graduation cohort, with a drop of approximately 400 students (Table 3). Overall, MCPS had 368 fewer

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[1] MCPS Board of Education Memorandum of February 23, 2021:
https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BYJNUW60D2CF/$file/ADOPTED%20Adjust%20Grad%20Requires%20Class%202021.pdf

students in the 2021 graduating cohort that in the prior year (a 3% drop), with 368 fewer Latino/a students (an 11% drop) and 429 fewer EML students (a 23% drop).

Table 3: Number of students in MCPS four-year graduation cohort, 2019, 2020, and 2021

	MCPS rates		
	2019	**2020**	*2021*
All students	12,156	12,646	*12,278*
Hispanic or Latino/a	3,672	4,046	*3,617*
Emergent Multilingual Learners	1,425	1,663	*1,274*
White	3,610	3,604	*3,618*

Data provided by MCPS.

We base our findings on analysis of the 2019 and 2020 graduation rates. Although there is a bump in graduation rates for 2020, it is modest and does not impact our observations.

The four-year graduation rate for EML students for 2019 and 2020 stands at just more than 50%; in other words, only slightly more than half of EML students graduate within four years of beginning ninth grade. Hispanic or Latino/a students' four-year graduation rates across these two years average 76%, meaning that almost one-quarter of students do not graduate within four years. There is also a substantial difference between the graduation rates of White students and those of Hispanic or Latino/a students (averaging 18 percentage points) and EML students (averaging 41 percentage points).

We examined these rates against national rates (De Brey, Snyder, Zhang, & Dillow, 2021). While MCPS overall graduation rates (comparing across the 2018-19 school year) exceed the national average by three percentage points, rates for Latino/a students in MCPS are six points below the national average, and rates for EML students are 16 points below the national average. Rates for White students, on the other hand, are six or more points above the national average.

Graduation achievement gaps between subgroups are larger for MCPS than they are nationwide. Nationwide, graduation rates for Latino/a students are 4 percentage points below the national average, and rates for EML students are 17 percentage points below the national average. In MCPS, the rate for Latino/a students is 12 percentage points below the MCPS average, and the rate for EML students is 35 percentage points below the MPCS average.

In looking at five-year cohort graduation rates, disparities are still evident; however, the benefit of an additional year for graduation is evident. Given an extra year to graduate, the percentage of all students graduating rises by an average of 2%, the percentage of Latino/a students graduating rises by an average of 4%, and the percentage of EML students graduating rises by an average of 8% (Table 4).

Table 4: MCPS five-year cohort graduation rate for 2019 and 2020

	2019	**2020**
All students	91.04%	91.15%
Hispanic or Latino	80.82%	80.60%
Emergent Multilingual Learners	62.61%	62.48%
White	≥ 95.00%	≥ 95.00%

Data source: Maryland State Department of Education

An additional observation regarding graduation rates for Latino/a students is that the rate of students who do not graduate in four years (24%) stands very close to the overall rate of students who have absenteeism rates of greater than 20 days per school year (23%). We believe that our recommendation to draft and implement an absenteeism response plan centering on Latino/a students likely will have a positive impact on graduation rates.

There are several areas for which CAL requested graduation rate data, but as graduation rate data are computed at the state, not district level, MCPS was unable to provide disaggregated graduation rate data. We recommend that MCPS computes and communicates graduation rate data for the following subgroups:

1. Students who are former EMLs and have exited services. One way to examine whether ELD services are appropriately supporting students is to confirm that once students exit services, they are on track for academic success without the support of ELD services.
2. Students dually identified as EML students and students with disabilities
3. Newcomer students (MCPS does not track this subgroup in data systems.)
4. Students with limited or interrupted formal education (MCPS does not track this subgroup in data systems.)

As we noted above, stakeholders have expressed concern regarding newcomer students who arrive in the middle of ninth grade and have fewer than four years to complete all graduation requirements, particularly for students who do not have clear documentation, or students who have interrupted schooling.

With regards to students who have exited services, we received a copy of a 2019 presentation to the MCPS Board of Education which provides graduation rates for students who have exited services, for 2016, 2017, and 2018. Graduation rates for students who have exited services stand at 83.5% (2016, 82.1% (2017), and 79.5% (2018).

Course-taking Patterns
CAL reviewed course-taking data and results from the "Learning, Accountability, and Results" section of the MCPS data dashboard.[2] Available data included information on Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and the SAT courses and examinations. Data are presented in Table 5. As 2021 data are anomalous due to COVID, we present 2020 data. For each course, we present numbers of students who participated in final examinations and numbers who met the specific benchmark for each examination. To understand patterns of opportunity and achievement, we disaggregate data for Hispanic or Latino/a students and for EML students. We also present participation and performance data as proportions of the share of all students. To understand if participation and performance are proportionate to the share of students in the population, in the final line of the table we present the share of Hispanic or Latino/a students and the share of EML students in the high school population for 2020.

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[2] We note that in the MCPS data dashboard, within the "Learning, Accountability, and Results" section, the dashboard uses the outdated term LEP (Limited English Proficient). We recommend updating this with the newer term, Emergent Multilingual (EML).

Table 5: Participation and performance in AP, IB, and SAT examinations, 2020

		All students		Hispanic or Latino/a students		EML students	
		Number	Proportion in population	Number	Proportion in population	Number	Proportion in population
AP Exams	Participated	20,069	100%	3,065	15%	530	3%
	Scored 3 or higher	15,516	100%	2,045	13%	352	2%
IB Exams	Participated	1,542	100%	383	25%	59	4%
	Scored 4 or higher	1,305	100%	289	22%	37	3%
SAT	Participated	9,171	100%	2,319	25%	723	8%
	Met Evidence-Based Reading and Writing benchmark	6,531	100%	1,110	17%	97	1%
	Met Math benchmark	4,848	100%	597	12%	81	2%
Number and proportion of high school students		50,794	100%	15,561	31%	5,959	12%

Hispanic or Latino/a students were disproportionately less likely to participate in these challenging courses; while they represent 31% of the population, they represent, at most, only 25% of the group who participates in advanced coursework. The disproportionality is even more acute for EML students – at 12% of the high school population but only 8% of participants taking the SAT.

Students in both of these groups, furthermore, are consistently less proportionately represented among the group of students meeting benchmarks. In other words, smaller proportions of Latino/a students and EML students are succeeding in these challenging courses, as compared to their peers.

One area of excellence that emerges from our review of data is the performance of EML students on AP language examinations. We find that EML students exceeded the performance of their fluent-English peers on the Chinese, French, and Spanish Language and Culture Advanced Placement examinations (Table 6).

Table 6: Mean AP exam score on select AP language examinations for all students and for EML students, 2020

	All Students		EML Students	
Course	**Number of AP exams taken**	**Mean AP exam score**	**Number of AP exams taken**	**Mean AP exam score**
Chinese Language and Culture	217	4.3	28	4.6
French Language and Culture	279	4.1	20	4.3
Spanish Language and Culture	1187	4	168	4.2

Seal of Biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award that "recognizes a student's high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English and one or more languages" (MCPS website).[3] According to the national Seal of Biliteracy organization, the award "encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and can be evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions offices."[4]

More than 1,200 MCPS students have been awarded the Seal of Biliteracy since 2020, including 470 Latino/a students and 80 EML students. Table 7 provides these numbers.

Table 7: Total number of MCPS students who have received the Seal of Biliteracy since 2020, number and proportion of Latino/a students, number and proportion of EML students, and the share of these groups in the total MCPS high school population

	Number of students who received the Seal of Biliteracy	Share of total number of students who received the Seal of Biliteracy	Share of total number of MCPS High School students
Total	1,232	100%	100%
Hispanic/Latino	470	38%	32%
EML	80	6%	11%

Latino/a students are more likely to receive the Seal than other students, but EML students are less likely to receive the Seal, as compared to the share of these two student subgroups in the general MCPS population.

Program Focus: Career Readiness Education Academy

As a part of our work to understand programs for college and career transitions, CAL examined the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA). CREA is "an academic and career readiness education program for older English learners in MCPS."[5]

To be eligible for this program, students must be:

- residents of Montgomery County and enrolled in a MCPS high school
- 18 years old or older by the first day of the school year
- enrolled in an English language development program in MCPS
- unlikely to meet Maryland state graduation requirements by the end of the academic year in which the student turns 21, based on a completed graduation plan regarding the 4-year or 5-year cohort options
- interested in pursuing an alternative pathway to a high school diploma through General Education Diploma (GED) preparation

CREA serves a small number of students in both full-day and evening programs at two sites in MCPS. A total of 150 students are served by the CREA program. Of these, 112 are enrolled in the Edison High School evening program. There are 29 students enrolled in the Edison High School day program and 9

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[3] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/office/seal-of-biliteracy.aspx
[4] https://sealofbiliteracy.org/faq
[5] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/esol/instruction/crea.aspx

students enrolled in the Seneca Valley day program. Figure 1 provides an overview of the sites, and the courses of study available at each.

Figure 1: CREA sites and available courses, by site

Evening program (Edison)	Day program (Edison)	Day program (Seneca Valley)
Construction cluster • Foundations of Construction and Building Technologies • HVAC • Construction Electricity Automotive Cluster • Auto Topics 1 • Auto Topics 2 Services Cluster • Nail Technology • Restaurant Management	Construction cluster • Foundations of Construction and Building Technologies • Carpentry • Electricity • HVAC • Masonry • Plumbing Automotive Cluster • Auto Body Repair Technology Services Cluster • Hospitality and Tourism • Restaurant Management	Construction cluster • Construction Technology • Carpentry • HVAC Automotive Cluster • Automotive Technology Child Development • Child Development

The majority of students in the CREA program are at ELP levels 1 or 2. The graph below is courtesy of the CREA program and shows the ELP levels of students for 2022-23. Most of these students have lived in the US for less than 2 years.

Figure 2: ELP levels of CREA students, 2022-23
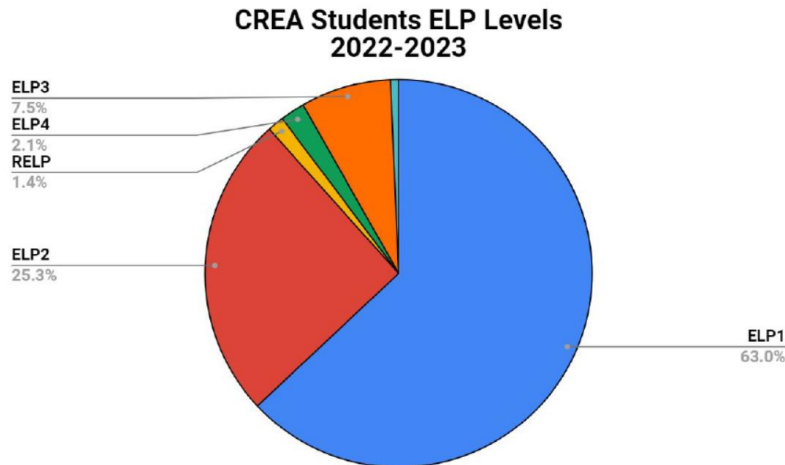
Key assets of the CREA program are its small classes and the bilingual staff, including bilingual paraeducators who can support students in the program. In focus groups and other interactions with CREA staff and students, a consistent theme was the nurturing environment in the CREA program, with

one participant stressing the familial and culturally competent atmosphere fostered by CREA staff: "We have so many bilingual mothers on our staff that just mother these kids."

One challenge that the program faces is that it has seen growth over the last two years, particularly in the evening program, as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Year-on-year growth in CREA enrollment, 2017-22
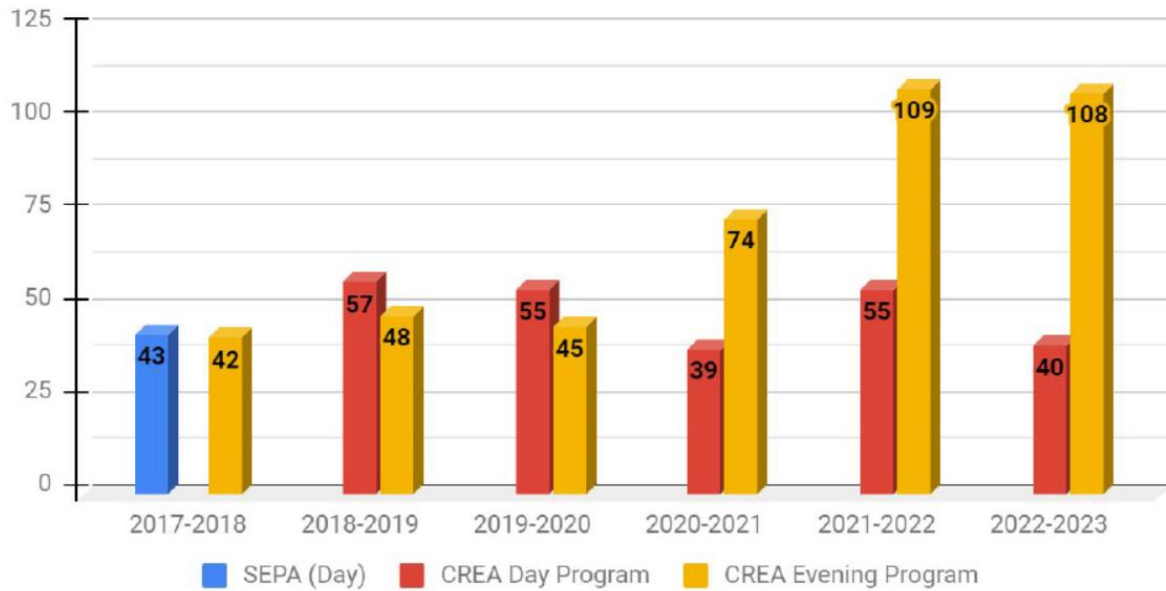
While there has been an increase in student enrollment of around 30% between SY 2017-2018 and SY 2022-2023, and a concomitant increase in student interest and referrals, the program has not seen a staffing increase over the years represented in the graphic.

Identification of students for the program is based on the eligibility criteria listed above, and staff from other programs refer students to CREA. We asked CREA staff if there was evidence that students who were eligible for the program were not being referred to the program. While this evidence is challenging to collect in a systematic way, CREA staff identified an increase in the number of potential students who had reached out to CREA directly rather than via the referral service, suggesting a high level of interest in the program.

An area of need is for students who do not meet CREA eligibility criteria because they have a potential pathway to graduation, but who cannot attend daytime programs at their home school due to employment commitments.

Other specific challenges identified by the program include that students are enrolled on a continuous basis, requiring that the program be nimble in adjusting class sizes. Again, staffing is a challenge, as the program must adjust classes throughout the year while ensuring that the appropriate number of instructors are available.

CREA offers support for the socioemotional needs of its students. The program partners with community support organizations like Identity, the county Wellness Centers, and Nourish Now. The program also partners with Montgomery College and with employers and unions to build pathways for students. While the program has ongoing partnerships, its capacity to support students with healthcare, job placement, financial assistance, and affordable housing remains a concern. One area that was raised to us was ensuring that MCPS provides access to the Wheaton Wellness Center for students enrolled in evening programs.

As we noted above, CREA students in focus group meetings expressed a need for information and preparation for additional career pathways. Finally, access to legal assistance focused on pathways to employment is a pressing concern and one that would enhance the foundational goals of the program. These challenges in connecting to services require staff capacity to research, reach out, and maintain partnerships with service providers.

Findings

Results indicate that there are concerns around a strong launch pad for college and career success for EML students in MCPS.

Are EML and Latino/a students appropriately prepared for college and career opportunities upon leaving school?

In addition to the sobering graduation rates of EML and Latino/a students, our research suggests that there are communication challenges in ensuring that students and their families have accurate, accessible information about the requirements for graduation, the opportunities available post-graduation, and the steps needed to access those opportunities.

Slightly less than one-third of survey respondents were in agreement that EML students and families had clear access to information about graduation requirements.

More than one-third of survey respondents disagreed that EML students and families had clear information on community college pathways, and more than 40% disagreed that EML students and families had access to clear information on college applications. One concrete suggestion was to ensure multilingual access to this information, particularly information about FAFSA.

An additional communication concern is that school staff may not always have clear understandings of students' prior educational progress, particularly if a student's transcript is unavailable. Enhanced communication with families would allow for schools to gather additional and more accurate information around students' prior coursework.

Research participants pointed out staffing challenges that aggravate these communication barriers. MCPS educators who responded to the survey and focus group data collections indicated that they would benefit from additional professional learning around supporting EML students in their post-secondary transitions. Educators also pointed out that in many cases, ELD teachers are the first point of contact, and that there is an insufficient number of guidance counselors who can support the needs of EML students. Students who are at risk of not graduating need adults who can support and nurture them. This means including students as key stakeholders and ensuring students feel that there is a strong likelihood of success. Our research participants also pointed to the Naviance platform as being difficult to use, which further emphasizes the need to support students in tracking their own trajectory.

Do students feel confident that they are prepared and supported upon leaving school?

While the group of students that we spoke with felt fairly well-prepared, they expressed concerns. Students echoed concerns over the communication of opportunities and pathways, including opportunities for advanced placement and pathways to college. While students noted that they had some exposure to career preparation and GED pathways, they would appreciate additional information about other pathways into higher education that might be available. We also include here a caveat about the limitations of this data. Students who participated in focus groups were a self-selected group and may have been a more motivated and engaged group.

Data on absenteeism, shared in Chapter 1, indicate that student engagement is a concern, as almost one-quarter (23%) of Latino/a students and almost one-quarter (23%) of EML students had more than 20 days of unexcused absences in the 2021-22 school year.

We also heard concerns from educators around a narrowed set of opportunities, emerging from a deficit mindset around the capacity of EML students.

What is the graduation rate for EML and Latino/a students? How does it compare to all students in MCPS, and how does it compare to national rates?

The factors that lead to individual students not graduating within four or five years are complex, and include factors related to students' schooling and educational settings, as well as factors external to the school system.

Nationally, 82% of Latino/a students graduate within four years -- four percentage points behind the national average for all students, and seven percentage points behind the national average for White students. EML students graduate at lower rates, with only 69% nationally graduating within four years of the start of ninth grade (De Brey, Snyder, Zhang, & Dillow, 2021).

Researchers have referred to the "ABCs" of dropout risk behavior – absenteeism, behavior problems, and course failure (Child Trends, 2013; Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). Our report finds that EML and Latino/a students are particularly at risk of high rates of absenteeism (more than 20 days of unexcused absences). Students who are not present in school do not receive sufficient instruction, and do not participate in the activities required to pass courses. Students who are less engaged and do not feel successful in academic contexts, in turn, are more likely to exhibit problem behaviors. (See our analysis of disciplinary data in Chapter 3. Although we caution that disciplinary measures have subjective elements, and we should not discount potential impacts of bias in the implementation of disciplinary measures.)

Conversely, for Latino/a students, strong and affirming relationships in a school community have a protective effect against dropout risk. Latino/a students who feel that they have warm and caring school relationships and feel a sense of safety and belonging tend to be more engaged, perceive themselves as more academically competent, and have higher levels of achievement (Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009; Cooper, 2012; for similar findings for all students, see also Bridgeland, Balfanz, Moore, & Friant, 2010; Child Trends, 2013; Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009).

External pressures can also lead to absences from school which impact dropout risk. Dalton, Glennie, & Ingels (2009) found that Latino/a students were more likely than students from other groups to indicate that family caregiving responsibilities were a reason for dropping out of school. Caregiving

responsibilities have a particular impact on girls. One-third of girls who drop out of school cite becoming a parent as a major factor in their decision to drop out (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006), and young Latina women may also take on responsibilities for younger siblings in their families which may impact school attendance (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009).

Students may also engage in paid labor to contribute to the family income, and about one-third of students point to employment pressure as a reason for dropping out, with young men more likely than young women to cite employment as a motivating factor (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006).

Graduation rates for EML and Latino/a students in MCPS are a serious cause for concern. We note that our findings below relate to data from 2019 and 2020. Due to the impact of COVID, 2021 graduation data are challenging to interpret. Graduation rates from 2022 were not available at the time of writing.

- Almost half of EML students and almost one-quarter of Latino/a students do not graduate in four years.
- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino/a students lags 12 percentage points below the overall MCPS average. The four-year graduation rate for EML students lags 33 percentage points below the overall MCPS average.
- The four-year graduation rate gap between White students and Hispanic or Latino students stands at 17 percentage points, and between White students and EML students averages 39 percentage points.
- EML and Latino/a students in MCPS graduate at lower rates than the national averages for these subgroups, and the gap between EML and Latino/a students and all students is wider than the national average.
- When given an additional year to graduate, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino/a students graduating rises by an average of 4%, and the percentage of EML students graduating rises by 8%.[6]

We note also that ninth-grade newcomers who arrive mid-year have fewer than four years to meet all entry requirements, and that this may have a negative impact on graduation rates for this group of students.

Are EML students scheduled to be on-track for graduation based on their scheduled course-taking?

Focus group participants highlighted course scheduling as a significant downstream barrier for graduation success. When students' schedules do not allow for all of the graduation requirements, it becomes impossible for students to meet these requirements.

Key barriers uncovered include the complexity of managing student schedules at the school level across all students. Research participants pointed out several additional complicating factors. Schools are sometimes challenged to sufficiently staff ELD positions. This is in part because they may not have final numbers of EML students due to the timeline for receiving assessment results, and therefore cannot ensure an accurate staff count and appropriate recruiting until summer. An additional scheduling

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[6] While we saw concern from educators about pressure to graduate students within four years, we note that the accountability systems in place around four-year graduation emerge from the federal and state level, and are not within the control of MCPS.

challenge can be in acquiring background knowledge around students' prior schooling in cases where transcripts are unavailable. Participants also expressed concern that EML students were slotted into the school-wide schedules at the end of the process.

Research participants pointed out two particular elements that they had observed as challenges for EMLs to remain on-track for graduation.

First, students who work in paid employment are challenged to meet the SSL requirements. CAL explored the *Maryland State Department of Education's Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines* (Maryland State Board of Education, 2019). This document articulates the requirement for 75 hours of SSL for graduation. The document notes that local school systems

> "may pro-rate the level of service-learning engagement expected for students transferring into school systems, but no student can be exempt from meeting the service-learning graduation requirement, including those who transfer second semester senior year."

MCPS identifies a pro-rating system for students who enroll in MCPS past sixth grade.[7] In our review of parental notifications around the SSL program, however, we were unable to identify any mention of this accommodation.

A focus group participant advocated for recognizing paid employment in lieu of service-learning requirements. While we understand that this is explicitly disallowed ("any service-learning activity that compensates a student with money, goods, or services may not be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement" [Maryland State Board of Education, 2019]), we recommend exploring how to include family caregiving service in the requirement. While we urge caution around any kind of policy-making that impacts the participation of minors in the workforce at the expense of education, we also would suggest exploring ways to recognize workplace participation as an asset of older students.

A second barrier of concern was that EML students were not able to meet graduation requirements due to missing world language credits. MCPS graduation requirements for the class of 2022[8] require fulfillment of "Electives" which may be satisfied by one of the following three options:

1. 2 credits in a world language, which may include American Sign Language, AND 2.5 credits in elective courses
2. 2 credits in Advanced Technology education AND 2.5 credits in elective courses
3. Complete a state-approved program of study (POS) AND a minimum of 0.5 credit in elective courses or more depending on POS

Not only did we find here that the scheduling requirements missed the needs of EML students, we also found that a specific strength of this cohort is neither celebrated nor viewed as an academic asset.

Finally, we also note that several respondents indicated that there were accountability pressures to move students toward four-year graduation in cases where educators felt that students would be

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[7] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ssl/pages/faq.aspx#43

[8] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/curriculum/0355.22_GraduationAtAGlance_Classof2022(1).pdf Note that graduation requirements have been updated recently, however, the relevant credit requirement can still be fulfilled by world language credits.

successful given five years. This is consistent with our finding that the proportion of EML students achieving graduation requirements rises by 8% when students are allowed the additional year.

Are EML and Latino/a students afforded opportunities to engage in college preparatory programs (e.g., IB and AP)? In gifted and talented programs? If not, what barriers exist?

- There are disproportionalities in students' patterns of course-taking. While 31% of high school students are Hispanic or Latino/a, only 25% of SAT course-takers are Hispanic or Latino/a. While 12% of high school students are classified as EML, only 8% of SAT course-takers are EML.
- Hispanic or Latino/a students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB, or SAT courses.
- EML students are less likely than their peers to succeed in challenging AP, IB, or SAT courses.
- EML students who take AP language examinations in Chinese, French, and Spanish outperform their fluent-English peers; however, the number of EML students who participate is very small.

Research participants identified communication around access to advanced course-taking as a barrier. Students also noted that these opportunities were not communicated to them.

Are EML and Latino/a students provided with supports to transition to the workforce (community college or career placement)?

Survey and focus group results indicate that educators do not feel confident that students have the supports needed to transition to career or higher education opportunities, with one-third to almost one-half of respondents tending to disagree or strongly disagree that students and families had access to clear information, in languages that they understand, to assist in supporting this transition.

In addition, we heard concern that activities to support students as they transition out of secondary education should be timed so that they are accessible to students who work, and that these activities should be sensitive to the immigration status of students.

What are the assets of the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA) program, and what supports might this program need?

The CREA program provides a space for career-oriented learning for students who cannot fulfill the credit requirements needed to graduate, but who need systemic supports to acquire English and train for career pathways. A key asset of this program is the nurturing and warm environment that is provided for these adult students. Despite a 30% growth over five years in the number of students served, as well as growth in the number of applicants, the program has not seen any staffing increase in that time.

Additional challenges identified by the program include connecting CREA students to wrap-around services, including housing, healthcare, and legal assistance. Legal assistance supports students in acquiring appropriate paperwork for job placement and is central to the program's goals of preparing students for employment.

An increase in staffing would allow for the program to continue to serve students at the current rate and would also allow staff to build stronger connections and capacity to provide the wraparound services that CREA students need.

How many students have the opportunity to earn the Seal of Biliteracy at graduation, and of that percentage how many in fact earn the Seal? Are students, their families, and their teachers aware of the opportunity?

Achievement of bilingualism and biliteracy

Since 2020, 470 Latino/a students in MCPS have been awarded the Seal of Biliteracy. This is almost 40% of the total number of students who have received the Seal, and Latino/a students are more likely than other subgroups of students to receive the Seal. For EML students, 80 students have received the award, which is a share of 6%, smaller than the share of EML students in the total population.

While administrators in focus groups spoke highly of the Seal of Biliteracy, made a clear case for the benefits of this qualification, and spoke of the through-line between TWI programming and the Seal of Biliteracy, we did not see mention of this qualification by classroom educators or students.

One-third of educators who serve high school students did not feel confident that families and students are able to access the information that they need to pursue this qualification.

When asked about pathways for post-secondary success, some TWI focus group participants discussed a need to build a pathway for TWI students into secondary schools, one noting, "we are getting there." A district administrator, as well as one school-level administrator, also reported that there is an in-process effort to build a pathway for TWI students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy, but also noted some challenges which were attributed, in part, to the fact that the program is under World Languages rather than TWI or EML administrators.

Recommendations

5.1 Set benchmarks for improvement of EML and Latino/a four- and five-year graduation rates as a matter of urgency.

5.2. Track and communicate graduation rate data for the following subgroups:

- Students who are former EMLs and have exited services. One way to examine whether ELD services are appropriately supporting students is to confirm that once students exit services, they are on track for academic success without the support of ELD services.
- Students dually identified as EML students and students with disabilities.
- Newcomer students.
- Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).

5.3 Improve accountability around scheduling to support graduation rates for EML students.

- At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, begin a process to provide each entering ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade EML student a personalized outline of graduation requirements, with detail on which requirements should be met in which of their remaining school years. Review and revise this outline at the end of each semester.
- If EML students enter MCPS mid-year after the beginning of ninth grade, provide a personalized outline of graduation requirements and detail on which requirements should be met in which of their remaining school years within 90 days of enrollment.
- Prioritize constructing schedules for EML students as early as possible in the scheduling process.

- Examine the schedules of every EML student in high school to ensure that all required courses are included within students' schedules for the year.
- Require each high school to provide an annual report to DELME and other relevant MCPS offices charged with supporting students' success toward graduation indicating how many, if any, EML students have schedules that are missing courses that are included in those students' personalized graduation requirements for the year.

5.4 Prioritize investment in nurturing relationships for EML and Latino/a students.

- Allocate additional culturally and linguistically competent counseling staff to support these recommendations.
- Empower counseling staff to escalate the need for a scheduling change if a student is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements due to scheduling issues.
- Ensure that students are included in the process and understand their own graduation requirements and provide caring and nurturing systems that support students who are not on track.

5.5 Improve outreach to families around graduation requirements and college and career opportunities.

- Ensure key information about graduation requirements is provided to families in a language that they can understand. Routinely seek feedback from families to ensure that the information is received and accessible.
- Conduct college and career information sessions for multilingual families, including information about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), in a language that families can understand.
- Ensure that all relevant staff share responsibility for multilingual communication on college and career opportunities, not just ELD teachers.
- Ensure that college and career meetings are accessible to students who are in the workforce.
- Train MCPS staff to be sensitive to students' diverse immigration statuses when communicating about college and career opportunities.

5.6 Examine specific graduation requirements identified as barriers.

- MCPS has an elective requirement for graduation which may be fulfilled by 2 credits of the same world language. Explore avenues to waive this graduation requirement for EML students, who, by definition, have fluency in a language other than English, while ensuring that advanced course-taking opportunities in world languages are open to those who wish to pursue them.
- Explore the state Student Service Learning (SSL) requirements to understand ways in which the SSL requirement can be met by students currently experiencing challenges in meeting these requirements. If hours are pro-rated for students who enroll in MCPS after the ninth grade, ensure that students, families, and counselors have a clear understanding of the pro-rating model.

5.7 Support the assets of EMLs and former EMLs in advanced coursework.

- Target EML students for participation in relevant advanced world language classes and examinations.

- Continue to promote the Seal of Biliteracy, especially to EML students. Integrate DELME staff into efforts to promote the Seal of Biliteracy.

5.10   Examine school accountability systems and ensure that such systems do not penalize schools for allowing newcomer EML students to graduate in five years. Examine flexibility around graduation requirements for counting first year of high school for newcomer students who enter MCPS midway through the ninth grade.

5.11   Examine staffing for the CREA program to ensure that sufficient staff are available to accommodate the increase in applicants and students, and to ensure that there are staff able to support the community connections to healthcare, legal, housing, and other services to support adult students.

6. Newcomer Students, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) Program

Summary of Recommendations

6.1   Continue the work that DELME is undertaking to monitor and evaluate the achievement and opportunities for elementary SLIFE students now that these students are dispersed among multiple elementary schools.

6.2   Should MCPS choose eventually to expand TWI programs, explore a priority pathway to these programs for SLIFE students.

- Engage the parents of SLIFE students in any planning to understand the impact of such change.
- Ensure that TWI schools have appropriate staffing in grades 3-5 to support SLIFE students.

6.3   Conduct annual reviews of data on the METS program, including numbers of students newly identified as SLIFE, number served, number exited, and number of students meeting ELD and academic content goals.

- Monitor these data to understand if site and staffing levels continue to be adequate or of numbers of students served are fluctuating.
- Monitor these data to understand if students are meeting programmatic goals, including graduation rates.
- Monitor these data to understand whether METS students are appropriately referred to special education services if needed.
- Supplement Central Office staffing to ensure this goal can be met.

6.4 Provide professional learning to support both ELD and content area teachers in METS programs.

- Prioritize professional learning for content area teachers.
- Provide professional learning on trauma-informed instruction and socio-emotional support for students with limited or interrupted formal education.

6.5 Expand the number of EML Therapeutic Counselors (ETCs) with the specific goal of understanding and reducing individual students' barriers to attendance.

6.6 Engage families, METS students, and their teachers in considering whether to follow the new elementary model and serve students at their home schools, or to continue the centralized METS model.

Background

The U.S. Department of Education's *Newcomer Toolkit* defines newcomer students as "any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States" (2016, Ch.1 p.1). Some newcomer students may arrive later in their educational careers, in middle or high school.

Immigrant and newcomer students enhance school communities:

> In schools, the very presence of immigrant students provides a rich opportunity for all students to expand their cultural knowledge and their capacity to participate fully in a multicultural democracy and engage with an increasingly interconnected world. When students attempt to communicate with, listen to, and learn from peers who have experiences and perspectives different from their own, they expand their knowledge base and at the same time gain the necessary intercommunication skills that are essential to success in their higher education, business, civic, political, and social lives.

> U.S. Department of Education 2016, Ch.1. p. 4.

Newcomer students are found throughout all programs in MCPS.

In some cases, immigrant students may arrive in the U.S. under particularly challenging circumstances. They may be asylees or refugees, and/or they may be unaccompanied youth who have arrived in the United States without a parent or guardian. In some cases, these students may have experienced interruption in their education or limited educational opportunities due to conflict, environmental disaster, health challenges, or other structural factors which resulted in a lack of access to consistent schooling. MCPS provides the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) program in middle and high school for students with limited or interrupted education (abbreviated as "SLIFE" in this document).

In this chapter, we present focus group data first. In focus groups, discussions related to newcomer students and SLIFE students were frequently intertwined, therefore we present the focus group data together. We also discuss our review of documents and procedures around intake of international students and identification and placement of SLIFE students. We then focus on the METS program. Data on the METS program includes survey data and classroom observations.

Results

Focus Groups

A number of student focus group participants entered MCPS as high school students. These participants described their entrance into MCPS as welcoming, with staff speaking their home languages and offering a range of services to them and their families.

Student focus group participants reported barriers for accessing extra-curricular activities, however, especially after-school activities. Note that the research staff did not ask student participants for their status as newcomers or SLIFE, but many are in the CREA program, and half of the students in one focus group reported having been in METS, at least previously, so many of the students are, or have been, newcomers or SLIFE. The students reported barriers to participation in activities, including age limits

(e.g., for sports), work (sometimes full-time after school), and family responsibilities (e.g., taking care of siblings or their own children).

A CREA teacher expressed a welcoming approach toward newcomers as well, saying that they can teach some topics in Spanish within CREA, which, they said, validates students' language and culture and "helps students feel that they are valuable."

Some educators described challenges and suggested changes in the onboarding of newcomer students. One school administrator said the "push to mainstream went too fast," with "no grace given." They described students taking tests within their first week at the district, sitting with a staff member showing them how to push buttons for the assessment, and participating in content classes with insufficient supports and modifications. An ELD teacher described the increasing numbers of students coming in, including refugees, and said that "the curriculum and training are out of date with the numbers," adding that teachers need more support to be able to welcome newcomers and provide appropriate instruction for them. A school administrator described being ill-equipped for the many SLIFE students at their school, and said they were looking for training opportunities to address students' needs. These types of challenges with instruction and assessment could impact the ways in which newcomers feel welcomed and included in instructional and programmatic activities.

A key support for SLIFE students is access to staff who have training in trauma-informed education and the provision of socioemotional supports. There has been some of this provided, but staff have expressed a need for more training and support in serving students with trauma.

Programmatic Support
An area of strength expressed in the focus groups was support for SLIFE students within the TWI program. A TWI administrator said, "We have our SLIFE students at the TWI program and we've noticed they exited the services within one year because of the Spanish instruction."

TWI focus group participants largely felt that the TWI program was working well for newcomers, in part due to Spanish being the home language of most newcomers. A district administrator noted, "It allows them access to the materials in a language they know. At least part of the day, they are immersed in their L1." A school administrator similarly praised TWI as well-suited for newcomers: "The TWI program really serves them well. Our teachers are language teachers. Every child has ample support and also emotionally. Newcomers coming from Latin America are thriving with the language and culture and some also literacy knowledge. They get to see that there are other students that are children of immigrants." Another administrator in the same focus group noted, "It gives them an opportunity to shine." An administrator from another school expressed a similar sentiment: "TWI is amazing. When I see them make those connections and being super-models. This particular student, his motivation to learn English has been incredible. Through his Spanish he has built self-confidence."

These administrators see multiple advantages of TWI for newcomers, including linguistic, academic, social, and emotional benefits. Even respondents at a school with newcomers speaking languages other than Spanish said that TWI "is beneficial" for newcomers. Part of the instructional approach for newcomers includes pullout support with paraeducators, as noted by one school administrator. In one focus group, administrators described their wrap-around services for newcomers, including a number of community partnerships that recognize and support newcomer students' varied needs.

A counselor described a SLIFE learner who participated in CREA, noting the program is "good for older high school students who need services at night and on Saturdays."

Overall, focus group participants described METS as a program with good supports for students, including regular progress measurement. They also described some changes in the program over the years, including the elimination of the elementary program. Two ELD teachers noted the elimination of elementary-level METS programming, and the lack of paraeducators to work with elementary SLIFE, saying there needs to be more support at the elementary level. Two CREA teachers in the same focus group noted decentralization of the program into schools across the county rather than at a regional center, which they said lessened the effectiveness of the program. Perhaps in part due to this decentralization, ELD teachers in another group reported wide variation in program implementation across schools and advocated for greater "vigilance" and more resources in order to standardize the program and ensure high-quality implementation. These ELD teachers also said that students encounter challenges upon leaving the program and transitioning to general education, and that more could be done to support them in this transition. A content teacher in another group noted, relatedly, that the program has mixed success, with some students succeeding and others dropping or aging out.

Defining subgroups

Focus group participants noted that there is no commonly understood definition for "newcomer student" in the district. Two administrators in one group said the term is generally used for students just moving into the country, or "brand-new newcomers," but that the definition isn't consistent past that broad understanding. One administrator gave a school-specific definition: "For us, it's a student who is new to the building and is an EML, who needs to be indoctrinated to the school and the surrounding area, and to get them ready to work." Another administrator in the group agreed, adding, "We have to look at it from a student-to-student perspective. We have to differentiate those students who are recently arrived from newcomers who have had some exposure." They added that there needs to be a distinction between students whose "first landing" is in MCPS and students who may have been in the U.S. for some time and have had some experience with U.S. schools, while also determining which students should be considered SLIFE. A counselor noted that they are sometimes not informed about a student's newcomer status.

Some participants shared concerns about the accurate identification of students as SLIFE, methods for tracking this information, and processes for determining the specific needs of individual students. A school administrator expressed a need for "screening and identifying the students as SLIFE," saying, "I've seen students who succeed and some who struggle throughout. They have many issues like age, how long have they been SLIFE, language processing issues, identification of what they actually need." A CREA teacher said one issue regarding SLIFE students is data tracking, saying that METS students used to be highlighted and tracked, but now they don't know for sure which students they are serving are SLIFE students (i.e., former METS students). A counselor reported that SLIFE students often do not get tested for special needs due to English proficiency, so they do not receive these services even if they may need them. Processes within the district for identifying and tracking SLIFE may be an area of need, according to focus group participants.

Data and Document Review

Data on newcomer students

As noted by participants in focus groups and also by members of the Stakeholder Commission, there is not a single well-communicated definition for a category of "newcomer students." CAL requested information on numbers of newcomer students as well as performance data for this group of students, however, MCPS does not track newly arrived students in central data systems.

We recognize the interest in understanding the academic performance of this subgroup of students as an evaluation method to understand whether appropriate supports and instruction are in place. Without an identifier in data systems, it is not possible to conduct counts or analyses of the academic performance of newcomer students. However, please see our "findings" below for some areas of concern around tracking data that is directly related to students' immigration status.

International Admissions & Enrollment Office and Processes

MCPS maintains an International Admissions & Enrollment (IAE)[1] office which supports enrollment for newcomer students. In the past twelve months, the IAE office has enrolled 4,375 international students (Dec 2021-Nov 2022, figures from "Monthly Student Enrollment" data on the IAE data dashboard[2]).

The following groups of students enroll through this office:

- International students ages 7 or older, whether a U.S. citizen or noncitizen, who have bona fide residency within Montgomery County and have not attended school in the United States or a U.S. school system in a foreign country at any time within the past two years.
- Foreign students who maintain official residency in another country and are seeking admission into MCPS. This group includes holders of J-1 Visas (exchange students) and applicants of I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Student Visa Status.
- U.S. citizens who attended a foreign school who need interpretation of school documentation and educational records for placement.
- Students residing with parents who live in housing with a short-term lease.
- Students residing with a non-custodial parent.
- Students living with parents and awaiting completion of permanent housing that is not within 60 days of enrollment.
- Students residing in Montgomery County without parents and who are requesting a waiver of tuition.
- International students who have not received an equivalent out-of-state high school diploma.

The office has a multilingual staff, and provides support for students and their families, including supporting the review of international transcripts, making grade placement recommendations, assigning students to their receiving school, and referring students to other services as needed. This includes conducting screening and assessment for English language services.

The IAE Office also supports a group of EML Therapeutic Counselors (ETCs). This group of specialized professionals "supports students from a cross-cultural perspective so they can succeed academically and

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[1] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/studentservices/schooling/iae.aspx
[2] https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/studentservices/schooling/IAE_Dashboard/

adjust to a new social and cultural environment while helping them stay meaningfully connected to their culture."[3]

There are currently 26 counselors, with 5 vacant positions. Each counselor is assigned to 3 schools, with a total of 70 schools with a partial FTE assignment. Counselors also manage referrals from students at schools which do not have an ETC assigned. Discussion with stakeholders revealed concerns over bandwidth and the ability of this team to fully address the needs of every student who might have a need for support. We particularly note that one role of these counselors is to address and elevate concerns related to absenteeism.

Identifying Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

The IAE office is responsible for identifying and referring students with limited or interrupted formal education, and referring students to services.

There are a total of 621 MCPS students who are identified as having experienced limited or interrupted formal education and requiring additional supports. Of these, 404 were identified in SY2021-22. The MCPS IAE office observes that there was a drop in numbers of international students generally in 2020 and 2021 due to travel restrictions.

Figure 1: Numbers of students with limited or interrupted formal education, and numbers newly identified in SY2021-22

School Type	Total number of students in the category (SY2021-22)	Number newly identified in SY 2021-22
Elementary	65	37
Middle	117	67
High	439	300
Total	621	404

Elementary students who fall into the SLIFE category are served at their local elementary school. Middle and high school students in this group are served in Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) programs. We provide information below on our understanding of services for elementary school students, and then follow with our evaluation of METS programs.

Services for Elementary Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

Services for Elementary SLIFE students were reviewed internally by MCPS in 2019, and a change was made to the program beginning in 2020. CAL reviewed the December 2020 report *Evaluation of the Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) Program at the Elementary Level*.

> "Prior to 2019-20, there were three sites at which elementary students identified according to SLIFE criteria were placed; subsequent to the 2019-20 school year, there were no new admissions to METS programs at these sites, and students with interrupted education were placed at their neighborhood schools."

The report additionally shares context about the numbers of students who were historically served at these sites: "From 2015 to 2020, 298 elementary school-age students were identified as ELs with

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[3] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/esol/counseling.aspx#referrals

interrupted education. The number identified varied by year ranging from a low of 40 students in 2016 to a high of 78 students in 2017." The report further finds that nearly all of these students are Hispanic/Latino.

The following recommendations emerged from the 2020 report.

- Clarify and update the guidelines for identifying ELs with interrupted education.
- Update the process and tools for screening and identifying ELs with interrupted education.
- Increase staffing allocation as well as the levels of expertise of staff in the METS classroom.
- Institute and communicate a clear plan for compacting instruction for elementary ELs with interrupted education so that the students transition to the standard instructional program within the projected time of 2 years.
- Continue to provide sustained professional development learning opportunities related to ELs.
- Institute opportunities for the central office staff working with the METS program and or implementing any aspect of the program for ELs with interrupted education to meet and collaborate on implementation.
- Connect METS program documentation to the MCPS databases on enrollment, district-level assessment, counseling services, and ESOL services receipt.

Subsequent to the transition, DELME is actively engaged in work to review and evaluate the new program. An initial finding from DELME is that students are more rapidly meeting the language criteria for exiting services – a key goal of this program – under the new program model, than they were in the prior two years of the previous model. Table 1 provides on the numbers and proportions of students meeting language proficiency criteria within their first year of the program, from 2017 through 2022 (note that there was no ACCESS testing in 2021).

Table 1: Number and proportion of elementary SLIFE students who meet language proficiency criteria and exit within one year

	METS (ES)				SLIFE
	ACCESS 2017	ACCESS 2018	ACCESS 2019	ACCESS 2020	ACCESS 2022
Number of first-time ACCESS test-takers	63	21	32	80	49
Number of these students who meet language proficiency criteria for exiting the program	13	7	3	15	13
Percentage of these students who meet language proficiency criteria for exiting the program	21%	33%	9%	19%	27%

As can be seen in Table 1, both the number of new students and the proportion who meet exit criteria within a year fluctuates year to year. In 2022, under the new program model, 27% of students met language proficiency exit criteria.

Program Focus: Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) Program
MCPS offers the METS program to support SLIFE students at the middle and high school level.

> The METS program of the Montgomery County Public Schools is designed to meet the linguistic and academic needs of English language learners who have had limited or no previous schooling or significant schooling gaps due to interrupted or disrupted education. Students enrolled in the

METS program receive instruction in developing English language proficiency and basic literacy and academic skills. Students also receive instruction and support to facilitate adjustment to both the academic and social school environment. The purpose of the METS program is to develop English language proficiency and literacy while providing the instruction and support with academics that will help narrow students' educational gaps and facilitate articulation to non-METS classes.

Identification criteria for student eligibility is provided on the MCPS website:

Students are eligible to attend the METS program when:

- They score at level 1 or 2 on the WIDA Screener Placement Test
- They have had a minimum of two years of a schooling gap
- Their age is appropriate for at least Grade 3 grade placement
- They function at two or more years below grade level in Math and/or Reading (in the student's home language)

Once students are identified as eligible for METS services, they are assigned to a METS site.[4] Numbers of students in the METS program are shown in Table 2

Table 2: Number of students in METS programs, SY 2021-22

School level	Number of students
Middle School	110
High School	445
Total	555

There are METS programs at 10 middle schools and 12 high schools, listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Schools with METS programs

Middle Schools	High Schools
Eastern MS	Bethesda Chevy Chase HS
Gaithersburg MS	Montgomery Blair HS
A. Mario Loiederman MS	Albert Einstein HS
Montgomery Village MS	Gaithersburg HS
Neelsville MS	Richard Montgomery HS
Takoma Park MS	Northwood HS
Julius West MS	Quince Orchard HS
White Oak MS	Rockville HS
Sligo MS	Seneca Valley HS
Wood MS	Springbrook HS
	Watkins Mill HS
	Wheaton HS

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[4] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/esol/instruction/mets.aspx

Focus group and other stakeholder input

To protect the privacy of stakeholders, we blend focus group data with other stakeholder comments in the analysis below of commentary from research participants on the METS program.

An area of concern for some participants was that students in the METS program were not able to continue at the same school once they had exited from METS, as students were routed to their neighborhood school once they exited the METS program. Of concern was that students would not be able to maintain relationships with supportive adults and with peers. Participants also pointed out that in the METS programs sites, students had easy access to wrap-around services, including wellness centers. There were other participants, however, who felt that there were already critical transportation challenges for students attending METS sites and that arranging for bus transportation to attend a METS program can take up to three weeks. Participants highlighted transportation as a barrier to regular attendance.

As part of our document review process, we reviewed documentation that indicated advocacy among METS teachers, families, and students, questioning whether METS students had sufficient choices in selecting high school sites.

Participants also expressed concerns with staffing levels, both at the program level, and with central office staffing levels.

Survey

A subset of survey respondents either work in METS programs (9.50%) or work in schools with METS programs but do not themselves work in the METS programs (15.25%).

Survey respondents were asked to respond to how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of belief statements regarding the METS program. Results are provided in Table 4. Percentages include only those who responded to these items.

Respondents had positive beliefs about the level of support provided for students' social and emotional needs (86.27% agreed or strongly agreed that students could access supports in a language that they understand). Respondents also expressed strong support for the benefits of the program, with 80.60% agreeing or strongly agreeing that students benefit from the METS program after they complete the course of study.

Echoing findings presented previously on the accessibility of graduation information (see the section College and Careers), only 64.96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students in the METS program and their families are able to access clear information about what is needed for graduation in a language that they can understand. Educators also had less confidence that students who exit the METS program continue to receive support in meeting their academic goals, with only 64.79% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Not all educators felt confident that students were making academic progress in ELA and mathematics, with only 69.01% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

On-time graduation is perceived as a challenge for students in this program, with only 45.16% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that students who exit this program are likely to graduate on

time. Finally, there was widespread disagreement that content area educators in METS programs had the skills to support EML students, with 63.23% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that these educators understand how to use appropriate instructional strategies.

Table 4: Survey respondents' beliefs about Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) programs in MCPS

Thinking about students who participate in the METS program, please rate the following statements:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average
Students in the METS program are able to access counselors and other staff who can support their social and emotional needs, in languages that they can understand.	23.53%	62.75%	10.46%	3.27%	1.93
Students in the METS program and their families are able to access clear information about what is needed for graduation in a language that they can understand.	13.87%	51.09%	29.20%	5.84%	2.27
Content area educators (i.e., math, science, social studies, physical education, music, etc.) understand how to use instructional strategies to support Emergent Multilingual students in the METS program.	7.10%	29.68%	44.52%	18.71%	2.75
Students who exit the METS program continue to receive support in meeting their academic goals.	14.79%	50.00%	27.46%	7.75%	2.28
Students in the METS program are making academic progress in English language arts and mathematics.	9.15%	59.86%	23.24%	7.75%	2.3
Students benefit from the METS program after they complete the course of study.	15.67%	64.93%	16.42%	2.99%	2.07
Students who exit the METS program are likely to graduate on time.	6.45%	38.71%	44.35%	10.48%	2.59

Of the 888 survey respondents, 100 (11%) provided a response to the open-ended question regarding the METS program. Of these 100, 32 provided responses that indicated they did not know about the program and or did not have anything to add. Among the 68 responses with comments about METS, respondents expressed needs for more support for students, as well as for staffing and professional learning. They also noted problems with the curriculum, suggestions for instruction and programming,

challenges with graduation requirements, and difficulties associated with the elimination of the program at the elementary level.

Overall Program Impact and Support

The METS program was reported as doing a good job of meeting students' needs by three respondents, while nine said that students need more support and two said there is a lack of support at the school level. Another respondent said that the MCPS community does not understand METS or how students access the program. Other program supports that were reported as needed included transportation to facilitate student participation in summer programming (1) and Lexile-leveled texts in classrooms and libraries (1).

A desire to see the program expanded was expressed explicitly by two respondents, and two others expressed frustration at the elimination or scaling down of the program at the secondary level. (The elimination of the elementary program is discussed separately below.)

One respondent connected issues with the program to district organization: "Things rapidly started to deteriorate when Dept. of ESOL was siloed into various other departments that didn't know much about ESOL. The communication between academic and socio-emotional needs (wrap-around) services has disappeared, we don't work as a unit."

Staffing and Professional Learning

A total of 45 survey respondents reported needing professional learning about newcomer students. Most responses (29) were statements of a broad need to learn how to support and instruct newcomers. Ten respondents cited needs regarding support with SLIFE specifically.

Some respondents reported specific instructional needs. Seven respondents indicated the need to better support students within the current curriculum. Note that some of these respondents and others—9 total—provided responses that critiqued newcomer and SLIFE programming and the curriculum in particular. Responses to this question indicated two, often overlapping, perspectives among staff. First, responses suggested that the curriculum needs to be changed. Second, that while working in the context of this curriculum, more professional learning and support with supplementary materials and differentiation is critical for newcomer success, most particularly needs in literacy development for students with limited or no first language literacy.

Another theme within the responses regarding professional learning on newcomers and SLIFE was a need for trauma-informed education (4) and socioemotional support (4).

Needs related to staffing and professional learning were reported by six survey respondents. Two respondents said that there were too many students per teacher in the program, and one stated that more teachers and paraeducators should be hired. Another noted that METS teachers are typically bilingual in Spanish and English, and wondered how students with other home languages are served (e.g., students who speak French, Bengali, or Vietnamese).

Four respondents noted a need for more professional learning and support for content teachers who teach METS students, often without training on how to meet these students' needs. Another respondent said that the quality and mindset of teachers matter a lot to students' success, or lack thereof, within the program.

Counselors were mentioned by two respondents, one stating that counselors are overwhelmed and serving a lot of students, and therefore unable to meet students' needs. The other said that there is a need for more counselors and social workers to serve METS students.

Curriculum and Instruction

Five respondents noted that the curriculum for METS is not meeting students' needs. One stated, "The curricular changes were not approved by teachers and have been frustrating for them." Another noted StudySync in particular, saying that it is "not appropriate for EMLs, particularly level 1s and 2s." Another mentioned System 44, saying it "does not fit these students in terms of their levels of language development, literacy in their own language, or their broader needs and priorities."

Survey respondents shared a number of needs with regard to instructional approaches and strategies. Needs relating to literacy included overall better literacy instruction (2), basic literacy instruction (2), and home language literacy instruction (3). Language instructional needs reported include better overall language instruction (1), concentrated English instruction for emerging learners (1), academic language and vocabulary instruction (1), more differentiation (1), and better scaffolding of grade-level content (1).

As noted above, one respondent highlighted the availability of Spanish-English bilingual teaching staff in METS, while noting the need for support for students who do not speak Spanish, including, at their school, students who speak French, Bengali, and Vietnamese. Another respondent said that "METS programming and materials seem more Spanish-speaker focused, leaving non-Spanish-speakers at a disadvantage."

Programmatic Suggestions

A few respondents suggested programmatic approaches or shifts. One said that students should have METS within their home schools, while another, conversely, stated that METS should be in its own building. Another respondent suggested that school offerings in the evenings would increase accessibility for some students, especially those who work.

Two respondents said there needs to be support in mainstream programs and classrooms for students who may qualify for METS but are not participating in the program, due to either their refusal to participate or the lack of identification, despite being qualified.

Identification

Three respondents noted problems with the identification of students as eligible to participate in METS. One noted that there are students at their school who are not identified as SLIFE but who have reported not going to school in their home country and therefore should qualify for METS. Another noted that MCPS is "not identifying students and just trusting the paperwork from the countries of origin. The county makes it difficult for students to be identified, leaving many students without monitoring and support."

Another reported the need to identify METS students with disabilities, saying, "This program may need to pay more attention to students who have special learning issues. Rather than keeping students in this program longer, they might consider identifying students who may have special needs, prepare information to share with special educators demonstrating when they observe, have proof of, and suspect a possible learning issue and therefore consult with special educators for assessment and support."

Transition out of METS

Five respondents cited needs with regards to METS students' transitions out of the program. Three reported that there is insufficient support for students during and after the transition, one saying, "Many of these students are confronted with major challenges after exiting after two years. The RT (resource teacher) at my school goes to great lengths to provide ongoing support, but she is limited because of the MCPS requirements/expectations." Another stated, "I have also worked with students that exit METS and see many of them struggle because they get no support after they are integrated in the general ed."

Two respondents said that METS students should be able to stay in their school rather than switching schools upon exiting the program, one stating, "In MCPS SLIFE students need to remain in the same HS where they begin as freshmen. METS students require consistency, routine, and teamwork."

Graduation

Survey respondents noted challenges with regard to METS students meeting graduation requirements. Four said that METS students should be afforded more time to graduate. Others said it was difficult for METS students to meet graduation requirements on time (2), that it is challenging for older students entering MCPS to graduate before aging out (1), and that METS students are dropping out as early as ninth grade (1).

A related issue is the coursework provided to METS students which does not count toward graduation requirements. Two respondents said that this is a problem, suggesting that ELD and METS coursework should count toward the English credits required for graduation. Another said that the push for METS students to transition into mainstream English classes needs to be reevaluated.

Adjustments to the grading system for METS students were suggested by another respondent.

Elementary Level

Survey respondents, especially those at the elementary level, commented on the elimination of the elementary METS program (13 respondents), the inclusion of SLIFE students in general education classes (5), and the SLIFE coaches working with students (2). Six respondents said that the SLIFE program currently implemented at elementary schools is less supportive than METS was for these students, and three said explicitly that the METS program should be reinstated at the elementary level. One respondent said that students are transferred out of the SLIFE program too early, before they have met program objectives, leading to insufficient support and challenges for these students.

Socioemotional Impacts

A few respondents reported negative socioemotional impacts for students in METS. Two reported curricular and programmatic impacts damaging students' self-esteem, and two reported discrimination and a deficit perspective. An additional respondent said that the program needs to serve the "whole child."

Regarding programmatic impacts, one respondent said that METS students in their middle school, which had a METS program, were enrolled in grade-level classes and did not have classes tailored for them. They said this led to students feeling discouraged and unable to succeed, seeing their classmates' knowledge and experience while experiencing a lack of support with their own language and literacy needs. Another respondent called the program "emotionally damaging" to the students due to their

participation in a curriculum and courses, such as mainstream ELA courses as juniors and seniors, that are difficult and do not meet their needs.

Regarding discrimination and a deficit perspective, one respondent said that students face discrimination from other students and some staff. Another noted that METS students experience isolation from other students and said that "they are seen from a deficit perspective, instead of highly capable young people who have incredible skills and knowledge."

Family Engagement

Two respondents noted needs with regard to family engagement around METS. One said that MCPS should equip parents to support their children's education, saying, "METS students often live with adults who also have limited education, and so we need to do a better job equipping those parents to support their children in school, especially at the high school level." Another suggested improving communication efforts to reach families and help them feel comfortable with their children's participation in the program.

Observations

CAL's classroom observations included a total of 10 METS classes across six schools (3 middle schools and 3 high schools), with five observations being conducted at each level (middle and high). We used the same method to observe METS classes as was used for general classroom observation, i.e., the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). For more information about observation methods, see Chapter 1.2.

METS classrooms in the observational sample included six math classes, two language arts classes, a developmental reading class, and a METS I class. The SIOP rating scale runs from 0 to 4, with ratings above 3.0 representing areas of strength, and ratings lower than 2.0 representing areas for growth. These ten courses received an overall average rating of 3.1, representing, overall, better incorporation of sheltering strategies than other instructional settings within MCPS, with only ESL pullout averaging higher overall at the secondary level (3.2). See Table 5 below for average ratings of each feature among the 10 METS classes. Areas of strength (average rating of 3.0 or above) are marked in green; areas for growth (average rating of 2.0 or below) are marked in red.

Table 5: Average ratings of SIOP features among observed METS classrooms (n=10)

Component	Feature	Average Rating
Lesson Preparation	1. Content objectives	3.0
	2. Language objectives	2.5
	3. Content concepts	3.7
	4. Supplementary materials	3.4
	5. Adaptation of content	3.5
	6. Meaningful activities	3.1
Building Background	7. Concepts linked to background experiences	2.4
	8. Links with past learning	3.1
	9. Key vocabulary	2.9
Comprehensible Input	10. Appropriate speech	3.7
	11. Clear explanation of tasks	3.2
	12. Variety of techniques	3.4
Strategies	13. Learning strategies	2.6
	14. Scaffolding techniques	3.5
	15. Higher-order thinking	1.2
Interaction	16. Opportunities for interaction	2.6
	17. Grouping configuration	3.2
	18. Wait time	3.7
	19. L1 clarification	3.8
Practice/ Application	20. Materials and/or manipulatives	2.7
	21. Apply content and language knowledge	3.1
	22. Integrate all language skills	2.3
Lesson Delivery	23. Lesson supports content objectives	3.5
	24. Lesson supports language objectives	2.8
	25. Student engagement	3.4
	26. Pacing	3.7
Review and Assessment	27. Key vocabulary review	2.0
	28. Key content concepts review	3.0
	29. Feedback to students	3.5
	30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning	3.4

There were many observed strengths among METS classes, including addressing content concepts, adapting content, using appropriate speech, incorporating scaffolding techniques, providing wait time, using L1 for clarification, supporting content objectives through lesson delivery, lesson pacing, and providing feedback to students. Only one area for growth emerges, related to engaging students in tasks that required higher-order thinking.

Findings

Is there a welcoming and inclusive approach for EMLs who begin their US educational career in high school?

Student focus groups included some students who shared that they had entered the school system in high school. These students expressed a positive stance toward their experiences. Some educators, however, expressed concern over the abrupt transition into mainstream classrooms and assessments. Educators also reported observing seeing students discouraged when they were placed in grade-level classes.

Survey respondents agreed that students in the METS program have access to socioemotional support in a language that they understand, although a number of respondents noted that while Spanish language supports were widely available, supports in other languages were not.

Educators also reported that when students transitioned out of the METS program, they may no longer be able to access needed supports, and in some cases may be required to transition to a different school.

The corps of ETCs represent a critical element of the systemic commitment to welcoming newcomer students. One support that this group of staff can bring is understanding individual student barriers to attendance. As we note in Chapter 2.1., almost one-quarter (23%) of Latino/a students and almost one-quarter (23%) of EML students had more than 20 days of unexcused absences in the 2021-22 school year.

An area that was identified as particularly welcoming to students was TWI programs.

What resources support students with limited or interrupted formal education? What are the assets of the METS (Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support) program, and what supports might this program need?

Identification

Focus group participants expressed a need for clearer processes for screening and identifying students with limited and interrupted formal education. Some focus group participants were unclear on the criteria. Our examination of processes found that there were clear definitions and criteria in place. Survey respondents also expressed concern about eligible students receiving the services, however, we found that, based on data made available to us, all of the students who met the criteria in middle and high school were placed in the METS program.

Elementary students with limited or interrupted formal education

For elementary students with limited or interrupted formal education, the 2019-20 school year saw a transition from elementary METS programs at three distinct school sites to a system in which SLIFE students are served at their local schools. Because this change happened in the first year of the COVID pandemic, it is challenging to understand the impact of this change. First, due to the impact of COVID, there are gaps in collecting data on students' academic achievement and in their ELP growth. Second, even if such data were available, it would be difficult to untangle any impacts from the program change from the overall impact of the pandemic. For various data points, CAL requested data disaggregated for the subgroup of SLIFE students, but this data is not available.

Our recommendations, therefore, include future monitoring and evaluation to understand if this change? is having a beneficial impact on students. We echo the recommendations from the 2020 report on elementary METS programs, including streamlining data connections from the METS program to other MCPS databases (namely enrollment, district-level assessment, counseling services, and ELD services).

We further note that the discontinuation of the standalone METS program for elementary students coincides with the expansion of TWI programs into upper elementary. TWI programs were identified by research participants as a source of strength for SLIFE students.

Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METS) program

While most educators agreed that the METS program meets students' academic needs, a considerable number (more than 30%) disagreed.

On the programmatic side, educators expressed the need for more consistency across METS programs stating that there was wide variation in program implementation. They also expressed concerns over staffing, highlighting the need for a smaller student-teacher ratio and additional paraeducator support. This finding is echoed by the evaluation of the elementary school METS program, which recommends clearer guidelines for schools around the purposes, implementation, progress monitoring, and protocols for assigning students to METS programs.

In terms of instruction, our classroom observations found that instruction in METS programs was an area of strength, with an overall average rating across the ten observed classrooms of 3.2 on a scale of 0-4, where we regard ratings greater than 3.0 as areas of strength.

We heard mixed concerns from participants about school settings for students who exited the METS programs. These students typically attend their neighborhood schools. Participants expressed concern that this practice broke students' ties to adults and peers at their METS school site, and also that it removed access to wrap-around services, including wellness centers. Other participants, however, pointed out that transportation to METS sites was a barrier to attendance for some students. We also found documentation of advocacy for more choice around school sites from students, families, and teachers.

Professional learning

Educators expressed a number of needs for more professional development around supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education, explicitly calling out a need for PD on newcomer students, trauma-informed education, and socioemotional support for newcomer students. A majority of survey respondents (63%) indicated that content area educators who support METS students did not have appropriate instructional strategies to meet the needs of these students. Sustained professional learning was also a recommendation of the 2020 elementary METS evaluation. Our recommendations for professional learning are included in Chapter 4 on Educator Assets and Supports.

The views of educators in the METS program support our findings that families are in need of clear and accessible information in a language that they can understand regarding students' graduation requirements.

Finally, in line with other findings, we see concern from educators that SLIFE students are not appropriately referred for special education services.

Are newcomer students and students with limited and interrupted formal education afforded the opportunity to access curricular and extracurricular activities, comparable to their peers?

Defining "newcomer" students

Before we turn to our findings about the opportunities for newcomer students, we first would like to note that we could not address this question directly through an examination of data on this subgroup. We did find strong interest in the idea of a common and well-communicated definition of "newcomer" across focus groups and also from the Stakeholder Commission.

We recognize the interest in understanding the academic performance of this subgroup of students as an evaluation method to gauge whether appropriate supports and instruction are in place. Without a clear definition of who counts as a "newcomer," it is not possible to conduct counts or analyses of the academic performance of newcomer students.

However, we urge caution around defining and tracking students based on their time of entry to the United States, for several reasons. First, student and family immigration status is an area of sensitivity for many families and there are civil rights concerns around school districts collecting data on students' immigration status (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Secondly, precisely because of these sensitivities, families may not wish to disclose relevant information, and so any systemic data collection runs the risk of inaccuracy.

Opportunities for newcomer students

Student focus group participants expressed barriers to accessing after-school activities. Barriers included paid work and caregiving work commitments. Students also mentioned that, in some cases, they had aged out of youth sports opportunities and could not participate.

Recommendations

6.1 Continue the work that DELME is undertaking to monitor and evaluate the achievement and opportunities for elementary SLIFE students now that these students are dispersed among multiple elementary schools.

6.2 Should MCPS choose eventually to expand TWI programs, explore a priority pathway to these programs for SLIFE students.

- Engage the parents of SLIFE students in any planning to understand the impact of such change.
- Ensure that TWI schools have appropriate staffing in grades 3-5 to support SLIFE students.

6.3 Conduct annual reviews of data on the METS program, including numbers of students newly identified as SLIFE, number served, number exited, and number of students meeting ELD and academic content goals.

- Monitor these data to understand if site and staffing levels continue to be adequate or of numbers of students served are fluctuating.
- Monitor these data to understand if students are meeting programmatic goals, including graduation rates.

- Monitor these data to understand whether METS students are appropriately referred to special education services if needed.
- Supplement Central Office staffing to ensure this goal can be met.

6.4 Provide professional learning to support both ELD and content area teachers in METS programs.

- Prioritize professional learning for content area teachers.
- Provide professional learning on trauma-informed instruction and socio-emotional support for students with limited or interrupted formal education.

6.7 Expand the number of EML Therapeutic Counselors (ETCs) with the specific goal of understanding and reducing individual students' barriers to attendance.

6.8 Engage families, METS students, and their teachers in considering whether to follow the new elementary model and serve students at their home schools, or to continue the centralized METS model.

7. Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) with Disabilities

Summary of Recommendations

7.1. Develop clear guidelines for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities.

- Review comparable guidelines and toolkits, including the *California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities* and Chapter 6 of the *Office of English Language Acquisition's English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies*.
- Ensure that the guidelines are appropriately communicated and that all stakeholders are trained in processes and procedures for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities.

7.2. Hold schools accountable for implementing best practices.

- Once guidelines are developed and implemented, conduct periodic monitoring visits to ensure schools are implementing these best practices. A focus of these visits should be ensuring that EMLs are provided with ELD services if indicated, as well as special education and related services.

7.3. Provide extensive professional learning opportunities to all MCPS staff.

- Provide all schools with mandatory training in processes and procedures for the identification and evaluation of EML students in cases of a suspected disability.
- Provide training for ELD and special educators on best practices for instruction for EML students with disabilities.

7.4. Create a pool of well-trained and well-paid interpreters.

- Increase the pool of available interpreters.
- Recruit qualified interpreters by increasing interpreter compensation and ensuring that compensation for travel is included, as travel location is a current barrier to services.
- Train interpreters on issues of assessments, confidentiality, and working with different language and cultural groups.
- Train MCPS special education assessment personnel on working effectively with interpreters.

Background

Students who are dually identified as EML and as a student with a disability require expert educators and specialized supports. Federal law protects students' rights to **both** special education and language education services. In this chapter, we examine the extent to which MCPS educators are prepared to support these students. We also examine processes and procedures around the identification and evaluation of EML students to assess whether these students are eligible for special education services.

Results

Focus Groups

Focus group participants conveyed several challenges in serving EML students with disabilities, with some of the biggest themes being the need for (1) a more equitable identification process for EMLs, (2) increased collaboration between ELD and special education teachers, and (3) growth with regards to language supports within SPED contexts.

One notable comment made by a special education teacher was that "the notion that SPED trumps ELD is pervasive in the county."

Responses for this section include statements from a variety of administrators and educators. Students in focus groups were asked if they had Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), and no student in the focus groups reported that they had an IEP. Participating parents did not report having a child with an IEP, but they spoke out of their experience with other families whose children do receive SPED services.

Professional learning

SPED teachers reported needing training in how to serve EMLs, one indicating they had only attended one training in 10 years. Another SPED teacher said they "know some strategies," for example, using images for language development, but that they are "still lacking a tool box." Two of the SPED teachers reported drawing on training they had received on working with deaf and hard of hearing students in working with EMLs, one reporting that this helped them teach language to EMLs, while the other acknowledged they still do not feel prepared to work with EMLs.

One ELD teacher expressed a need for curriculum and special training for EMLs with cognitive disabilities, saying that there are alternative tests but no alternative programs for these students. A parent reported knowing several families with children with IEPs, and they said these families "don't feel that their children are well supported in the Spanish program," implicating a desire for accommodations and bilingual support within SPED instruction.

Issues around staffing can also impact how prepared teachers are for serving EMLs with disabilities. An ELD teacher said that there is, broadly, a shortage of SPED teachers within MCPS. This statement resonates with other statements, discussed below, about the large workload of SPED teachers. A parent of a student in a TWI school reported that there are not enough bilingual SPED staff at the school. Staffing appears to remain a challenge within SPED, with bilingual staffing perhaps a particular challenge.

Collaboration between ELD and SPED Teachers

The potential benefits of increased collaboration between ELD and SPED teachers in helping to serve EMLs with disabilities was a theme among the focus groups. Teachers in one focus group reported collaboration between ELD and SPED teachers, with one ELD teacher saying they "defer to SPED teachers," but that they share learning goals. A counselor in the same group said that SPED and ELD teachers collaborate and plan together.

However, in three focus groups, participants reported a need for more collaboration between SPED and ELD teachers. Three school administrators in one focus group said that there is too little collaboration between ELD and SPED, one attributing this to the high demands on both types of teachers, who are working across multiple grade levels, and one participant adding that they have observed some ELD

teachers attempt to collaborate with classroom teachers but not with SPED teachers. A classroom teacher in another focus group similarly said that SPED teachers spend a limited amount of time with ELD teachers and have limited access to ELD teachers. Special education teachers in another focus group reported limited access to ELD teachers, one saying they have never co-taught with an ELD teacher and do not receive consultation unless they request it. That teacher and another SPED teacher in the group emphasized the difficulty with collaboration as due, in part, to time constraints and the demands of the job. One of the SPED teachers also noted that ELD teachers do not attend IEP meetings even if a student receives ELD services.

Identification and misclassification

There were a variety of responses from focus group participants about both over and underrepresentation of EMLs among students with disabilities. In one focus group, three school administrators reported challenges in the SPED identification process for EMLs, leading to misclassification. One of these administrators reported overrepresentation of students of color, especially boys of color, and EMLs within SPED. Two others discussed factors that could lead to a lack of testing or a disability not being identified, which could indicate underrepresentation. One of the factors mentioned was students' language proficiency; one of the administrators, as well as a counselor and classroom teacher in two other focus groups, noted that most EMLs with English proficiency of Level I and II won't be tested for disabilities, which could lead to underidentification.

Clarity of Protocols

Over and underrepresentation are related to the clarity of protocols for the identification of disabilities. There was variation in responses with regard to whether protocols were clear. While one school administrator responded that protocols for EMLs with disabilities are clear, one school counselor, one elementary ELD teacher, one TWI school administrator, and one SPED teacher stated that protocols were unclear, or that policies were not uniform. The administrator stated that identification most often happens in elementary school, although they, and others, spoke of students being identified as having disabilities in middle or high school, sometimes as newcomers to the district.

Language Support for Identification

Two SPED teachers in the same focus group shared that it is difficult to code students during the identification process due to language differences. One of them further shared that although students have to be tested using interpreters, interpreters are not always available even if a request is made. They shared that when this happens the district misses the deadline for timely evaluation, which further complicates the process and causes a delay in communication with parents about potential disabilities. They said that although there is a bilingual assessment team, they are not always available, and in some cases staff members (e.g., a secretary) step in to provide interpretation. A school administrator similarly stated that the bilingual assessment team is available, but that the process moves slowly when they are "slammed with work."

Family Engagement for EMLs with Disabilities

Parents participating in the family focus group reported significant challenges for families of EML students with IEPs. They said the process is "extremely confusing" and requires intense advocacy efforts on the part of the family to get appropriate services. They said the system needs to become more accessible, and that translation services "should just be the baseline; having just that doesn't cut it." They emphasized the need for a "culturally welcoming approach," and another parent added,

"Communication about IEPs is not good. There needs to be a better way to explain the information." The opportunity for increased collaboration between SPED and ELD teachers, including ELD teacher attendance at IEP meetings, as discussed above, may be related to the issues families are having with navigating SPED services.

Survey

We asked educators to provide us with information on their preparation in working with EML students with disabilities – including both preservice (Table 1) and inservice (Table 2) training. It was rare for preservice training to include coverage of how to support EML students with disabilities (65.50% of respondents received no coverage of this content). It was only slightly less rare for the topic to be covered in inservice training, with 59.22% of respondents indicating that this topic was not covered in recent professional learning.

Table 1: Survey respondents' preservice training in supporting EML students with disabilities

My preservice training included how to support Emergent Multilingual students with disabilities.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, extensively	2.29%
Yes, some training	22.51%
No, this topic was not addressed in my preservice training.	65.50%
Don't know/not applicable	9.70%

Table 2: Survey respondents' recent professional learning that pertains to supporting EML students with disabilities

Within the past five years, I have participated in professional development activities that have included strategies to support Emergent Multilingual students with disabilities.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, extensive training on this topic	5.65%
Yes, some training on this topic	29.74%
No, I have not attended training on this topic.	59.22%
Don't know/not applicable	5.38%

We also asked respondents to provide us with their impressions and beliefs about the supports offered for MCPS EML students with disabilities and their families (Table 3). More than 20% disagreed that families are able to access interpretation services to easily participate in IEP or 504 meetings, and that evaluations for special education services are typically conducted in students' home languages. Additionally, almost one-quarter did not believe that EML students with disabilities typically receive both English language development services and special education-related services.

Participants tended to not express agreement or strong agreement around statements related to families' access to information, with fewer than 50% agreeing with the following statements:

- Families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand, about their student's IEP or 504 plan.
- Families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand, about the results of special education evaluations.

- Families with EML students have the information that they need to refer students for a screening.

Table 3: Survey respondents' beliefs about EML students with disabilities in MCPS

Thinking about Emergent Multilingual students with disabilities, please rate the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Weighted Average
Families with EML students have the information that they need to refer students for a screening.	2.21%	20.61%	40.11%	19.23%	17.84%	2.93
Evaluations are typically conducted in students' home language.	7.41%	43.78%	17.90%	4.90%	26.01%	2.27
Families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand, about the results of special education evaluations.	5.46%	40.20%	23.95%	9.66%	20.73%	2.48
Families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand, about their student's IEP or 504 plan.	6.82%	40.25%	24.23%	8.08%	20.61%	2.42
Families are able to access interpretation services easily to participate in IEP or 504 meetings.	12.24%	45.48%	17.66%	5.29%	19.33%	2.2
EML students with disabilities typically receive both English language development services and special education-related services.	14.94%	41.20%	17.74%	6.70%	19.41%	2.2

Of the 888 survey respondents, 228 (26%) provided a response to the open-ended question regarding EML students with disabilities. Of these 228, thirty-eight provided responses that indicated they did not know about this area or have anything to add. Among the 190 responses with comments about how MCPS supports EML students with disabilities, respondents largely described an educational context in which approaches to serving students vary widely. There were respondents who indicated that students are at times denied timely SPED testing, and, when identified, are not provided with the services for which they qualify, being served most often in SPED contexts with limited language support. Further, although interpretation and translation are sometimes provided for families, respondents described significant barriers for families in understanding services and advocating for their children. Key needs described included training for teachers (especially ELD teachers), a consistent and research-based approach to serving these students, and a better understanding of how to determine whether a student

is struggling due to language differences or disabilities. These and other themes from the open-ended survey responses are discussed further below.

Overall Views on How EMLs with Disabilities are being Served

A number of respondents made broad comments about how MCPS is doing in serving EMLs with disabilities. Two respondents said, broadly, that MCPS is doing well in serving these students. Another respondent cited a number of practices at an early childhood center that are supportive of EMLs with disabilities. However, 14 respondents described this broadly as an area of need, 11 said more support and guidance is needed for EML students with disabilities, and five described EMLs with disabilities as being ignored and deprioritized within the district. One respondent stated, "I don't believe MCPS supports these students at all. They fall into a sort of no-man's land. Students coded as both special education and EML are usually put into co-taught special education classes rather than EML classes, so they stop getting language support and are only provided support for their disabilities." Two respondents cited the lack of communication and collaboration between SPED and ELD teams as a key need for serving these students. Four respondents said that approaches and quality of services vary by school, one stating, "My current placement does a fairly good job, but in previous schools it has been abysmal. There is no equity between schools and virtually no oversight." Another respondent noted that the Speech Program does a lot of work in this area that is overlooked and unrecognized for its value in contributing to solutions for EMLs with disabilities.

Identification and Establishment of Services

Processes for identifying EML students as having disabilities were a common theme among survey responses, with five noting that the process is generally difficult and confusing. Regarding EMLs specifically, 29 respondents said that EML students were denied SPED testing and services due to their language needs and other "exclusionary factors." One stated, "It is nearly impossible to get services for EML students until they are proficient in English. However, many do not become proficient due to ACCESS scores because of a learning disability." Issues reported as related to lack of identification in high school included students aging out, dropping out, or being identified too late. One respondent said, "Getting high school EMLs evaluated has been a problem for years. Most schools where I have taught refuse to consider a student for at least a year and refuse to consider students with interrupted education. By the time a student is considered for screening, either they are on the verge of dropping out due to frustration or they are aging out." Regarding issues at the elementary level, another respondent shared, "It is frustrating at the primary levels to watch EL students struggle for multiple years because the system won't screen most ELs, saying any issues are due to language. Instead, many of these students lose years of education and fall further and further behind. By the time they are finally screened for services, they are years below grade level and their self-esteem has been damaged." Another respondent shared how this impacts early childhood education: "It is extremely difficult to engage special ed with ELD students in MCPS, especially in early childhood. Many years can go by before a child has been identified because MCPS Central Office will say academic challenges are solely based on language issues. I have had many students over the years who have lost precious early intervention time in receiving special ed support because issues were solely attributed to language." One ELD teacher emphasized the expertise and perspective of the ELD teachers as an overlooked resource in this area: "Often when EML teachers think strongly that there is a learning problem, they are told it is the language and that is supposed to end the inquiry about it. Most teachers don't say anything about a possible LD lightly. It is disrespectful to the student and teacher."

Relatedly, many respondents (18) cited long and untimely processes for identifying EMLs with disabilities, with referring ELD teachers reporting being told that students need to improve in their English language skills or be in the district for a longer amount of time before being able to be tested for disabilities and potentially become eligible for SPED services.

Related to the refusal to evaluate some EMLs, 10 respondents said that EMLs are underidentified as having disabilities. However, two respondents said that EMLs are overidentified, with others noting that the processes that lead to current underidentification are a response to prior patterns of overidentification. One noted, "I understand that this is in response to overidentification in the past, however, if you are an EML and have a learning disability, you deserve to get help regardless of your first language."

Problems with testing were cited generally (2) and with regard to the lack of use of bilingual assessments (1). The availability of interpreters for evaluations seems to vary, with four respondents reporting interpreters are available for evaluations, and four reporting that there is a need for interpreters for evaluations.

A theme woven among the responses about identification and evaluation was a broad need for attention to how to differentiate students' needs with regard to second language acquisition and learning disabilities (18), with some noting that it takes time to determine whether students are struggling with language or due to a disability (4). One noted, "EML students with disabilities are not usually screened because administration and counseling staff automatically think that their challenges are due to language and not a learning disability."

Respondents suggested including ELD staff in various ways within SPED identification and service provision in order to better identify and serve these students. Suggestions included having ELD staff present for IEP meetings (3), involving ELD teachers in SPED services (1), giving ELD teachers diagnostic tools and procedures to help identify students' needs (1), and involving ELD teachers in processes for exiting SPED services (1). One stated, "Language teachers should be given more of a voice in the process. We are shut out."

Services for EMLs with Disabilities
Respondents reported that EMLs with disabilities rarely receive both ELD and SPED services (14), and that they are primarily served by SPED rather than ELD (17), although one respondent said that they receive both. One respondent said that EMLs are encouraged to refuse services once identified for SPED. Three teachers reported, relatedly, that it is difficult to deliver ELD services to these students, and an ELD teacher said that they do push-in to support students' language needs since the students are pulled for SPED rather than ELD. One respondent noted small-group or push-in support for students, and another noted support through resource periods or aides for students at the high school level. An ELD teacher said that EMLs with disabilities receive the accommodations they need within ELD or sheltered classes, "as our supports are very similar and regularly used for the whole class."

Programmatic and instructional needs reported by respondents included more consistency in the approach to serving these students (3), specialized instruction for EMLs with disabilities (1), more ELD support in Learning Centers or special schools (2), more support in mainstream classes (1), greater collaboration between teachers (2), and more services in languages other than English and Spanish (2).

Curricular resources reported as needs were curriculum specifically for EMLs with disabilities (1), translated texts (1), and modified lessons for these students (1).

Staffing and Professional Learning

Staffing concerns were raised by a number of respondents, citing needs related to broad understaffing issues (3), teachers who serve EMLs with disabilities specifically (1), bilingual staff to provide services EMLs with disabilities (1), SPED teachers who serve EMLs (1), more bilingual assessment staff (1), and more bilingual counselors (1).

Support and professional learning were also cited as needs for teachers serving EMLs with disabilities, with seven respondents saying that more support and guidance is needed for teachers. Three respondents indicated a broad need for more training on serving EMLs with disabilities, and another indicated that teacher training programs do not prepare teachers well for serving these students. Fourteen respondents said that ELD teachers need training on serving SPED students, many of these being ELD teachers themselves and expressing an interest in more training in this area. Other staff roles indicated as needing professional learning support for serving these students were SPED teachers (2 respondents), non-ELD teachers (1), and administrators (1). One respondent suggested incorporating information on serving EMLs as part of existing SPED trainings. Other sub-topics indicated as professional learning needs were co-teaching and progress monitoring of EMLs in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (1) and cultural responsiveness (1).

Long-term EMLs and Exiting ELD Services for Students with Disabilities

Respondents said that long-term EMLs often have disabilities (5 respondents) and that there are problems with the process for exiting EMLs that make it harder for students with disabilities to test out of ELD services, even if they are sufficiently proficient in English (9). One noted that staff who work with students should have a voice in the process. Another mentioned students who were born in the U.S., have attended MCPS for 8 years, and are unable to exit due to being unable to pass the WIDA assessment. Another respondent said, "There needs to be a modification of how we are testing these students. We have a large Learning Center population who are given the same WIDA test and scored on the same rubric as non-IEP students. They often tire out just from the directions portion of the test and end up clicking random answers to get through the test. It is not appropriate for many of them or useful data." Another shared that a "pressing issue is that there should be another way to exit the student from ELD if they were born here and are in ELD longer than 5 years. At that point, the language is not the issue, but the disability may impact their ability to pass the language proficiency test."

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students

A few respondents (3) mentioned deaf and hard-of-hearing students, drawing attention to the fact that these students are both EMLs and students with disabilities. One said, "Please don't forget that Deaf or Hard of Hearing students who use American Sign Language are also Multilingual Learners. This population is TOO easily overlooked, but has needs from both the special education sphere and also the EML sphere." Another shared, "Deaf/Hard of Hearing students would likely be included in this category of 'EML students with disabilities.' They receive specialized instruction and services."

Family Engagement

Family engagement for EMLs with disabilities was described largely as an area facing a number of challenges. Survey respondents said that more meaningful participation from families is needed (5 respondents), there is a lack of outreach to families (9 respondents), and families need more direct

support (9 respondnets). Resources were described as lacking and needing revision, with respondents saying more resources were needed for families of EMLs (11 respondents), and that the information can be overwhelming for them (6 respondents). In part due to lack of experience with the U.S. educational context and also due to lack of comprehensible communication and resources for families, respondents described EML parents as unaware of policies, procedures, and services related to SPED (16 respondents), and said that parents need to be empowered to advocate for their children (14 respondents). One respondent also noted that unaccompanied minors are at a particular disadvantage when it comes to navigating SPED identification and services.

Two respondents also noted related socioeconomic issues such as health care. One of these respondents described this, as well as a number of the other challenges cited as facing EML families: "I think that EML families often are not aware of warning signs that their child is behind in their learning, especially in foundational reading and math skills--they put their faith entirely in the school system. Parents from the US often know that they have to advocate for referrals and testing if they suspect a learning disability exists in their child. I also feel that EML families often are not able to advocate for their children because of a lack of understanding of how special education works in this country. Finally, EML families often have less access to affordable health care where vital screenings take place in terms of learning, vision, hearing, speech, and behavior." Another respondent similarly noted, "ELD students who need special ed services face significant obstacles. A parent of a child who went to a speech and language clinic in El Salvador wrote a letter asking for 'help' for her child. The SPED team leader said the parent did not specifically ask for her child to be evaluated. So we need to wait until a parent without health insurance finds a way for her child to have a physical exam that includes speech, vision, and hearing tests. Then we can determine if his difficulties are due to language or special ed needs. This is really painful because we are delaying providing services to a child who needs them. I doubt this would happen at a more affluent school with English-speaking parents who understand the school's legal obligation to educate their child."

Linguistic barriers also exist for EML parents. These are mitigated by interpretation services available for meetings and communication with families, with eight respondents noting the support these provide, and two noting that meetings with interpreters are the best way for families to get information about SPED services for their children. However, many respondents also noted persistent challenges, saying that interpretation is not always available (7), that the language around SPED services is complex and challenging for parents to understand (22), even for native English speakers (3), that providing interpretation is insufficient for clear communication with EML families (8), and that interpreters' lack of understanding of the SPED context impedes clear communication (2).

Regarding document translation, seven respondents said that documents are translated as a support for families of EMLs, while 12 reported that documents are frequently not translated. Specific challenges noted by respondents included the screening survey that families complete being provided only in English (1), difficulty in getting IEPs translated (1), frequent lack of translation for evaluation results (1), and delays in providing translated evaluations to parents (1). Two noted a lack of translation for languages other than Spanish, one mentioning a SPED brochure specifically. Also, as mentioned above regarding interpretation, one respondent emphasized not just translation but ensuring comprehensibility and clear communication, noting, "Even if the reports are translated into the families' home language, that does not mean the information is clear or easily understood."

A number of respondents noted the need for ensuring comprehension and cultural understanding and responsiveness for families. Respondents reported a need to ensure parent understanding even when translation is provided (13). One stated, "More of an effort needs to be made to not just translate information, but really make sure parents understand. Many other countries do not have the systems and supports that we have here. Parents do not know their rights. Also many families feel shame or come from cultures where disabilities carry a stigma. Staff need to be sensitive." On the issue of cultural differences, this respondent and others noted cultural differences around disability and schooling (4 respondents), as well as a need for cultural sensitivity and responsiveness when interacting with families (4). One respondent shared, "There is a huge need for training for staff to make meetings and family interactions more culturally responsive. Families are really not considered (or treated) as true partners due to language and cultural differences which are not fully respected by staff. There is a need for training to move from a deficit mindset to a more strengths-based and culturally responsive mindset." Another shared, "MCPS overall does not do enough to ensure that non-English speaking families of kids with disabilities have access to information in their home language and that meetings are conducted in a way that families truly understand what is happening and how they can advocate for their child. An interpreter at these meetings is not enough. Staff need training on culturally responsive ways to take families through the screening and evaluation process, as well as IEP and 504 meetings." Another respondent said, "Parents feel intimidated advocating for their child because they feel school staff are professionals that shouldn't be questioned. IEP meetings and screening processes are very much oriented to White American culture."

Professional Learning on EMLs with Disabilities

The need for professional learning on EMLs with disabilities and the intersection of ELD and SPED services was reported by 16 survey respondents. Most of these (14) reported broad needs regarding knowledge of how to support and instruct EMLs with disabilities, one describing this as a "significant need." Another of these respondents said that SPED teachers need to learn more about EMLs and how to support them.

Identification and placement were mentioned as needs for professional learning by four respondents. One noted the need to better understand the distinction between language difference and language disorders, noting that speech pathologists can help in this area. Another mentioned challenges with EMLs not exiting ELD services due to other learning challenges, noting a desire to understand better how to support these students and how to best balance the services provided to them.

Two respondents noted a desire to better understand the role of culture in serving students with disabilities. One reported wanting to learn "how cultural differences impact which behavior strategies are effective." The other said, "I would welcome training or information on the underlying cultural views of students with disabilities and then ways to help families from various backgrounds on their journey of being a parent of a child with a disability."

One other respondent noted the need to address deaf and hard-of-hearing students in professional learning on EMLs and special education, noting that these students are "increasingly frequently new language learners – of ASL, of English, of their home language, etc. Oftentimes professional development addresses EML students of spoken language, whose needs are often very different from those of Deaf/Hard of Hearing students."

Quantitative Data, Document Review, and other Data

As part of our document review process, CAL sought out documentation on processes, guidance, and procedures around EMLs and special education, including any documentation on referrals, identification, and IEP processes. To conduct a comprehensive search for documentation, we engaged in discussion with the DELME team as well as outreach to special education staff at the MCPS central office. We were unable to uncover written policies specific to EMLs with disabilities. We also asked about recent professional learning regarding EML students with disabilities and were likewise not able to find evidence of any recent professional learning on this topic.

CAL examined the referral process for the Bilingual Assessment Team (BAT), which is posted on the MCPS website.[1] Bilingual assessment is best practice in many cases for students with suspected disabilities, however, bilingual assessments are only available in Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, or Amharic. For students who have other language backgrounds, assessments take place via interpreter.

As part of our investigation, emerging from concerns expressed in focus groups and in survey data, we examined the systems in place to support interpreters for IEP and 504 conferences. We find that interpreters are paid poorly ($31.50 to $35.00 per hour, with no paid travel time). An impact of this is that interpreters prefer not to travel to parts of the county too far from them. Additionally, we were not able to uncover any evidence that interpreters were trained on issues of assessments, confidentiality, or working with different language and cultural groups. Nor was there evidence that MCPS assessment personnel have received training on working effectively with interpreters.

Analysis of Over/Under Identification

To examine disproportionate identification (either over or underrepresentation), the share of students in a particular group is compared to the share of students in the total population. For example, if 10% of a total student population is left-handed, but 50% of students who run for student council are left-handed, we would say that there is an overrepresentation of left-handed students running for student council.

Table 4 and Table 5 show the demographic characteristics, by race and ethnicity of the total MCPS population and the population of students with disabilities, respectively, for school year 2021-22.

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of the total MCPS student population, SY2021-22

	Elementary	Middle	High	Special	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Asian	13.7%	14.3%	14.5%	8.0%	14.1%
Black or African American	21.8%	21.9%	21.8%	34.2%	21.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
White	24.0%	25.5%	27.1%	23.9%	25.3%
Two or More Races	5.3%	5.4%	4.4%	5.0%	5.0%
Hispanic/Latino	34.8%	32.7%	32.0%	28.9%	33.4%

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[1] https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/studentservices/schooling/default.aspx?id=333029

Table 5: Demographic characteristics of MCPS students with disabilities, SY2021-22

	Elementary	Middle	High	Special	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Asian	10.1%	5.8%	6.3%	8.0%	8.0%
Black or African American	26.0%	26.7%	26.8%	33.7%	26.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
White	22.4%	23.7%	28.0%	23.9%	24.3%
Two or More Races	4.8%	4.4%	4.2%	4.7%	4.6%
Hispanic/Latino	36.3%	39.0%	34.5%	29.7%	36.3%

All else being equal, we would expect that students' ethnicities should have no impact on their likelihood of being a student with a disability. Table 6 shows the risk ratio for Latino/a student identification. We see that they are slightly overrepresented in the population of students with disabilities (36.3% of students with disabilities are Latino/a) than in the total population (33.4% of total students are Latino/a).

Table 6: Risk Ratio for Special Education identification for Latino/a students

	Elementary	Middle	High	Special	Total
Risk Ratio	1.04	1.19	1.08	1.03	1.09

Risk ratios greater than 1.0 indicate overrepresentation; risk ratios less than 1.0 indicate underrepresentation.

For EML students, we examined the distribution of all students and the distribution of EML students by disability category. Data are provided in Table 7. We also present the risk ratio.

Table 7: Distribution of all students with disabilities and EML students with disabilities, by disability category

Disability Code	All Students	EML Students	Total %	EML %	Risk Ratio
No Disability	140,237	25,099	86.81%	81.86%	0.94
Autism	3,430	651	2.12%	2.12%	1.00
Deaf	67	-	0.04%	-	-
Deaf-Blindness	-	-	-	-	-
Developmental Delay	3,043	567	1.88%	1.85%	0.98
Emotional Disability	692	75	0.43%	0.24%	**0.57**
Hearing Impairment	164	19	0.10%	0.06%	0.61
Intellectual Disability	612	202	0.38%	0.66%	**1.74**
Multiple Disabilities	540	100	0.33%	0.33%	0.98
Orthopedic Impairment	14	-	0.01%	-	-
Other Health Impairment	3,825	709	2.37%	2.31%	0.98
Specific Learning Disability	6,876	2,707	4.26%	8.83%	**2.07**
Speech or Language Impairment	1,969	508	1.22%	1.66%	**1.36**
Traumatic Brain Injury	15	-	0.01%	-	-
Visual Impairment	52	-	0%	-	-

Note: Cells with nine or fewer students are suppressed for privacy.

Table 7 shows that EML students are slightly overrepresented among students with disabilities – of all students, 86.81% are coded as "no disability" but only 81.86% of EML students have no disability.

Among disability categories, EML students are slightly overrepresented among students identified with speech or language impairment. EML students are more overrepresented among students identified with an intellectual disability, and EML students are twice as likely to be identified with a specific learning disability than the general population of students.

EML students are underrepresented among students identified with an emotional disability. EML students are also underrepresented among students identified with a hearing impairment, however, the n-size for this group is small.

Observations

Please refer to the Observations section of Chapter 2.2 for observation of classrooms with students with disabilities.

Findings

Focus groups, surveys, and interviews uncovered concerns from educators that students who were dually identified as Emergent Multilingual students and students with disabilities may not be receiving appropriate services for their dual identifications.

Do teachers who work with Emergent Multilingual Learner students with disabilities feel prepared to support these students?

Survey and focus group responses indicate that teachers do not feel prepared to support EML students with disabilities. The majority of survey respondents had not received any preservice or inservice training to support this group of learners.

In addition, results exploring educators' beliefs about how well EML students with disabilities are supported indicate that educators are concerned for this group of students. Scant majorities agreed that IEP or 504 meetings were accessible to families who need language access; that students who were dually identified were receiving appropriate services; and that special education evaluations were conducted in students' home languages.

This concern was echoed in educators' perceptions of how accessible information about special education services is to families of EML students with disabilities. Fewer than half of the educators surveyed believed that families have clear information, in a language that they understand, about their students' IEP or 504 plan, about results of a special education evaluation, or about the process to refer students for a screening. There is also a clear and compelling need for additional clarity and professional development around the identification and evaluation process, which we discuss below.

Is there disproportional identification of English learners as students with disabilities (either over or underrepresentation)?

Nationwide, there is concern about the misclassification of EL students with disabilities (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Zehler et al., 2003; Klingner et al., 2006; Samson & Lesaux, 2009; Sullivan, 2011; Artiles et al., 2005; Artiles et al., 2011; Ballantyne, 2013).

Such misclassification may be either overidentification (i.e., the identification of a disability when no disability is present) or underidentification (a disability which is not identified, and therefore a situation in which a school district does not provide appropriate services to a student). Overidentification and underidentification can be present simultaneously.

While care must be taken to provide an accurate evaluation and classification of EML students, equal care must be taken to ensure that evaluation is done in a timely fashion.

The US Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA, 2017, Ch 6, p. 1) states:

> If an EL is suspected of having one or more disabilities, the LEA must evaluate the EL promptly to determine if the EL has a disability or disabilities and whether the EL needs disability-related services (which are special education and related services under IDEA or regular or special education and related aids and services under Section 504). Disability evaluations may not be delayed because of a student's limited English language proficiency (ELP) or the student's participation in a language instruction educational program (LIEP).

Latino/a students are slightly overrepresented in the population of students with disabilities, and the greatest overrepresentation is in middle school. As a whole, EML students are also slightly overrepresented among students with disabilities.

Among disability categories, we find that EML students are slightly overrepresented among students identified with speech or language impairment. EML students are more overrepresented among

students identified with an intellectual disability, and EML students are twice as likely to be identified with a specific learning disability than are the general population of students.

EML students are underrepresented among students identified with an emotional disability.

Analysis of qualitative data raises concerns around the processes of identification and evaluation.

Interviews and focus groups uncovered two major misconceptions about EMLS with disabilities that pertain to the identification and evaluation of these students.

One is that EMLs should not be evaluated until after they have been in the country for two years or until they learn English. Some teachers believe that this means two years of English language services prior to a referral. This is a violation of federal regulations. If this is commonly applied, there may be students who are in need of special education services but will not receive the necessary services.

Another common misconception is that special education services trump English language development services and that, ELD services should be dropped once a child is diagnosed with a disability.

There is confusion among school staff around the exclusionary factors that are considered when determining if an EML has a learning disability. EMLs may mistakenly not receive special education services when they are actually eligible if these factors are not applied appropriately (Whitaker and Ortiz, 2019).

In our review of documents and other data, we find that currently, the county has no evaluation guidelines for EMLs. The evaluation process is of concern. It appears that EMLs speaking the five most common languages in the county are evaluated by the Bilingual Assessment Team (BAT) using interpreters if no staff are available who speak those languages. This team follows best practices, but it is not clear what happens for other EMLs.

An additional area of concern is outreach to parents of EMLs; we were unable to find clear guidelines from MCPS on best or expected practices for outreach to parents.

Given the size of MCPS, we recommend below that the district should consider developing its own guidelines. The following two publications are recommended resources for this work:

- An example of well-developed guidelines was published in 2019 by the California Department of Education.
- The Office of English Language Acquisition (2017) has developed a toolkit for providing services for EMLs. Chapter 6 is devoted to English learners with disabilities and contains useful tools for schools and districts.

Related to this finding, a final area of concern is consistency across the district. Staff interviews indicate that there is considerable variability among schools in how they evaluate, place, and serve EMLs with disabilities.

How is data from MTSS being used in schools?

During focus groups, MCPS staff were asked about the use of MTSS data in schools. Only one, an ELD teacher, was familiar with the MTSS process but she indicated that she was not part of it.

Additional Finding: Communication with the families of EML students with disabilities

While it was not one of our original research questions, compelling evidence emerged from our research study that there are challenges when it comes to communicating with the families of EML students with disabilities. Focus group and survey participants expressed challenges with securing translation and interpretation services to support evaluation and IEP and 504 meetings and documentation. Examination of the systems around interpretation services indicate that there are challenges in staffing these services. Furthermore, interpretation and translation in this field requires specialist knowledge of special education processes and procedures, and we were unable to uncover evidence of any training in this area. Finally, we also were unable to find evidence that assessment staff had the training to work effectively with interpreters.

For additional information on interpretation and translation services, please refer to MCPS staff interviews in the following chapter, Family Engagement. This section includes information on the process for getting interpretation and translation services.

Recommendations

7.1. Develop clear guidelines for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities.

- Review comparable guidelines and toolkits, including the *California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities* and Chapter 6 of the *Office of English Language Acquisition's English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies*.
- Ensure that the guidelines are appropriately communicated and that all stakeholders are trained in processes and procedures for the evaluation and placement of EMLs with disabilities.

7.2. Hold schools accountable for implementing best practices.

- Once guidelines are developed and implemented, conduct periodic monitoring visits to ensure schools are implementing these best practices. A focus of these visits should be ensuring that EMLs are provided with ELD services if indicated as well as special education and related services.

7.3. Provide extensive professional learning opportunities to all MCPS staff.

- Provide all schools with mandatory training in processes and procedures for the identification and evaluation of EML students in case of a suspected disability
- Provide training for ELD and special educators on best practices for instruction for EML students with disabilities.

7.4. Create a pool of well-trained and well-paid interpreters.

- Increase the pool of available interpreters.
- Recruit qualified interpreters by increasing interpreter compensation and ensuring that compensation for travel is included, as travel location is a current barrier to services.
- Train interpreters on issues of assessments, confidentiality and working with different language and cultural groups.
- Train MCPS special education assessment personnel on working effectively with interpreters.

8. Family engagement

Summary of Recommendations

8.1. Expand the use of interpretation and translation services.

- Expand the number of staff available to support interpretation and translation services.
- Expand the number of languages available.
- Create a standardized list of educational terms and acronyms for translators and interpreters to use.
- Train interpreters and translators on key educational terms and concepts.

We note that this recommendation should be considered in conjunction with recommendation 9.4 in the chapter on EML students with disabilities.

8.2 Employ multiple modes of communication to reach parents of EMLs, including text, apps, and paper communication.

8.3. Foster linguistic and cultural competence in MCPS staff.

- Offer professional learning opportunities for all staff on culturally responsive practices
- Ensure that these practices are being implemented in all schools.
- Expand the share of MCPS staff who are bilingual and bicultural.
- For schools with large numbers of EMLs and Latino students, consider holding school meetings in Spanish with interpretation for non-Spanish speaking parents.

Background

Research on both linguistically diverse and English-speaking families indicates that family engagement is associated with positive student outcomes. These outcomes include higher grades and test scores, higher language proficiency, and better social skills, as well as increased rates of high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment (Ferguson, 2008; Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Lindholm-Leary, 2015, in the National Academies Press, 2017). Researchers have found that immigrant parents place a high value on their children's education (Cooper et al., 1994) and on acquiring English themselves in order to better financially provide for their families (Public Agenda, 1998).

In this chapter, we examine how easily families are able to engage with their children's schooling, and the extent to which language differences can be a barrier to this engagement.

Results

Focus Groups

Parent focus groups were conducted in the spring of 2022 but only three parents participated. Due to the low number, CAL worked with MPCS staff, including Parent and Community Coordinators (PCCs), to recruit and help conduct focus groups in the fall. Ten parents participated in those focus groups. Findings from those focus groups are included below.

Understanding of ELD Services

Two Latino/a parents were perplexed by the schools providing ELD services to their children because their children were born in the U.S. Other parents indicated they understood why their children were

receiving ELD services. One father said that the ELD program had become a safe place for his son because the son experienced difficulties making friends in general education. Overall, they thought the program was effective in helping their children learn English. One parent brought up the difficulty in learning English during the pandemic but shared that her child was now catching up with her language skills. She also said that her child was having trouble with reading in English.

Knowledge of Special Programs (TWI, CREA and METS)
Only one parent knew of these programs – TWI.

Supporting Learning at Home
Latino/a parents reported receiving information in Spanish. Other parents only received information when requested by them or by going on the online portal. None of the parents had received information on supporting learning at home.

Handling Problems at School
Latino/a parents were clear on who they consulted for issues arising in schools, contacting teachers for learning issues and the counselor for behavioral issues. Chinese parents relied on the district-wide PCC for help in reaching out to schools. Latino/a parents suggested hiring more Spanish-speaking counselors.

Students with IEPs
Parents whose children had IEPs were satisfied with the special education services their child was receiving. They felt the services and placements were helpful to their child. They also felt they had been included in all aspects of the special education process, including the evaluation, development of the IEP, and placement.

Preparation for College
This question was intended for parents of students in middle and high schools. The parent of a middle schooler reported that she had not received any information from her child's school about college preparation. Another parent thought the school was preparing her child for college.

Interestingly, this question elicited parent comments about not being informed of efforts to prepare their children for college and any information received being in English only. One of the Spanish-speaking parents suggested having meetings every month in Spanish to make the college preparation information more accessible.

Welcoming Environments
Students and parents had very different responses to the question of whether families feel welcome at MCPS. As described in the Assets chapter, students reported that their families were warmly welcomed when they came to MCPS—spoken to in their native languages by friendly, helpful staff who offered a variety of resources and assistance. In one of the two student focus groups, all the students agreed that their parents were always treated well and with respect; in the other student group, most agreed, and some said that it was better than it used to be.

Results from the family focus groups were more mixed on this question. Some Latino parents felt welcomed but Chinese parents reported some difficulties in communicating with school personnel. One parent felt there were obstacles to effective communication, and another went as far as to say she felt unwelcomed by school staff although they knew she had limited English language skills. Several parents indicated that native languages are not always used, and noted a need for more cultural proficiency,

particularly in schools with fewer EML and Latino/a students. One parent said that MCPS "uses a lot of jargon" with regard to diversity, but that leadership in schools is not truly culturally proficient. They also noted a need for more inclusivity in the district's outreach and approach, for example, sensitivity to the different languages and cultures of EML students (e.g., Brazilians who speak Portuguese).

Communication with Families

Focus group participants had a lot to say about modes of communication with families, overall indicating that communication via phones (e.g., texting, WhatsApp, and calls), paper, and in-person meetings is better than emailing or other online communication for many EML and Latino/a families. This is in part due to a lack of internet and computer access that is discussed further below in the section identifying barriers for families. Focus group participants suggest this is also about families' preferences and cultural expectations regarding communication. A parent shared, "It's not just the language but the how. We've started a WhatsApp group and I've realized how much information families are not getting. We pushed for in-person sessions with families. MCPS assumes that parents use laptops/iPads, but many of our families use the phone. Paper would also be helpful." Another parent agreed, saying, "We have a lot of parents that do not use technology," adding that "face-to-face seems to be the best way to reach people." They both noted apps for communication that can be accessed via phone (e.g., Dojo, WhatsApp, Remind), and suggested that other online information such as the online portal, should be accessible on phones for families who do not have a computer. They also shared that paper forms sent home with students can be a good way to communicate with families.

Participants in three other focus groups echoed these sentiments, noting that many parents do not use email and that they had found better success with phone communication, like texting and WhatsApp. A counselor and a TWI teacher noted that email is still being used a lot. The TWI teacher said that Google Forms and Synergy (for report cards) are other communication methods that are difficult for parents to use, noting that Synergy is supposed to have an app but it is not intuitive. They also mentioned that apps like Class Dojo can be good ways to communicate. An ELD teacher in another group said that their school has done a good job of helping parents access computer programs and obtain student information, noting that their school "does a lot to reach out to parents."

The TWI parent participating in the family focus group reported challenges in receiving information in Spanish, their home language. They said that COVID testing forms were in dense language, COVID tests did not include Spanish instructions, and that they are unable to communicate with the many school staff who do not speak Spanish.

Two school administrators in one focus group reported that written communication is all bilingual, one adding that "there's always somebody at the office that they can speak to." However, they both noted the difficulty with the system, one suggesting, "MCPS needs to be better in getting us the materials in other languages; they are not always timely or accurate in Spanish."

A school administrator reported a need to "help families understand the system and the options" with regard to pathways to post-secondary success, elsewhere emphasizing the importance of "making sure that the paths toward graduation are very clear."

It again appears that there are efforts to provide accessible communication to families, with bilingual materials being shared; however, challenges remain with providing full translation of everything sent home to families and communicating with school staff, in some cases.

Regarding phone calls, an ELD teacher noted that their school regularly opened up phone lines in multiple languages to answer questions and help update parents, while acknowledging that due to increasing numbers of EMLs, the schools "have to do a lot of catch-up in this area."

Parents reported that schools communicate with them via email in English rather than in their native language. One of the Latino/a parents reported her child's school communicates with her in Spanish. This issue will be an ongoing theme in this chapter with some parents reporting good communications and others not being able to receive information in their native language.

When asked about improving communication with parents, Chinese parents requested that information be sent in their language as they are currently receiving information in English and Spanish. Another Chinese parent recalled receiving a phone call from their child's school in English and not really knowing what the call was about.

One of the Latina moms suggested that flyers that are sent home be translated into Spanish. Another said that schools employ headsets for Spanish interpretation for meetings, including IEPs.

Finally, one parent recommended that schools with large Latino/a student populations conduct meetings in Spanish with interpreters for other languages (including English).

Language Use and Translation for Family Communication

Participants across six focus groups reported bi-/multilingual communication with families, both on paper and in person. In one of these groups, an ELD teacher and a content teacher shared that communication happens within their schools in multiple languages. They noted, along with a parent, differences by school in terms of languages provided for communication with families. The parent noted that they are able to receive school communication in three languages. A school administrator mentioned the recent addition of Portuguese translations of community messages as a "win," noting that multilingual community messages are "beautiful."

Central office communication was an area in which a need for translation in multiple languages was identified. A school administrator said that announcements from the central office should be translated into Spanish at the bare minimum, adding that the website translation feature does not always work well. Parent participants requested that a document with the terminology and acronyms be provided in Spanish, noting that this would also help translators provide consistent translations of key terms in Spanish-language communication with families.

Participants in five focus groups (3 school administrators, 1 counselor, 1 SPED teacher, and 1 parent) reported challenges in timely access to interpreters for family communication. Two school administrators said that in-person translation services are challenging to access, especially during high-traffic times, and that they sometimes have to wait a while for someone. A counselor similarly noted that it is difficult to get interpreters in short turn-around. Another school administrator identified this as particularly challenging for communication with families who speak languages that are less common within MCPS.

Participants in four focus group discussed Language Line, offering praise, and also some critique, for the service. Two school administrators in one group said Language Line is accessible, one noting that they have never had to wait. Two counselors said that Language Line works very well, but shared that it is not good for communicating about sensitive topics; in those cases, one reported asking a secretary to

interpret instead. A school administrator in another focus group reported challenges with using Language Line to communicate with Pashto-speaking families; they said it is hard to make an appointment and to find someone who speaks the family's particular dialect. One parent said that Language Line is a challenge but did not elaborate.

Participants shared that others sometimes step in to help with translation. Three counselors in one focus group reported staff members providing translation, even when it is "not their job," one noting they sometimes interpret during meetings. One of the counselors and a special education teacher in another focus group mentioned secretaries sometimes being asked to provide translation. A parent said that there are a lot of volunteer translators for family engagement events and community meetings, and a content teacher similarly stated that community members sometimes step in to help with translation. Two parents noted that kids sometimes act as translators for their families.

Family Engagement Strategies and School Events

MCPS staff in four focus groups (2 content teachers, 4 ELD teachers, and 1 school administrator) noted effective outreach efforts to engage families. A content teacher said that some schools "have tremendous outreach and programs for the parents," acknowledging that efforts can still improve, "but it's working." An ELD teacher noted that "teachers don't give up," but that it does require extra effort to communicate with parents of EMLs. Some staff (1 administrator, 2 ELD teachers, and 1 counselor) noted areas for improvement with family engagement as well, citing barriers such as language, technology, and COVID (these and other barriers are discussed further below). One ELD teacher said, there are "lots of efforts to get parents into schools, but the institution has to change."

TWI school and district administrators reported a number of efforts to engage and welcome families. A district administrator reported "a lot of services to families," with variation depending on the population a school is serving. Another school administrator shared, "I feel like it's the school where we put a lot of effort and empowerment so that they can advocate for their children." A strategy reported by a school administrator for ensuring support for EMLs' families was to partner with the international office.

One school administrator, however, reported ongoing conflict between the school and some of the students' families: "The school and the parents are fighting on our children's behalf, but we need to be aligned. It's only a handful of parents, but they are very vocal." They did not elaborate on the source of the conflict.

Some participants mentioned the role of Title I in family engagement, connecting funding and requirements associated with being a Title I school with levels of family engagement. One administrator said, "We have a lot of requirements as a Title I school," noting examples like parent education and information sessions. A district administrator similarly reported most TWI schools as being Title I schools and receiving funds for parent engagement; they said it was more of a challenge for the schools not designated as Title I.

One strategy suggested by focus groups including parents, was intentionally staffing counselors and community liaison staff who had the capacity to work with parents. Child care for family events was another important strategy to remove barriers to participation. Participants highlighted numerous types of school events, including Spanish or Latino/a Cultural nights, Dual language nights, Math or STEM nights, Pizza day, Fair for kids (parents invited), and Healthy Kids days on Saturdays. Participants also identified classes for parents associated with the school as important opportunities, and enumerated

classes that they had seen, including trainings, information sessions, ESL classes, Latina Leadership Training for mothers, and Community Wellness meetings. Finally, resource sharing, such as academic lessons or information about health care and social services, was identified as a useful strategy for family engagement.

Strategies that focus group participants noted could be added or improved include the following:

- Additional Parent Community Coordinators (PCCs)
- Bilingual counseling for students and parents
- Language learning services for parents
- A Parent Advisory Council specifically for ELD parents

Barriers to Family Engagement

Focus group participants reported several barriers to family engagement. A counselor highlighted the significance of addressing these barriers, saying that "schools are missing the parent voices" and another counselor stating that they are "worried that the ELD parents are being ignored." While many successful efforts to engage families were reported by participants, as described above, participants also identified considerable barriers. These included language barriers, technology, socioeconomic factors, district staffing limitations, the continuing impact of COVID, and transportation barriers.

The most frequently cited barrier was language. Language was mentioned in five focus groups. A counselor noted the need for English skills in accessing the online portal system. A school administrator expressed a deep desire to support families, but felt frustrated by language obstacles. A special education teacher cited language barriers in access to teachers and psychologists. Parents mentioned some bilingual communication, but noted other areas in which communication was only in English (e.g., COVID tests and forms), and that interpretation services are a "a slow process." One parent called Google Translate "far from perfect," and mentioned Dojo as another resource, but said that it is not in very many languages. A school administrator said that the many technology tools available to support parents lack effectiveness for parents without strong first language literacy skills, another administrator in the group adding, "lots of families are not literate."

The next most frequently cited barrier (mentioned in five focus groups, including school administrators, counselors, ELD teachers, and special education teachers) was access to technology and the internet. Participants noted computer and internet access as necessary for parents to access Blackboard and the online portal system. One ELD teacher noted that at their children's school, all communication is online, limiting participation for parents without access. As noted above in the section on modes of communication, it was because of the technology barrier that some focus group participants suggested parents need communication in writing, in person, and/or over the phone.

Regarding socioeconomic barriers, an ELD teacher and a counselor, in separate groups, both noted that some parents have multiple jobs, and that this is, in some cases, related to the recession and COVID. The counselor further noted that some school staff do not understand this—that they are unaware of the reasons behind some parents being less involved at school.

A special education teacher noted that staffing challenges impacted communication with parents. They said that having too few staff led to ineffective communication due to lack of knowledge of the families.

For example, they shared that emails were sent to parents who do not use that mode of communication.

Transportation was cited as a barrier by one school administrator, who noted that boundary designations mean that some EMLs live far from their school. They said that, with this distance, some parents may have difficulty finding transportation to the school for meetings or events.

Family and Community Survey

After experiencing challenges with attracting participants to family and community focus groups in the spring, CAL hosted a second round of family and community focus groups in the fall, and also fielded a short survey, based on the focus group protocol. The survey is provided in Appendix F.

The survey was translated into the seven top MCPS languages (Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese), and was also provided in English. The survey was distributed in paper format via a table at the August 27 MCPS Back to School Fair, at Westfield Wheaton, and was distributed electronically via SurveyMonkey. The questions across the paper and electronic versions were identical.

A total of 58 participants responded to the paper survey, and a total of 378 respondents accessed the online survey. The online survey had a high attrition rate. Of the 378 respondents who clicked on the first page, only 169 submitted responses.

In total, 226 individuals fully or partially responded to the survey; 57 responding to the paper survey (one of the 58 original respondents did not check the informed consent box and this response was not included in the final count), and 169 responding to the online survey.

Of the eight available languages, most respondents chose English or Spanish. Table 1 provides detail on the languages that the survey respondents selected.

Table 1: Respondents to Family and Community Survey, by survey language for paper and online formats

Language of Survey	Number of respondents, Paper format	Number of respondents, Online format	Total number of respondents
Amharic	3		**3**
Chinese	6	5	**11**
English	24	94	**118**
French	4		**4**
Korean	2	1	**3**
Portuguese	1	5	**6**
Spanish	16	64	**80**
Vietnamese	1		**1**
Total	**57**	**169**	**226**

We asked survey respondents to provide their ethnicity, and we provide data on the ethnicity of respondents in Table 2. The largest share of respondents were Latino/a respondents (42%). White respondents were next (21%) followed by Asian respondents (19%).

Table 2: Ethnicity of survey respondents

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Percentage	Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1%	Middle Eastern or North African	6	2%
Asian	47	19%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Black or African American	21	8%	White	53	21%
Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx, or Hispanic	106	42%	I prefer not to answer/Other	15	6%

The majority of respondents had a language other than English at home. Slightly fewer than 40% of respondents have a child receiving EML services; slightly more than 40% have a child who has received such services in the past. Details on family language and EML status of survey respondents are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Family language practices and EML status of the children of survey respondents

	Yes		No		Total number of respondents
Do you speak a language other than English at home?	184	83%	39	17%	223
I currently have a child who receives English language development services	83	39%	132	61%	215
I have a child who has received English language development services in the past	89	41%	129	59%	218

The team investigated two other details of the sample.

First, since some of the outreach was conducted at the Back to School Fair, CAL researchers wanted to understand the extent to which respondents were new to MCPS. It is likely that families new to the system are more likely to attend such events, and if our survey was biased toward families new to MCPS, we might conclude that the results were not representative. Fewer than 20% of respondents were new to MCPS, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of survey respondents enrolling a child in MCPS for the first time

	Yes		No		Total number of respondents
This is my first year enrolling a child in MCPS	41	19%	176	81%	217

Second, we noticed a large number (118, around half) of survey respondents chose English. We wanted to ensure that the voices we were reporting in the survey were from the populations that we are targeting, namely families who are Latino/a, multilingual, and families of current or former EML students. We analyzed the number of respondents who fell into none of those categories (i.e., spoke only English at home, did not have a current or former EML child, and were not Latino/a). Of the 226 total respondents, 29 (12.8%) fell into this category. We felt that this is a small enough share that these respondents – no matter their precise reason for responding – do not constitute an outsized proportion of the participants.

Results about respondents' attitudents toward MCPS and the services it offers are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Survey respondents' attitudes toward MCPS and services provided.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		N/A		Total	Weighted Average
My family feels welcome at our school(s)	129	59%	78	35%	6	3%	4	2%	3	1%	220	1.5
I receive regular written communication from my children's schools in a language that I can understand	124	58%	71	33%	9	4%	7	3%	3	1%	214	1.5
I can easily access interpretation services if I need them	93	43%	57	26%	14	6%	5	2%	47	22%	216	1.6
It was easy to enroll my children in school	109	51%	76	35%	16	7%	9	4%	5	2%	215	1.6
I understand how well my children are doing in school	96	45%	96	45%	14	7%	5	2%	3	1%	214	1.7
I understand how my children are progressing in learning English	89	41%	84	38%	11	5%	3	1%	32	15%	219	1.6
I feel that MCPS is preparing my children for success after high school	93	42%	88	40%	18	8%	5	2%	15	7%	219	1.7

The majority of respondents had favorable attitudes toward the aspects of MCPS that we investigated, with all categories having majorities of respondents who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with each statement.

Parents asked to respond to an open-ended question regarding their experience at MCPS. Results were quite mixed, with some parents offering praise for the way schools welcomed them and their children and thanking MCPS for offering EML students support for learning. Other parents indicated that schools did not meet the needs of Latino/a students. They wanted more Spanish translation. A few indicated that they did not feel welcome as Spanish-speakers and that school personnel would not engage with

them if they spoke Spanish. One parent said that if you don't speak one of the seven languages that MCPS translates materials for, there was really no communication with parents.

Parents indicated a lack of cultural competency existed at the school level and indicated that school personnel did not see Latinos as high-achieving. One parent reported that her daughter did not attend the first two weeks of school because of a school mistake, thus missing out on the opportunity to join a sports team.

The issue of MCPS using online platforms was also problematic. As noted above, not all parents have access to the internet. One parent indicated that they needed to ask for help to complete online forms.

Several parents indicated that MCPS needs more TWI programs, specifically for target languages other than Spanish. Some also indicated that schools needed more materials in native languages.

Educator Survey

Respondents to the educator survey were confident that they were able to access interpretation services, with 86.47% of respondents stating that they knew how to access interpretation services for students and families if they need to do so. Furthermore, a smaller but still substantial proportion (72.39%) had in fact used these services. (It is of note, however, that the survey respondents skew toward ELD instructors and ELD certified instructors, so it may be that this is not reflective of the larger population of MCPS educators.)

CAL asked survey respondents to rate the adequacy of interpretation and translation services were rated as adequate. Table 6 shows that respondents were split on this question, with 49.22% agreeing that the services were adequate to serve the needs of multilingual learners and their families, and 46.91% disagreeing.

Table 6: Survey respondents' view of the adequacy of interpretation and translation services

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Weighted Average
MCPS interpretation and translation services are adequate to serve the needs of multilingual learners and their families	9.70%	39.52%	33.33%	13.58%	3.88%	2.53

Of the 888 survey respondents, 331 (37%) provided a response to the open-ended question regarding interpretation services for students and families. These ranged from one-word responses to long paragraphs providing rich descriptions and suggestions with regards to district interpretation services. Overall, the message from survey respondents was that interpretation services can be very effective and provide necessary services for multilingual families, but that effectiveness is limited by the inability to receive high-quality services in a timely fashion. Concerns were also raised about access for different types of communication (e.g., conferences, documents), competencies of interpreters, and lack of access for less common languages. Respondents also shared other strategies they or their colleagues used for communicating with multilingual families, including (worth mentioning?).

Overall Quality of Interpretation Services

General comments about the quality of interpretation services were made by 43 survey respondents, using descriptors such as "wonderful," "excellent," "amazing," "very good," "helpful," and "valuable." Two respondents noted that services have improved over time, two said it varies by school, and four cited ease of use and accessibility. Many respondents also reported challenges with services, including difficulty with use (19), difficulty with access (31), references to a general need for more interpretation (6), and general comments about inadequacy or ineffectiveness (11). Responses often cited both strengths and challenges; a comment by one respondent articulates this tension well: "The interpretation services are good but not always easy to access. If you have time and advanced notice it is easy to use. If you don't have those, you must find a friend or colleague to step in." Some of these specific strengths and challenges shared by survey respondents are further articulated below.

Reported Use of Interpretation Services

While most survey respondents reported on their use of interpretation services provided by MCPS, 24 indicated that they don't use these services. Of these 24, thirteen respondents said they did not use the services because they were bilingual. Ten respondents shared that they know other teachers and staff who do not use interpretation services, and five indicated that more staff should use the services.

Many respondents also noted that better communication is needed with regard available services (13). Others noted that teachers need training on how to access and use the services (17). A few (4) noted that not all staff have access to services.

Use of Other Tools

The lack of use by some district staff was, in some cases, reported as connected to decisions to use other tools that were more aligned with their interpretation needs due to, for example, timeliness or mode preference. Eleven respondents said that they or others use the following tools: Google Translate (8), Google voice for texting (1), Zoom (1), Google Meet (1), and Class Dojo (1). Another said they would "like to see a phone-based app that allows texts in multiple languages to foster easy access between staff and families."

Seven additional respondents said they use Talking Points, which they said works very well for them, one calling it "extremely effective and helpful" and another noting that it is better for families, who use texting more than email. Another respondent said it should be promoted by the district as a way to connect with families, and another suggested the county contract with them.

Need for Greater Representation of Languages

The most common theme among open-ended survey responses regarding interpretation was the need for services for *all* languages spoken by MCPS students and families (51). Six respondents noted the recent addition of languages or the availability of interpretation services for a wide range of languages as a strength; these respondents specifically noted service availability for the following languages: Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Amharic, and Dari. Two of these respondents noted they were receiving these services via Language Line, not through the interpreters available through MCPS Oral Interpretation Services. Most respondents did not specify whether the languages provided or needed represented availability via Oral Interpretation Services, Language Line, or Written Translation Services.

Languages that survey respondents reported as needing better representation in interpretation services within MCPS are provided in Table 7. The most cited needs are for Pashto (12) and Amharic (11), followed by Farsi (5) and Dari (4).

Table 7: Number of survey respondents reporting a need for better access to interpretation and translation for home languages of students

Language	Number of Respondents	Language	Number of Respondents
Amharic	11	Oromo	1
Arabic	1	Pashto	12
ASL	1	Persian	1
Bengali	2	Portuguese	1
Burmese	1	Russian	1
Chinese	1	Tagalog	1
Dari	4	Ukrainian	1
Farsi	5	Urdu	1
French	1	Vietnamese	2
Indigenous languages (unspecified)	2	Other/regional dialects (unspecified)	2
Korean	1		

Timeliness and Availability of Interpretation Services

Another commonly reported concern was the timeliness of interpretation services and the need for last-minute interpretation and more flexible communication with families. As noted above, 31 respondents described interpretation services as difficult to access. These comments often referred to the timeliness of services and the inability to get an interpreter at the last minute (27). The long lead-time required for requesting an interpreter was also noted.

Specific concerns were also shared with regards to high-volume times, in particular, during parent-teacher conferences (16). Some respondents noted the limitations on numbers of interpreters per school as a particular challenge.

One teacher shared, "We need many more interpreters, and we need more flexibility in requesting interpreters. Sometimes we need an interpreter the next day or even the same day, and that is very difficult to achieve, even at times of the year that are not 'high-demand.'"

Staffing

Related to the difficulty receiving interpretation services, 23 respondents said more interpreters are needed. Five of these reported a desire for a school-based interpreter, two citing a high percentage of Spanish-speaking students within their school, and one suggesting that bilingual teachers and staff be offered compensation and time within their work schedule to provide interpretation services.

Some respondents (16) also noted a need for more bilingual staff to provide in-person, school-based communication in families' home languages. They suggested a need for more bilingual counselors (3),

office staff (3), teachers (2), paraeducators (2), parent community coordinators and family outreach staff (2), assessment staff (1), and administrators (1).

Others Providing Interpretation

These staffing requests relate closely to comments by survey respondents (21) that staff already often step in to provide interpretation. They specifically mentioned staff in the following roles providing interpretation: ELD teachers (3), teachers (2), Spanish teachers (1), paraeducators (1), counselors (1), security guards (1), building service workers (1), and pupil personnel workers (1). Most reported this as stemming from difficulty accessing interpretation services in the timeline necessary, for example, when interpreters are not available, or if it is a last-minute need. However, one respondent gave an additional justification—that having a staff member interpret "makes the conversation more personal and easier for everyone involved." Two respondents reported offering to do this out of their own commitment to the school community and to EMLs, while others said that either themselves or others are called on to do it even though it is outside their job description.

A few respondents mentioned others who sometimes step in when interpreters are not available— students (3), family members (3), and community members (1).

Interpreter Competencies

A number of respondents (26) raised the issue of interpreter competencies, with six reporting that interpreters do a good job, five offering a mixed review, and 15 reporting that additional training or support is needed for interpreters. Seven respondents specifically mentioned technical or specialized language related to educational contexts, including special education, and the need for interpreters to be familiar and able to discuss specialized educational topics in both languages. Other issues raised by respondents included basic fluency in target languages, professionalism, and cultural knowledge.

Cultural Responsiveness and "Personal Touch"

Some respondents (5) raised the issue of cultural responsiveness, indicating that interpretation is not the answer for being culturally responsive, and that more is needed. It was also mentioned that at times interpretation itself needs to be more culturally responsive. Eight respondents also said that some of the interpretation services lack a personal touch and create interactional distance between staff and parents due to the mediation by the phone and/or the interpreter. One suggested that interpretation via video, if possible, would help parents feel "more relaxed" and enable all participants to see body language. As noted above, some mentioned calling on building staff to interpret, one noting the benefits of involving someone "who knows the student" and another saying that this "makes the conversation more personal and easier for everyone involved."

Parent and Family Access

A number of survey respondents cited parent and family access to and knowledge of interpretation services as a challenge. Six said that parents need more information on how to access these services. Seven said that the system needs to shift so that parents are able to request or initiate interpretation services.

Language Line

Respondents had mostly positive feedback regarding Language Line, with 43 of 75 respondents who mentioned the service reporting its benefits, including its timeliness compared with requesting an interpreter through the district, and the ability to access interpreters in a wider array of languages.

Others reported challenges with effectively using the service, saying it was difficult to use (9), ineffective (5), or inaccurate (3). Others reported interpersonal challenges, with six respondents saying it was an awkward way to communicate with families, and three citing problems when discussing sensitive topics with families.

Translation of Documents and Materials for Families

Many respondents (38) mentioned needs regarding the translation of documents and materials. Half of these respondents (19) noted the need for document translation to be more available in home languages other than Spanish. A need for all materials to be automatically translated in initial communications, providing at least Spanish and English as a baseline for all communications from schools and/or the district, was mentioned by 15 respondents. Documents mentioned specifically as needing more frequent translation and/or better access to translation services included special education forms (1), report cards (1), curriculum (1), and videos (2).

Difficulties with the system were cited by 14 respondents. They noted challenges such as cumbersome processes for requesting translation, lack of timeliness and delays in translated versions being provided to families, use of staff not trained in translation for reviewing documents, and use of Google Translate due to difficulty accessing document translation services. One respondent's comment captured the themes found across a number of survey responses: "There is not an adequate or equitable amount of high-quality translated material, and often it is an afterthought rather than intentionally planned."

Professional Learning on Family Engagement

In addition to the rich commentary from survey respondents on interpretation services, twenty-seven survey respondents described a need for professional learning on family engagement, twelve of them reporting a broad need without providing specifics on questions or issues they would like addressed. Seven reported wanting to know how to increase parent involvement, one mentioning parents' lack of trust in the school system, and another noting the many challenges and responsibilities faced by new immigrant parents, which can provide barriers to their engagement.

Some respondents said they would like to better understand how to engage parents in supporting their children academically. Six respondents said they would like to better understand how to communicate important information about district programming to parents. One noted the need for translation of MCPS acronyms and language related to legal and policy issues into more accessible language for parents. Others noted needs for professional learning to help parents understand EML services and programs (1), magnet programs (1), disabilities and related services (1), and environment literacy and outdoor education objectives (1). One stated that they'd like to learn "how to best communicate with new immigrant families so they can be informed and take advantage of the great opportunities we have in the school and in the community."

Two respondents said they would like to know how to help families support their children academically, one indicating a need for oral language development in the home language and the other expressing a desire to help families support language and learning needs of young learners (ages 0-4).

Two respondents also noted wanting more information on services for families, for example, counseling and mental health, housing, and health services.

Two survey respondents asked for more professional learning on cultural differences. One stated that teachers need to better understand the experiences and potential traumas experienced by students and their families. Another said they would like to understand "how parent engagement differs across cultures and how to increase parent engagement across cultures."

Interviews with MCPS Staff

Interviews with MCPS staff regarding interpreters cleared up several misconceptions identified above. Requests for interpreters and translators are submitted to an online database. In the system, schools can request specific interpreters. MCPS trains interpreters and translators and maintains a pool of 143 interpreters and 45 translators. These have all been trained by MCPS. They are paid $31.50 per hour (special education interpretation is paid at $35.00 per hour). They are not paid for travel time and some interpreters are reluctant to cross long distances. Overall, interpreters prefer virtual sessions to in-person which has become another barrier in securing interpretation services for schools. In addition to the trained interpreters, school personnel are offered the opportunity to participate in training and are given an additional $10.00 per hour. Best practices dictate using only trained interpreters whereas some schools rely on untrained personnel, community members, or even students. Special education personnel are not trained on the use of interpreters although several staff mentioned that they should be.

Another interesting finding is that interpretation is usually consecutive rather than simultaneous. For interpretation to be simultaneous, headsets would be required. The office of interpretation services had, in the past, sent headsets that were returned in poor shape. Therefore, that office has encouraged schools to buy their own equipment. While interpretation and translation services are paid for by a central budget, headsets would need to come from the schools' budgets. It is not known how many have purchased headsets.

It was also learned that parents can request IEPS be translated, but only to seven languages. The interpretation office has found it difficult to recruit translators for some languages (e.g., Pashto).

Interview with Parent Community Coordinators (PCCs)

MCPS has PCCs who provide services to support parents in their native languages. These PCCs usually provide services to several schools but some have district-wide responsibilities (e.g., the Chinese language PCC).

They described their roles as serving as a link between parents and schools. They maintain reciprocal relationships with schools, collaborating with schools for student success. They provide information to parents on supporting student achievement at home (although, they do not use a specific parent engagement curriculum). They serve as cultural guides to schools and at the same time, help parents navigate the school system. The PCCs support one another as needed for speakers of languages other than English. Schools will make referrals to PCCs even if they do not have one. PCCs also help schools find interpreters although they are not part of the office for interpretation and translation.

When asked what would be helpful to them, PCCs responded with suggestions for more culturally responsive practices for MCPS staff. They also mentioned that language access information was available but not consistently used across the county.

Findings

Do families feel welcome at their schools?

Families generally felt welcome at MCPS, and students observed that their parents were treated well in school. As in other areas covered in this report, some schools embraced their diverse families and made efforts to communicate in the language and mode preferred by parents. Those schools with fewer EMLs and Latinos did not do so well, however. Chinese parents particularly struggled to communicate with schools.

Educators were able to highlight a broad and diverse range of strategies that they use to welcome multilingual families into schools, including dedicated support staff, school events and classes for parents, child care services, and resource sharing. While this is a key strength, and although MCPS has a commitment to cultural competence, we found that the adoption of these practices does not seem to be consistent across schools.

Is there appropriate communication between home and school, and are families receiving information in languages that they can understand?

Survey and focus group participants identified a variety of barriers to parent participation in schools. Some of these are beyond the scope of MCPS policy influence, including families experiencing homelessness, parents who work several jobs, and the impact of COVID. Many of the barriers, however, are within the control of the district.

Language access appears to be a major issue. Although schools and families use Language Line, there are topics too sensitive to be broached with this type of communication. The availability of interpreters and translators was a topic of much discussion and is explored further below. Schools use staff to work around the issue, but this is problematic, as it creates an additional burden on multilingual staff, without concomitant compensation. Also, although much of central office communications are translated into Spanish, other languages are simply not used. Survey participants indicated that several languages should be translated, including Amharic and Pashto.

Are school events (e.g., back to school nights) appropriately communicated to families, in languages that they understand and via modes of communication that all families access (e.g., ensuring that communication is not only digital)?

While some parents are receiving some communication, research participants provided insight into appropriate modes of communication. Participants reported that in-person and paper communication were always useful. Families also noted a preference for digital communication via phone-based means (including texting, WhatsApp, and calls) over digital communication that required internet and computer access.

Are translation services available and are educators aware of and using these services?

Translation and interpretation services are available, although fewer than half of the survey respondents agreed that the services were adequate for the needs of the MCPS community. The clear consensus from focus groups, surveys, and interviews is that more staff are needed to support interpretation and translation services. Staff found it difficult to get these services, especially when the need is immediate.

Research participants raised multiple issues and concerns around the adequacy of translation and interpretation services. Key concerns included:

- Availability and timeliness of services, and inadequate numbers of interpreters who can provide services when needed
- Interpreters' capacity to provide technical or specialized language around educational contexts
- Interpersonal challenges with interpreter-mediated communication
- More extensive translation of documents needed, particularly from the central office
- Need for greater representation of languages

What barriers to enrolment and school engagement are faced by multilingual families?

Participants in the survey and in parent focus groups point to the use of emails to communicate with parents. Many parents of EMLs use technologies that are not compatible with those used by schools. And some of those tools are beyond the reach of some parents. Many parents do not use email as a source of communication and prefer to communicate in-person or by phone. Assumptions about the technology available for parents creates an expectation that all parents are using tablets or computers when that is not the case. The county should ensure that schools are using multiple methods of communication. All portals should be easy to use and available in multiple languages. All county-level communications should be in multiple languages. Parents identified the PCCs as an excellent resource.

Recommendations

8.1. Expand the use of interpretation and translation services.

- Expand the number of staff available to support interpretation and translation services.
- Expand the number of languages available.
- Create a standardized list of educational terms and acronyms for translators and interpreters to use.
- Train interpreters and translators on key educational terms and concepts.

We note that this recommendation should be considered in conjunction with recommendation 9.4 in the chapter on EML students with disabilities.

8.2 Employ multiple modes of communication to reach parents of EMLs, including text, apps, and paper communication.

8.3. Foster linguistic and cultural competence in MCPS staff.

- Offer professional learning opportunities for all staff on culturally responsive practices
- Ensure that these practices are being implemented in all schools.
- Expand the share of MCPS staff who are bilingual and bicultural.
- For schools with large numbers of EMLs and Latino students, consider holding school meetings in Spanish with interpretation for non-Spanish speaking parents.

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Appendix A: July 14 2020 Memorandum from the Montgomery County Board of Education

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Rockville, Maryland
July 14, 2020

<u>MEMORANDUM</u>

To/From: Members of the Board of Education

Subject: Examination of Student Achievement Data for English Speakers of Other
                  Languages (ESOL) and Latino Students

WHEREAS, Approximately 18% of the students enrolled in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) received ESOL services during the 2019-2020 school year and Latino students represent approximately 32% of the total student population; and

WHEREAS, During fiscal year 2020, direct expenditures used to support the MCPS ESOL program totaled $83,410,452. This expenditure does not include indirect support costs such as overhead, transportation, general education, and other related costs; and

WHEREAS, ESOL students, and more specifically Limited English Proficient students, have struggled to attain proficiency on state math and literacy assessments and continue to underperform as compared to their English proficient peers; and

WHEREAS, The MCPS Latino student population continues to underperform as compared to White, Asian and African American students overall, including a lower overall graduation rate; and

WHEREAS, Between 2017 and 2019, MCPS workgroups conducted research on ESOL instruction at the elementary and secondary school levels and acknowledged that the longstanding educational methodologies and models that have been used for the delivery of ESOL instruction may not be tailored to suit the needs of the current ESOL student population; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that MCPS continues to build on the findings and recommendations contained in the studies conducted by these workgroups and implement them to improve the ESOL program and Latino student achievement; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Education is committed to educational equity, the academic achievement of all students and the prudent expenditure of public funds; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Education is interested in exploring innovative educational models to more fully support the immediate academic achievement of the ESOL and Latino student populations and the most efficient investment of resources to support these programs; now therefore be it

Resolved, That Board of Education directs the superintendent to convene a commission of stakeholders ("Commission") to: 1) review all aspects of the current ESOL model, including student achievement outcomes, and review the findings and recommendations of the workgroups referenced herein to determine what is working and what needs to be improved; and 2) conduct a thorough review and analysis of the data related to Latino student achievement, review and update benchmarking data, that compares the MCPS ESOL model and its student achievement outcomes with models used by comparable school districts and make recommendations to improve student achievement for both student populations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board recommends that the superintendent hire an outside expert (at a cost not to exceed fifty thousand dollars) with specific expertise in ESOL instruction and Latino student achievement, who will coordinate and facilitate the work of this Commission and provide an external review of the MCPS model and outcomes. The work group shall take the last name of the expert and be known as the *"____[insert expert's last name]____ Commission on ESOL Instruction and Latino Student Achievement.*" The Commission should be comprised of the following stakeholders: 1) MCPS central office, ESOL and curriculum staff; 2) six individuals appointed by each of the three employee associations (two members from each association representing elementary, middle and high school levels) to serve on the Commission. The Commission shall also include parents, students and stakeholders nominated by community groups that have demonstrated effectiveness in serving the needs of the ESOL and Latino student populations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission shall review the current literature and best practices regarding the needs of English Language Learners and Latino student achievement and shall issue a final report of findings and recommendations. The Board requests that the report be issued by March 31, 2021, (which may be extended or delayed, if necessary, due to ongoing COVID-19 health concerns) in both English and Spanish. The Board of Education will receive annual updates on the implementation of the recommendations and the Commission members will be invited to attend and testify.

BOE:rns

Center for Applied Linguistics Commission on ELD Instruction and Latina/o Student Achievement

March 30, 2022

Afternoon Session	4.30PM-6.00PM
Evening Session	6.30PM-8.00PM

Agenda

	Afternoon Session	Evening Session
Introductions and Group Norms	4:30	6:30
Purpose of Commission	4:40	6:40
Small Group Interactions	4:50	6:50
Jamboard walkthrough	5.35	7.35
Wrap up	5.50	7.50

Small group breakouts

Group 1: Two-way Immersion (TWI) immersion programs

Group 2: Secondary students – moving toward successful graduation

Group 3: EML students in elementary settings

Group 4: MCPS ELD Commission Core team

Center for Applied Linguistics Commission on ELD Instruction and Latina/o Student Achievement

April 28, 2022

Afternoon Session	4.30PM-6.00PM
Evening Session	6.30PM-8.00PM

Agenda

	Afternoon Session	Evening Session
Introductions and Review of Meeting 1	4:30	6:30
Data collection plans	4:40	6:40
Detailed review of Commission Proposals from Meeting 1 – in small groups	4:50	6:50
Report out on small group discussion	5.35	7.35
Wrap up	5.50	7.50

Center for Applied Linguistics Commission on ELD Instruction and Latina/o Student Achievement

September 20, 2022

Afternoon Session	4.30PM-6.00PM
Evening Session	6.30PM-8.00PM

Agenda

	Afternoon Session	Evening Session
Introductions and Review of Evaluation to date	4:30	6:30
Presentation of initial recommendations	4:40	6:40
Breakout Groups – Session 1 (please select your group)	4:50	6:50

- Achievement and opportunities
- Two-way immersion
- Family engagement
- MCPS educators

	Afternoon Session	Evening Session
Breakout Groups – Session 2 (please select your group)	5.30	7.30

- College and career
- Newcomer students and students with limited/interrupted formal education
- EML students with disabilities
- Asssets of EML and Latino/a students

	Afternoon Session	Evening Session
Wrap up	5.55	7.55

Center for Applied Linguistics Commission on ELD Instruction and Latina/o Student Achievement

December 7, 2022

5.00PM-7.00PM

Agenda

Introductions

Summary of Data Collection

Introduction to Virtual Gallery Walk

Practice space

Virtual Gallery Walk

- Index of Galleries

	Link to Key Findings & Results	Breakout Room
1	Achievement and Opportunity	1
2	Instructional Methods and Models	1
3	Assets-based Approach to Multicultural and Multilingual Students	3
4	Educator Assets and Supports	1
5	College and Career Transitions	2
6	Newcomer Students, SLIFE Students, and METS	2
7	EML students with disabilities	3
8	Family Engagement	3

Note: we will not re-convene to wrap up, feel free to leave when you have reviewed all of the galleries of interest.

Appendix C: Focus Group Protocols

Protocol 1: Classroom Educator Focus Group

1. How has MCPS prepared you to work with EMLs? Do you feed you have enough professional learning opportunities to do your job well?
2. Do you feel prepared to teach language to EML students (in your discipline)?
3. Have professional learning opportunities included practices to promote sociocultural competence?
4. One of the goals of MCPS is to engage parents and families of EMLs from an asset-based perspective. How effective have efforts to reach parents and families of EMLs been?
5. From the perspective of a general or special education educator, do you feel prepared to differentiate instruction for EMLs?
6. From the perspective of an ELD educator, do you regularly plan with content area or special education teachers? [OR] From the perspective of a general education/special education educator, do you regularly plan with ELD educators?
7. [For secondary educators only] MCPS has a program called METS which is multidisciplinary educational training and supports program, designed to work with students with interrupted formal education. Does this program prepare students to transition effectively into general education?
8. For EMLs with IEPs, does MCPS have a set of policies and procedures that are followed uniformly? In your experience do these students receive special education services as well as language services to continue to develop their English language skills?
9. Are there any topics we haven't discussed, and you'd like to talk about?

Protocol 2: Administrators and Other Staff

1. Has MCPS provided sufficient professional learning opportunities for you and your school or department to effectively provide instructional services to EMLs?
   a. For TWI group, follow up – Do you feel that there are sufficient and culturally appropriate resources in Spanish to effectively provide instructional services to EMLs in TWI programs? What is the process for requesting and obtaining resources for twi programs?
2. Are you able to meaningfully communicate with parents of EMLs? What could the district do to improve communication?
3. Does MCPS have clear protocols in place to identify, evaluate and place EMLs with disabilities? How could this process be improved?
4. Are you able to easily access translators or interpreters to work with EMLs and their families? How could these services be improved?
5. How do you define a Newcomer student? Does MCPS have a common definition of Newcomers? [For secondary groups: Do you have a METS program in your school? Do you feel that students in the METS program have good opportunities for graduation?]

6. Do you feel that EMLs have clear pathways for post-secondary success, including college and CTE?
7. Do you feel that MCPS provides sufficient professional learning opportunities and oversight for schools to effectively develop English language skills of EMLs?

   For TWI group, follow up –

   a. How about for students to develop Spanish language skills?
   b. Do you think it's important for twi students to learn all subjects in the two languages in every grade level?
8. Is there sufficient collaboration between content teachers, special educators and ELD teachers? How could this improve?

   For TWI group, follow up –

   a. How about collaboration across TWI programs?
   b. How does MCPS recruit bilingual teachers? Do you think strategies used are effective? Are Spanish teachers interviewed in Spanish and asked to respond to a written prompt in Spanish?
9. Is there anything we have not talked about today that you would like to contribute?

Protocol 3: Students

1. When you first came to MCPS, did you feel your school tried to understand your needs and those of your family? [Follow up – can you give us an example?]
2. Tell us about your relationships with your teachers. Do you feel that your teachers have high expectations for you? Do you feel like you have a warm and trusting relationship with your teachers?
3. Did you participate in an MCPS TWI program in elementary school? Do you think your knowledge of Spanish will help you in college or in your career?
4. Do you think you were provided an education that will let you move on to college or a career? Did you feel supported in determining where to go after high school?
5. Has your school helped you to enroll in honors or advanced placement classes?
6. Have your parents been treated with respect in your school? Do you think teachers and administrators have reached out to engage with them? [Follow up – can you give us an example?]
7. If you have or had an IEP, did you understand what services you were receiving and why?
8. Do you feel your school schedule allowed for you to participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and fun classes?
9. Are there any topics we have not covered that you would like to talk about?

Protocol 4: Family and Community Groups

1. When you first enrolled your child in an MCPS school, did you feel welcomed? Did the school speak to you in your preferred language?
2. How do you feel the communication with your child's teacher was? Did you receive regular updates in your preferred language?
3. Ask about what parents know about ELD programs. Does your school communicate with you about your child's ELD program? How do you feel about their progress in learning English?
4. Ask about whether the parents have children in special programs; TWI, CREA, METS – ask about experiences? [ask if they know whether their child is on track for graduation? Do they get good info on that?]
5. Did you receive information or resources from your school on how to support your child at home? Did you learn how to interpret or review your child's report card or annual test scores? [If there are parents with children in TWI programs – Did you receive this information in Spanish?]
6. If your child has an issue or problem at school, who do you go to first? Do you feel the problems or issues are handled well and resolved? [Follow up – could you give us an example?]
7. If you have a child with an IEP, how was the process of having them evaluated? Did the evaluation team share with you their findings and involve you in the decision regarding where your child would receive special education services?
8. For parents of middle or high school students, do you feel schools prepared your child to go to college or other training after high school?
9. How could MCPS improve its communications with parents of EMLs?

Appendix D: Survey Instrument

Commission on English Language Development (ELD) Instruction and Latina/o/e/ Student Achievement Survey

You have been invited to participate in the Center for Applied Linguistics evaluation of Emergent Multilingual and Latina/o/e/x services in MCPS.

Dr. Keira Ballantyne, at the Center for Applied Linguistics, is the study director.

If you agree, you will participate in an electronic survey that will ask you questions about your experiences with Emergent Multilingual and Latinx students in Montgomery County Public Schools. We anticipate that the survey will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time with no negative consequences.

All information about you will be confidential, and only CAL researchers will have access to it. Researchers will never share any personal information about you with anyone else. We will not ask for your name, and we will not share any information that might identify you personally in reports or papers about this project. Information about who you are or your individual responses to questions will not be shared with your school, other teachers, or MCPS administrators.

There are minimal risks for participating in this study.

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about EML and Latina/o/e/x students in MCPS.

If you have any questions at any time about this project, you may contact Dr. Keira Ballantyne, at kballantyne@cal.org or 202 355 1554.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact CAL Institutional Review Board at IRB@cal.org or Justin Kelly at 202 362 3740.

By clicking "Next" below, you indicate that you consent to participate in the research study.

Professional Background

In this survey, we will be asking you some questions about Emergent Multilingual Learners, or EMLs. MCPS uses this term to focus on the assets of students who are adding English to their linguistic repertoire. This term replaces the previously used terms "English Language Learner (ELL)" and "English Learner (EL)".

1. Which of the following best describes you? Please check all that apply

☐ Elementary general education teacher

☐ Elementary English Language Development (ELD) teacher

☐ Elementary Two-way Immersion (TWI) teacher

☐ Secondary content teacher (e.g., math, physical education, music, science)

☐ Secondary ELD teacher

☐ Special education teacher

☐ SLIFE coach

☐ Elementary school administrator

☐ Middle school administrator

☐ High school administrator

☐ Paraeducator

☐ School psychologist, social worker, or school counselor

☐ District-level administrator

☐ Parent or community member

☐ Other (please specify)

2. Please indicate your areas of teaching certification, if applicable. Please check all that apply

- [ ] English for Speakers of Other Languages
- [ ] Early Childhood/Elementary Areas
- [ ] Middle School Areas (4-9)
- [ ] General Secondary Content Areas (7-12)
- [ ] Special Education
- [ ] Other Specialty Areas (e.g. Art, Health, World Languages)
- [ ] Administrative or Supervisory Areas
- [ ] Counselor, social worker, or school psychologist
- [ ] Other (please specify)

3. Please indicate the type of certification you hold, if applicable. Please indicate the highest level of certificate that you hold.

- ( ) I do not hold a teaching certification
- ( ) Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC)
- ( ) Standard Professional Certificate I (SPC I)
- ( ) Standard Professional Certificate II (SPC II)
- ( ) Advanced Professional Certificate (APC)
- ( ) Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC)
- ( ) Conditional Certificate (CDC)
- ( ) Administrator I
- ( ) Administrator II
- ( ) A different type of certification (please specify)

4. Please select your number of years of experience as an educator (including teaching, school administration, and/or other school support roles).

- ( ) 0-5
- ( ) 6-10
- ( ) 11-15
- ( ) 16-20
- ( ) 21 or more
- ( ) None of the above

5. Thinking about the students that you serve in your classroom, school, or in other capacities, approximately how many do you believe are Emergent Multilingual learners?

- ○ Fewer than one-third
- ○ One third to two thirds
- ○ More than two thirds
- ○ Don't know or not applicable

6. Thinking about the students that you serve in your classroom, school, or in other capacities, approximately how many do you believe identify as Latina/o/e/x or Hispanic?

- ○ Fewer than one-third
- ○ One third to two thirds
- ○ More than two thirds
- ○ Don't know or not applicable

Commission on English Language Development (ELD) Instruction and Latina/o/e/ Student Achievement Survey

Demographics

We are going to ask you about some aspects of your personal identity, such as your race, ethnicity, gender, and language background. We understand these may be sensitive topics, so each question includes an option not to respond. We will only use this information to report the proportions of survey respondents representing various identities, in order to help us understand whether the survey respondents are broadly representative of the MCPS community as a whole. We will never use this information in any way that might identify individuals.

7. Which of these groups do you identify with? Select all that apply to you:

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic

☐ Middle Eastern or North African

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White

☐ Some other race, ethnicity, or origin (please specify)

[   ]

☐ I prefer not to answer

8. Please indicate which languages you speak at home or with your family. Select all that apply to you:

☐ I speak English at home and with my family

☐ I speak Spanish at home or with my family

☐ I speak another language at home or with my family (please specify)

[   ]

☐ I prefer not to answer

9. How do you describe your gender identity?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Non-binary

☐ None of these apply to me (please specify how you identify)

[   ]

☐ I prefer not to answer

Welcoming Emergent Multilingual students and their families

10. Please rate each of the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
I believe that my school and MCPS generally works to provide a welcoming environment for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I believe that students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel welcomed at my school and in MCPS generally.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Physical safety is a concern for culturally and linguistically diverse students at my school.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The home languages and cultures of students in MCPS are recognized and respected.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I believe that students benefit when they can use their home language in the classroom.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
MCPS interpretation and translation services are adequate to serve the needs of multilingual learners and their families	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. I know how to access interpretation services for students and families if I need to do so.

◯ Yes

◯ No

12. I have used MCPS interpretation services for students and families.

◯ Yes

◯ No

13. Please share any feedback you have on MCPS interpretation services for students and families.

Professional Development

14. In the past five years, approximately how often have you participated in in-service professional development activities?

○ Not at all

○ About once a year

○ 2-4 times per year

○ More than 4 times per year

15. For the topics listed below, please indicate which have been covered in in-service professional development activities in which you've participated in the past five years.

	Yes, extended coverage	Yes, some coverage or mention	No	Don't know/ Not applicable
Creating language objectives	○	○	○	○
Incorporating language objectives into content instruction	○	○	○	○
Oral language development for EML students	○	○	○	○
Literacy strategies for EML students	○	○	○	○
Writing strategies for EML students	○	○	○	○
Teaching language through content	○	○	○	○
Family engagement strategies for multilingual families	○	○	○	○
Sociocultural competence	○	○	○	○
Identifying or supporting gifted and talented EML students	○	○	○	○
Supporting newcomer students	○	○	○	○
Supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)	○	○	○	○
Effective TWI programmatic and/or instructional practices	○	○	○	○

16. Please rate each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
I am familiar with the ELD standards	○	○	○	○	○
I am familiar with my students' levels of ELD and I use data on ELD level to differentiate instruction	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy supporting Emergent Multilingual students	○	○	○	○	○
I have challenges with supporting Emergent Multilingual students	○	○	○	○	○
I know about the language backgrounds of the Emergent Multilingual students that I serve	○	○	○	○	○
I have met the families of the Emergent Multilingual students that I serve	○	○	○	○	○
The Emergent Multilingual students that I serve have opportunities to engage in challenging courses	○	○	○	○	○
The Emergent Multilingual students that I serve have opportunities to engage with a broad curriculum including music, arts, world languages, and physical education	○	○	○	○	○
The Emergent Multilingual students that I serve have opportunities to participate in a range of extracurricular activities	○	○	○	○	○

17. Are there any areas where you would like additional professional learning to support EML students? What topics do you feel you need more support with?

EML Students with Disabilities

18. My preservice training included how to support Emergent Multilingual students with disabilities

○ Yes, extensively

○ Yes, some training

○ No, this topic was not addressed in my preservice training

○ Don't know/ not applicable

19. Within the past five years, I have participated in professional development activities that have included strategies to support Emergent Multilingual students with disabilities

○ Yes, extensive training on this topic

○ Yes, some training on this topic

○ No, I have not attended training on this topic

○ Don't know/ not applicable

20. Thinking about Emergent Multilingual students with disabilities, please rate the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Families with EML students have the information that they need to refer students for a screening	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluations are typically conducted in students' home language	○	○	○	○	○
Families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand, about the results of special education evaluations	○	○	○	○	○
Families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand, about their student's IEP or 504 plan	○	○	○	○	○
Families are able to access interpretation services easily to participate in IEP or 504 meetings	○	○	○	○	○
EML students with disabilities typically receive both English language development services and special education related services	○	○	○	○	○

21. Please share any feedback you have on how MCPS supports EML students with disabilities.

Two-way Immersion Programs

22. Do you work in or with a school with a Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program?

○ Yes

○ No

23. Thinking about TWI programs in MCPS, please rate the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Partner teachers meet frequently to coordinate instruction	○	○	○	○	○
Classroom teachers and support services teachers meet frequently to coordinate instruction	○	○	○	○	○
Emergent multilingual students from Spanish-speaking homes are provided support services in Spanish	○	○	○	○	○
I can easily access materials in Spanish that meet my instructional needs	○	○	○	○	○
I have access to assessment materials in Spanish	○	○	○	○	○
My school welcomes and supports Spanish-speaking families	○	○	○	○	○
The voices of Spanish-speaking families have equitable weight to the voices of English-speaking families.	○	○	○	○	○
My school welcomes and supports families who speak languages other than English and Spanish	○	○	○	○	○
I am familiar with the Common Core en español standards	○	○	○	○	○
I am familiar with the WIDA Spanish language development standards	○	○	○	○	○
I think it is important for TWI students to learn all subjects in the two languages in every grade level.	○	○	○	○	○
I think offering all subjects in the two languages in every grade level is challenging for TWI teachers.	○	○	○	○	○

24. Please share anything additional that you would like us to know about TWI programs

College and Career

25. Do you provide support or services to high school students?

◯ Yes

◯ No

26. Emergent Multilingual students and their families have access to clear information, in a language that they understand about the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
What is needed for graduation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
How to apply for college	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
How to apply for community college	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Costs and funding opportunities for college or community college	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Career opportunities such as internships or apprenticeships	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
How to access school counselors for support	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Dual enrollment opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) classes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Seal of Biliteracy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

27. Please share anything additional that you would like us to know about college and career preparation for EML students.

Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) Program

28. Do you work in a school with a Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) Program?

○ Yes, and I work within the METS program

○ Yes, my school has a METS program, but I do not work in the METS program

○ No

29. Thinking about students who participate in the METS program, please rate the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Students in the METS program are able to access counselors and other staff who can support their social and emotional needs, in languages that they can understand	○	○	○	○	○
Students in the METS program and their families are able to access clear information about what is needed for graduation in a language that they can understand	○	○	○	○	○
Content area educators (i.e., math, science, social studies, physical education, music, etc.) understand how to use instructional strategies to support Emergent Multilingual students in the METS program	○	○	○	○	○
Students who exit the METS program continue to receive support in meeting their academic goals	○	○	○	○	○
Students in the METS program are making academic progress in English language arts and mathematics.	○	○	○	○	○
Students benefit from the METS program after they complete the course of study.	○	○	○	○	○
Students who exit the METS program are likely to graduate on time	○	○	○	○	○

30. Please share anything additional that you would like us to know about the METS program

Commission on English Language Development (ELD) Instruction and Latina/o/e/ Student Achievement Survey

Thank you

Thank you for participating in the survey.

Appendix E: Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®)

Observer(s): _____   Teacher: _____

Date: _____   School: _____

Grade: _____   Class/Topic: _____

ESL Level: _____   Lesson: Multi-day   Single-day   (*circle one*)

Total Points Possible: 120 (Subtract 4 points for each NA given: _____)
Total Points Earned: _____   Percentage Score: _____

Directions: Circle the number that best reflects what you observe in a sheltered lesson. You may give a score from 0–4 (or NA on selected items). Cite under "Comments" specific examples of the behaviors observed.

LESSON PREPARATION

4	3	2	1	0
1. **Content objectives** clearly defined, displayed and reviewed with students		**Content objectives** for students implied		No clearly defined **content objectives** for students

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
2. **Language objectives** clearly defined, displayed and reviewed with students		**Language objectives** for students implied		No clearly defined **language objectives** for students

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
3. **Content concepts** appropriate for age and educational background level of students		**Content concepts** somewhat appropriate for age and educational background level of students		**Content concepts** inappropriate for age and educational background level of students

Comments:

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**

4. **Supplementary materials** used to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful (e.g., computer programs, graphs, models, visuals)

Some use of **supplementary materials**

No use of **supplementary materials**

Comments:

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**NA**

5. **Adaptation of content** (e.g., text, assignment) to all levels of student proficiency

Some **adaptation of content** to all levels of student proficiency

No significant **adaptation of content** to all levels of student proficiency

Comments:

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**

6. **Meaningful activities** that integrate lesson concepts (e.g., interviews, letter writing, simulations, models) with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking

Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts but provide few language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking

No **meaningful activities** that integrate lesson concepts with language practice

Comments:

BUILDING BACKGROUND

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**NA**

7. **Concepts explicitly linked** to students' background experiences

Concepts loosely linked to students' background experiences

Concepts not explicitly linked to students' background experiences

Comments:

BUILDING BACKGROUND CONT.

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**

8. **Links explicitly made** between past learning and new concepts

Few links made between past learning and new concepts

No links made between past learning and new concepts

Comments:

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**

9. **Key vocabulary** emphasized (e.g., introduced, written, repeated, and highlighted for students to see)

Key vocabulary introduced, but not emphasized

Key vocabulary not introduced or emphasized

Comments:

COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**

10. **Speech** appropriate for students' proficiency levels (e.g., slower rate, enunciation, and simple sentence structure for beginners)

Speech sometimes inappropriate for students' proficiency levels

Speech inappropriate for students' proficiency levels

Comments:

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**

11. **Clear explanation** of academic tasks

Unclear explanation of academic tasks

No explanation of academic tasks

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
12. **A variety of techniques** used to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language)		Some **techniques** used to make content concepts clear		No **techniques** used to make concepts clear

Comments:

STRATEGIES

4	3	2	1	0
13. Ample opportunities provided for students to use **learning strategies**		Inadequate opportunities provided for students to use **learning strategies**		No opportunity provided for students to use to use **learning strategies**

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
14. **Scaffolding techniques** consistently used, assisting and supporting student understanding (e.g., think-alouds)		**Scaffolding techniques** occasionally used		**Scaffolding techniques** not used

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
15. A variety of **questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills** (e.g., literal, analytical, and interpretive questions)		Infrequent **questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills**		No **questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills**

Comments:

INTERACTION

4	3	2	1	0
16. Frequent opportunities for **interaction** and discussion between teacher/student and among students, which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts		**Interaction** mostly teacher-dominated with some opportunities for students to talk about or question lesson concepts		**Interaction** teacher-dominated with no opportunities for students to discuss lesson concepts

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0

17. **Grouping configurations** support language and content objectives of the lesson	**Grouping configurations** unevenly support the language and content objectives		**Grouping configurations** do not support the language and content objectives	

Comments:

4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
18. Sufficient **wait time for student responses** consistently provided	Sufficient **wait time for student responses** occasionally provided		Sufficient **wait time for student responses** not provided	

Comments:

4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**NA**
19. Ample opportunities for students to **clarify key concepts in L1** as needed with aide, peer, or L1 text	Some opportunities for students to **clarify key concepts in L1**		No opportunities for students to **clarify key concepts in L1**		

Comments:

PRACTICE & APPLICATION

4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**NA**
20. **Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives** provided for students to practice using new content knowledge	Few **hands-on materials and/or manipulatives** provided for students to practice using new content knowledge		No **hands-on materials and/or manipulatives** provided for students to practice using new content knowledge		

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0	NA

21. Activities provided for students to **apply content and language knowledge** in the classroom | Activities provided for students to **apply** either **content or language knowledge** in the classroom | No activities provided for students to **apply content and language knowledge** in the classroom

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0

22. Activities integrate all **language skills** (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking) | Activities integrate some **language skills** | Activities do not integrate **language skills**

Comments:

LESSON DELIVERY

4	3	2	1	0

23. **Content objectives** clearly supported by lesson delivery | **Content objectives** somewhat supported by lesson delivery | **Content objectives** not supported by lesson delivery

Comments:

	3	2	1	0
4				

24. **Language objectives** clearly supported by lesson delivery | **Language objectives** somewhat supported by lesson delivery | **Language objectives** not supported by lesson delivery

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0

25. **Students engaged** approximately 90% to 100% of the period | **Students engaged** approximately 70% of the period | **Students engaged** less than 50% of the period

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0

26. **Pacing** of the lesson appropriate to students' ability levels | **Pacing** generally appropriate, but at times too fast or too slow | **Pacing** inappropriate to students' ability levels

Comments:

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT

	4	3	2	1	0

27. Comprehensive **review of key vocabulary** | Uneven **review of key vocabulary** | No **review of key vocabulary**

Comments:

	4	3	2	1	0

28. Comprehensive **review of key content concepts** | Uneven **review of key content concepts** | No **review of key content concepts**

Comments:

	4	3	2	1	0

29. Regular **feedback** provided to students on their output (e.g., language, content, work) | Inconsistent **feedback** provided to students on their output | No **feedback** provided to students on their output

Comments:

	4	3	2	1	0

30. **Assessment of student comprehension and learning** of all lesson objectives (e.g., spot checking, group response) throughout the lesson | **Assessment of student comprehension and learning** of some lesson objectives | No **assessment of student comprehension and learning** of lesson objectives

Comments:

Appendix F: CAL Dual Language Instructional Observation Protocol

School:	Teacher:	Grade level(s):	Language:
Date:	Start time: End time:	Content area:	Lesson topic:

Number of adults and their roles (teacher, instructional assistants, parents, etc.):

Classroom set-up (room configuration, use of wall space, environmental print, instructional materials, classroom library, etc.): Is it conducive to learning for second language learners?

Classroom Print (languages equitably displayed, color-coded, percentage in each language)

Language Use by Staff
Teacher uses target language (highlight): Always-Most of the time-Sometimes-Never

If less than 100%, when does the teacher use the non-target language?
- Access to content by students
- Social communication
- Behavior/management
- Other:

In what kind of interaction is the non-target language used (highlight)? Whole group-small group-partners-individually-other

If another person is in the room providing assistance: Always-Most of the time-Sometimes-Never

Other comments:

Language Use by Students
Students use target language (highlight): Always-Most of the time-Sometimes-Never

If less than 100%, when does the student use the non-target language?
- Access to content by students
- Social communication
- Behavior/management
- Other:

In what kind of interaction is the non-target language used (highlight)? Whole group-small group-partners-individually-other

(Capture responses of students using the non-target language as possible)

Response by teacher/staff when students use non-target language:

Complete the chart by entering a 4-1 (exemplary to minimal). Enter 0 if the practice is needed but not observed. Enter N/A if the practice is *not able to be observed/rated*. Include evidence whenever possible.

Strand 3 - Instruction   **Principle 1. Instructional methods are derived from research-based principles of dual language education and ensure fidelity to the model**
1. Instruction incorporates appropriate separation of languages to promote high levels of language acquisition. (Evidence under *Language Use*) Evidence:
Principle 2. Instructional strategies support the attainment of the three core goals of dual language education
1. Teacher integrates language and content instruction. Evidence:
2. Teachers use sheltered instruction and other pedagogical strategies to facilitate student comprehension and promote language and literacy development. Evidence:
3. Instruction in one language builds on concepts learned in the other. Evidence:
4. Instruction leverages students' bilingualism by strategically bringing students' attention to similarities or differences between languages. Evidence:
5. Teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure equitable participation among all students. Evidence:

Principle 3. Instruction is student-centered
1. Teacher uses active learning strategies such as thematic instruction, cooperative learning, and learning centers in order to meet the needs of diverse learners. Evidence:
2. Teacher creates meaningful opportunities for sustained language use. Evidence:
3. Student grouping maximizes opportunities for students to benefit from peer models. Evidence:
Principle 4. Instructional staff effectively integrate technology to deepen and enhance the learning process
1. Students use technology to display their understanding of content and to further develop their language and literacy skills in both program languages. Evidence:
2. Instructional staff use technology tools to engage all learners. Evidence:
Strand 4 - Assessment & Accountability
1. Teacher checks for understanding and provides feedback when needed. Evidence:
2. Teacher uses other types of formative assessment. Evidence:

Appendix G: Family and Community Survey

* 1. Which language would you like to use to complete the survey?

○ አማርኛ (Amharic)

○ 中文 (Chinese)

○ English

○ français (French)

○ 한국어 (Korean)

○ Português (Portuguese)

○ español (Spanish)

○ Việt Nam (Vietnamese)

2. የMCPS እያደጉ ያሉ የብዝሃ ቋንቋ እና ላቲና/ኦ/ኢ የተማሪ አገልግሎቶች ግምገማ

በMCPS ውስጥ እያደጉ ባሉ የብዝሃ ቋንቋ እና ላቲና/ኦ/ኢ አገልግሎቶች ማዕከል የተሰጠ የቋንቋዎች ግምገማ ላይ እንዲሳተፉ ተጋብዘዋል።

ዶ/ር ኬይራ ባላንታይን (Dr. Keira Ballantyne) በተግባራዊ የቋንቋ ጥናት ማዕከል የጥናት ዳይሬክተር ናቸው።

ከተስማሙ፣ በMCPS ውስጥ ስላሉት እያደጉ ያሉ የብዝሃ ቋንቋ እና/ወይም ላቲና/ኦ/ኢ ልጆች ተሞክሮ አጭር የዳሰሳ ጥያቄዎችየጠናቅቃሉ። ተሳትፎ ሙሉ በሙሉ በፈቃደኝነት ስለሆነ በማንኛውም ጊዜ ያለ ምንም አሉታዊ ተጽእኖ ለመተው ትችላለህ/ትችያለሽ።

ስለአንተ(ቺ) ያለው መረጃ ሁሉ ሚስጥራዊ ስለሆነ፣ የ CAL አጥኚዎች ብቻ ሊያገኙት ይችላሉ። አጥኚዎቹ ስለአንተ(ቺ) ምንም አይነት የግል መረጃ ለሌላ ለማንም አያካፍሉም። በዚህ ፕሮጀክት የእርስዎ ስም በሪፖርት ወይም ወረቀት ላይ አይገለጽም። ስለማንንትዎ ወይም ስለሚገኑሩት ነገር መረጃ ለትምህርት ቤትዎ፣ ለሌሎች አስተማሪዎች ወይም ለ MCPS አስተዳዳሪዎች ይፋ አይደረግም።

በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ መሳተፍ ምንም ስጋት አይኖረውም።

ይህ ጥናት አንተ(ች)ን በግል ለመርዳት አልተነደፈም፣ ነገር ግን ውጤቱ በ MCPS ውስጥ ስለ EML እና Latina/o/e/x ተማሪዎች አጥኚው(ዋ) የበለጠ እንዲያውቅ ሊረዳቸው ይችላል።

በዚህ የዳሰሳ ጥናት ላይ ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ ነኝ

○ አዎን

○ አይደለም

3. ከእነዚህ ቡድኖች መካከል ከየትኛው ጋር ይመደባሉ? እርስዎን የሚመለከተውን ሁሉ ይምረጡ፡-

☐ አሜሪካዊ ህንዳዊ ወይም የአላስካ ተወላጅ

☐ ኤሽያዊ

☐ ጥቁር ወይ አፍሪካን አሜሪካን

☐ ላቲና፣ ላቲኖ፣ ላቲን፣ ላቲንክስ ወይም ስፓኒክ

☐ መካከለኛው ምስራቅ ወይም ሰሜን አፍሪካ

☐ ሃዋይ ተወላጅ ወይም ሌላ የፓሲፊክ ደሴት ተወላጅ

☐ ነጭ

☐ ባልመልስ እመርጣለሁ

☐ ሌላ ዘር፣ ጎሳ ወይም አመጣጥ (እባክዎ ይግለጹ)

[   ]

4. ወደሚቀጥለው የክፍል ደረጃ የሚገባ ልጅ አለኝ (እባክዎ የሚመለከትዎን ላይ ምልክት ያድርጉ)

☐ ቅድመ መዋእለ ህፃናት

☐ መዋእለ ህፃናት

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

5. በቤት ውስጥ ከእንግሊዝኛ ሌላ ቋንቋ ይናገራሉ?

◯ አዎን

◯ አይደለም

6. የትኛው ቋንቋ(ዎች)?

[   ]

7. በMCPS ውስጥ ልጅ ሳስመዘግብ ይህ የመጀመሪያዬ ነው

◯ አዎን

◯ አይደለም

8. በአሁኑ ጊዜ የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ለእድገት አገልግሎቶችን የሚቀበል ልጅ አለኝ

◯ አዎን

◯ አይደለም

9. ከዚህ ቀደም የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ለእድገት አገልግሎቶችን ያገኘ ልጅ አለኝ

◯ አዎን

◯ አይደለም

10. Please rate the following statements

	በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አልስማማም	በፍጹም አልስማማም	አይመለከተውም/ አለቦታው ነው
ቤተሰቤ በትምህርት ቤት(ቤቶች) መልካም አቀባበል እንደሚደረግላቸው ይሰማቸዋል	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
ከልጆቼ ትምህርት ቤት መደበኛ የጽሁፍ መረጃን በምረዳው ቋንቋ እቀበላለሁ።	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
የትርጓሜ አገልግሎቶች ካስፈለገኝ በቀላሉ ማግኘት እችላለሁ	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
ልጆቼን ትምህርት ቤት ለማስመዝገብ ቀላል ነበር	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
ልጆቼ በትምህርት ቤት ውስጥ ምን ያህል ጥሩ እንደሆኑ ተረድቻለሁ	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
ልጆቼ እንግሊዘኛ በመማር መሻሻላቸው እንዴት እንደሆነ ተረድቻለሁ	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
MCPS ከሁለተኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት ቤት በኋላ ልጆቼን ለስኬት እያዘጋጀ እንደሆነ ይሰማኛል።	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. እባክዎን በMCPS ውስጥ ስላሎት ልምድ ሊያካፍሉን የሚፈልጉትን ማንኛውንም ተጨማሪ መረጃ ይስጡን።

12. MCPS多語言初學者和拉丁裔學生服務評估

我們邀請您參加"應用語言學中心"對MCPS多語言初學者和拉丁裔學生服務的評估。

"應用語言學中心"的Keira Ballantyne博士將擔任本次研究的主任。

如果您同意, 您將回答有關多語言初學者和拉丁裔學生在MCPS體驗的一份簡短調查。參加調查完全出於自願, 您可以隨時退出, 並且不會有任何負面後果。

所有關於您的資訊都是保密的, 只有CAL的研究員才能看到這些資訊。研究員絕不會與其他任何人分享您的任何個人資訊。我們不會在有關這個項目的任何報告或論文中使用您的姓名。您的個人資訊或您的發言內容不會與您所在的學校、其他老師或MCPS行政領導分享。

參加這次研究的風險極其微小。

這次研究的目的不是為了幫助您個人, 但是研究結果可能有助研究員更好地了解MCPS的EML和拉丁裔學生。

我同意參加這次調查。

◯ 是
◯ 否

13. 您認為自己屬於哪些族群?請選擇所有適用於您的選項:

☐ 美國印地安人或阿拉斯加原住民

☐ 亞裔

☐ 黑人或非裔

☐ 拉丁裔

☐ 中東或北非

☐ 夏威夷原住民或其它太平洋島國居民

☐ 白人

☐ 我不想回答

☐ 其他種族、民族或出身(請說明)

[   ]

14. 我的孩子即將進入以下年級(請勾選所有適用的選項):

☐ 幼前班

☐ 幼稚園

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

15. 您在家是否使用除英語之外的其它語言?

◯ 是

◯ 否

16. 哪種(些)語言?

[   ]

17. 哪種(些)語言?

◯ 是

◯ 否

18. 我目前有一個孩子正在接受英語語言發展服務

◯ 是

◯ 否

19. 我的孩子在過去曾經接受過英語語言發展服務

◯ 是

◯ 否

20. Please rate the following statements

	非常認同	認同	不認同	非常不認同	不適用
我的家人在學校感到受歡迎	○	○	○	○	○
我收到孩子學校用我能理解的語言定期發給我的書面通訊	○	○	○	○	○
如果我需要, 我能輕鬆地獲得口譯服務	○	○	○	○	○
在學校為孩子辦理註冊手續很容易	○	○	○	○	○
我了解孩子在學校的表現	○	○	○	○	○
我了解孩子在英語學習方面取得的進步	○	○	○	○	○
我覺得MCPS在幫助我的孩子做好準備, 以便在高中畢業後能取得成功	○	○	○	○	○

21. 請提供您想要分享的有關您在MCPS體驗的任何其他資訊。

English

22. Evaluation of MCPS Emergent Multilingual and Latina/o/e Student Services

You have been invited to participate in the Center for Applied Linguistics evaluation of Emergent Multilingual and Latina/o/e services in MCPS.

Dr. Keira Ballantyne, at the Center for Applied Linguistics, is the study director.

If you agree, you will complete a short survey about the experiences of your Emergent Multilingual and/or Latina/o/e children in MCPS. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time with no negative consequences.

All information about you will be confidential, and only CAL researchers will have access to it. Researchers will never share any personal information about you with anyone else. Your name will not be used in reports or papers about this project. Information about who you are or what you say will not be shared with your school, other teachers, or MCPS administrators.

There are minimal risks for participating in this study.

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about EML and Latina/o/e/x students in MCPS.

I consent to participating in this survey.

◯ Yes

◯ No

23. Which of these groups do you identify with? Select all that apply to you:

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic

☐ Middle Eastern or North African

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White

☐ I prefer not to answer

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

24. I have a child entering the following grade level (please check all that apply):

- [ ] PreK
- [ ] K
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7
- [ ] 8
- [ ] 9
- [ ] 10
- [ ] 11
- [ ] 12

25. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

26. Which language(s)?

[   ]

27. This is my first year enrolling a child in MCPS

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

28. I currently have a child who recieves English language development services

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

29. I have a child who has received English language development services in the past

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

30. Please rate the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
My family feels welcome at our school(s)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I receive regular written communication from my children's schools in a language that I can understand	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I can easily access interpretation services if I need them	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It was easy to enroll my children in school	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I understand how well my children are doing in school	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I understand how my children are progressing in learning English	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that MCPS is preparing my children for success after high school	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

31. Please provide us with any additional information that you'd like to share about your experience in MCPS.

32. Évaluation des services aux élèves émergents multilingues et Latinos de MCPS

Vous avez été invité à participer à l'évaluation du Centre de Linguistique Appliquée (Center for Applied Linguistics, CAL) des services d'élèves multilingues émergents et latinos de MCPS.

Le Dr Keira Ballantyne, du Centre de linguistique appliquée, est le directeur d'étude.

Si vous y consentez, vous remplirez une courte enquête sur les expériences de vos enfants émergents multilingues et/ou Latino de MCPS. La participation est entièrement volontaire et vous pouvez en vous retirer à tout moment sans conséquences négatives.

Toutes les informations vous concernant seront confidentielles et seuls les chercheurs du CAL y auront accès. Les chercheurs ne partageront jamais et avec quiconque d'information personnelle vous concernant. Votre nom ne sera pas utilisé dans les rapports ou les articles portant sur ce projet. Les informations en lien avec votre identité ou ce que vous dites ne seront pas communiquées à votre école, à d'autres enseignants ou aux administrateurs de MCPS.

La participation à cette étude n'implique que des risques minimes.

Cette recherche n'est pas conçue pour vous aider personnellement, mais les résultats peuvent aider l'enquêteur à en savoir plus sur les élèves multilingues émergents ou latinos de MCPS.

J'accepte de participer à cette enquête

◯ Oui

◯ Non

33. Auquel de ces groupes vous identifiez-vous ? Sélectionnez tous les choix qui s'appliquent à vous :

☐ Amérindien ou autochtone de l'Alaska

☐ Asiatique

☐ Noir ou noir américain

☐ Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx ou Hispanique

☐ Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord

☐ Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord

☐ Blanc

☐ Je préfère ne pas répondre.

☐ Autre race, ethnie ou origine (veuillez préciser)

34. J'ai un enfant passant au ce grade scolaire suivant (veuillez cocher tous les choix correspondants) :

- [ ] Prekindergarten (pré-maternelle)
- [ ] Kindergarten (Maternelle)
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7
- [ ] 8
- [ ] 9
- [ ] 10
- [ ] 11
- [ ] 12

35. Parlez-vous une langue autre que l'anglais à la maison ?

- ( ) Oui
- ( ) Non

36. Quelle(s) langue(s) ?

[   ]

37. C'est la première année que j'inscris un enfant à MCPS

- ( ) Oui
- ( ) Non

38. J'ai actuellement un enfant qui reçoit des services de développement de la langue anglaise

- ( ) Oui
- ( ) Non

39. J'ai un enfant qui a reçu des services de développement de la langue anglaise dans le passé

- ( ) Oui
- ( ) Non

40. Please rate the following statements

	Entièrement d'accord	D'accord	Pas d'accord	Pas du tout d'accord	Sans objet
Ma famille se sent bien accueillie dans notre/nos école(s)	○	○	○	○	○
Je reçois régulièrement des courriers écrits de la part de l'école de mes enfants dans une langue que je peux comprendre	○	○	○	○	○
Je peux facilement accéder aux services d'interprétation si j'en ai besoin	○	○	○	○	○
L'inscription de mes enfants à l'école a été facile	○	○	○	○	○
Je suis capable de comprendre le niveau scolaire de mes enfants	○	○	○	○	○
Je suis capable de comprendre les progrès de mes enfants dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais	○	○	○	○	○
J'ai le sentiment que MCPS prépare mes enfants à réussir après le lycée	○	○	○	○	○

41. Veuillez nous fournir toute information supplémentaire que vous aimeriez partager au sujet de votre expérience à MCPS.

42. MCPS 새 다중 언어 및 라티나/라티노/라틴 학생 서비스 평가

Center for Applied Linguistics가 진행하는 MCPS의 새 다중언어 및 라티나/라티노/라틴(Emergent Multilingual and Latina/o/e/x services) 평가에 여러분을 초대합니다.

Center for Applied Linguistics의 Keira Ballantyne 박사가 이 연구의 감독을 맡고 있습니다.

여러분은 동의할 경우 새 다중언어 및 및 라티나/라티노/라틴계 학생 여러분의 MCPS 경험에 관한 짧은 설문조사에 답하게 됩니다. 참여는 전적으로 자발적이며 부정적인 결과 없이 언제든지 참여를 중단할 수 있습니다.

학생에 관한 모든 정보는 비밀에 붙여지며 CAL 연구원만이 이를 볼 수 있습니다. 연구원들은 여러분의 개인 정보를 다른 사람과 절대 공유하지 않습니다. 또한, 여러분의 이름은 이 프로젝트에 관한 보고서나 서류에 기록되지 않습니다. 여러분에 대한 정보나 말하는 모든 정보는 학교, 타 교사 또는 MCPS 관리자와 공유하지 않습니다.

이 연구 참여에 따른 위험은 최소한적입니다.

이 연구는 여러분을 개인적으로 돕기 위해 고안된 것이 아닙니다만, 이 결과에 따라 연구자가 MCPS의 새 다중언어 학생(EML) 및 라티나/라티노/라틴 학생들에 대해 더 많이 배우게 되는 도움을 제공할 수 있습니다.

이 설문조사 참여에 동의합니다.

◯ 예
◯ 아니요

43. 다음 중 어느 그룹에 해당합니까? 다음 중 해당하는 곳에 모두 표시합시다:

☐ 미국계인디언또는알래스카원주민
☐ 미국계인디언또는알래스카원주민
☐ 흑인또는아프리카계미국인
☐ 라티나, 라티노, 라틴, 라티넥스, 히스패닉
☐ 중동또는북아프리카
☐ 중동또는북아프리카
☐ 백인
☐ 답변하지 않겠습니다.
☐ 답변하지 않겠습니다.

_____

44. 나는 다음 학년에 다닐 자녀가 있다. (해당하는 곳 모두에 표시):

- ☐ 프리킨더가든
- ☐ 킨더가든
- ☐ 1학년
- ☐ 2학년
- ☐ 3학년
- ☐ 4학년
- ☐ 5학년
- ☐ 6학년
- ☐ 7학년
- ☐ 8학년
- ☐ 9학년
- ☐ 10학년
- ☐ 11학년
- ☐ 12학년

45. 집에서 대화를 나눌 때에 영어 이외의 언어도 사용합니까?

- ◯ 예
- ◯ 아니요

46. 사용하는 언어는?

☐

47. 사용하는 언어는?

- ◯ 예
- ◯ 아니요

48. 우리 아이는 현재 영어 언어 개발 서비스를 받고 있습니다.

- ◯ 예
- ◯ 아니요

49. 우리 아이는 전에 영어 언어 개발 서비스를 받은 적이 있습니다.

- ◯ 예
- ◯ 아니요

50. Please rate the following statements

	매우 동의함	동의함	동의하지 않음	매우 동의하지 않음	해당 안 됨
우리 가족은 학교에서 환영받고 있다고 느낍니다.	○	○	○	○	○
나는 우리 아이들의 학교로부터 내가 이해할 수 있는 언어로 된 서면 커뮤니케이션을 정기적으로 받습니다.	○	○	○	○	○
도움이 필요한 경우, 통역 서비스를 쉽게 받을 수 있습니다.	○	○	○	○	○
우리 아이들의 학교 등록이 쉬웠습니다.	○	○	○	○	○
우리 아이들이 학교에서 얼마나 잘하고 있는지 알고 이해합니다.	○	○	○	○	○
우리 아이들이 학교에서 어떻게 영어를 배우고 있는지 이해하고 있습니다.	○	○	○	○	○
MCPS는 고등학교 졸업 후의 성공을 위해 우리 아이들을 준비시켜준다고 느낍니다.	○	○	○	○	○

51. MCPS에서의 경험에 관해 나누고 싶으신 내용이 있으시면 이곳에 적어주세요.

52. Avaliação dos Serviços para Estudantes Multilíngues Emergentes e Latina/o/e/x de MCPS

Você está convidado a participar da avaliação do Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) de serviços ao Multilíngue Emergente e Latina/o/e/x de MCPS.

Dra. Keira Ballantyne, do Center for Applied Linguistics, é a diretora do estudo.

Se concordar, você deverá preencher uma breve pesquisa sobre as experiências de seus filhos Multilíngues Emergentes e Latina/o/e/x de MCPS. A participação é totalmente voluntária e você pode desistir a qualquer momento sem consequências negativas.

Todas as informações sobre você serão confidenciais e somente os pesquisadores do CAL terão acesso a elas. Os pesquisadores nunca compartilharão nenhuma informação pessoal sobre você com mais ninguém. Seu nome não será usado em relatórios ou artigos sobre este projeto. Informações sobre quem você é ou o que você diz não serão compartilhadas com sua escola, outros professores ou administradores de MCPS.

Há riscos mínimos para participar deste estudo.

Esta pesquisa não foi projetada para ajudá-lo pessoalmente, mas os resultados podem ajudar o investigador a entender melhor os alunos EML e Latina/o/e/x em MCPS.

Concordo em participar desta pesquisa

○ Sim

○ Não

53. Com qual desses grupos você se identifica? Selecione todos os que se aplicam a você:

☐ Índio Americano ou Nativo do Alasca

☐ Asiático

☐ Negro ou Afro-americano

☐ Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx ou Hispânico

☐ Do Oriente Médio ou Norte da África

☐ Havaiano Nativo ou Nativo de Outra Ilha do Pacífico

☐ Branco

☐ Prefiro não responder

☐ Alguma outra raça, etnia ou origem (especifique)

54. Tenho um filho ingressando no seguinte nível de escolaridade (marque todos os que se aplicam):

- [ ] Pré-Kindergarten
- [ ] Kindergarten
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7
- [ ] 8
- [ ] 9
- [ ] 10
- [ ] 11
- [ ] 12

55. Você fala outro idioma além do inglês em casa?

- ( ) Sim
- ( ) Não

56. Qual(is) idioma(s)?

[   ]

57. Este é o meu primeiro ano matriculando uma criança em MCPS

- ( ) Sim
- ( ) Não

58. Atualmente, tenho um filho que recebe serviços de desenvolvimento da língua inglesa

- ( ) Sim
- ( ) Não

59. Tenho um filho que recebeu serviços de desenvolvimento da língua inglesa no passado

- ( ) Sim
- ( ) Não

60. Please rate the following statements

	Concordo Plenamente	Concordo	Discordo	Discordo Completamente	Não aplicável
Minha família se sente bem-vinda em nossa(s) escola(s)	○	○	○	○	○
Recebo comunicações escritas regulares das escolas de meus filhos em um idioma que posso entender	○	○	○	○	○
Recebo comunicações escritas regulares das escolas de meus filhos em um idioma que posso entender	○	○	○	○	○
Foi fácil matricular meus filhos na escola	○	○	○	○	○
Entendo como meus filhos estão indo na escola	○	○	○	○	○
Entendo como meus filhos estão progredindo no aprendizado do inglês	○	○	○	○	○
Sinto que MCPS está preparando meus filhos para o sucesso após o ensino médio	○	○	○	○	○

61. Forneça quaisquer informações adicionais que você gostaria de compartilhar sobre sua experiência com MCPS.

62. Evaluación de los servicios estudiantiles para multilingües emergentes y latinos de MCPS

Ha sido invitado a participar en la evaluación del Centro de Lingüística Aplicada (Center for Applied Linguistics-CAL) de los servicios para los multilingües emergentes y latinos en MCPS.

La Dra. Keira Ballantyne, del Centro de Lingüística Aplicada, es la directora del estudio.

Si está de acuerdo, completará una breve encuesta sobre las experiencias de sus hijos multilingües emergentes y/o latinos en MCPS. La participación es completamente voluntaria y se puede retirar en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia negativa.

Toda la información sobre usted será confidencial y solamente los investigadores de CAL tendrán acceso a ella. Los investigadores nunca compartirán ninguna información personal sobre usted con ninguna otra persona. No se usará su nombre en los reportes o artículos sobre este proyecto. No se compartirá ninguna información sobre quién es usted o qué dice con su escuela, otros maestros o administradores de MCPS.

Hay riesgos mínimos al participar en este estudio.

La investigación no está diseñada para ayudarle personalmente, pero los resultados podrían ayudar al investigador aprender más sobre los estudiantes multilingües emergentes y latinos/as/es/x en MCPS.

Acepto participar en esta encuesta

○ Sí

○ No

63. ¿Con cuál de estos grupos se identifica? Marque todas las opciones que correspondan:

☐ indígena americano o nativo de Alaska

☐ asiático

☐ negro o afroamericano

☐ latina, latino, latine, latinx o hispano

☐ de medio oriente o norafricano

☐ originario de Hawái u otra isla del Pacífico

☐ caucásico

☐ Prefiero no responder

☐ Alguna otra raza, identidad étnica u origen (por favor especifique)

[_____]

64. Tengo a un hijo que está entrando al siguiente grado (marque todas las opciones que correspondan):

☐ Prekindergarten

☐ Kindergarten

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

65. ¿Habla usted un idioma que no sea el inglés en casa?

○ Sí

○ No

66. ¿Qué idioma(s)?

[   ]

67. Este es el primer año que matriculo a un hijo en MCPS

○ Sí

○ No

68. Actualmente, tengo a un hijo que recibe servicios de desarrollo del idioma inglés

○ Sí

○ No

69. Tengo a un hijo que recibió servicios de desarrollo del idioma inglés en el pasado

○ Sí

○ No

70. Please rate the following statements

	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo	No corresponde
Mi familia se siente bienvenida en nuestra(s) escuela(s)	○	○	○	○	○
Recibo comunicación escrita regular de las escuelas de mis hijos en un idioma que puedo comprender	○	○	○	○	○
Recibo comunicación escrita regular de las escuelas de mis hijos en un idioma que puedo comprender	○	○	○	○	○
Fue fácil matricular a mis hijos en la escuela	○	○	○	○	○
Entiendo el desempeño de mis hijos en la escuela	○	○	○	○	○
Entiendo cómo están progresando mis hijos en su aprendizaje del inglés	○	○	○	○	○
Siento que MCPS está preparando a mis hijos para el éxito después de la escuela secundaria	○	○	○	○	○

71. Por favor, aporte cualquier información adicional que desee compartir sobre su experiencia en MCPS.

72. Thẩm định các Dịch vụ Học Sinh Đa Ngôn ngữ Mới và Latina/o/e của MCPS

Quý vị được mời tham gia vào thẩm định của Trung tâm Ngôn ngữ Ứng dụng về các dịch vụ Học sinh Đa Ngôn ngữ Mới và Latina/o/e/ tại MCPS.

Dr. Keira Ballantyne là giám đốc nghiên cứu tại Trung tâm Ngôn ngữ Ứng dụng.

Nếu quý vị đồng ý, quý vị sẽ hoàn tất một cuộc khảo sát ngắn về kinh nghiệm của những em trẻ mới đa ngôn ngữ và/hoặc Latina/o/e trong MCPS. Sự tham gia là hoàn toàn tự nguyện, và quý có thể rút lui bất cứ lúc nào mà không có hậu quả tiêu cực.

Tất cả tin tức về em sẽ được giữ kín và chỉ có các nhà nghiên cứu CAL mới có quyền truy cập thông tin đó. Các nhà nghiên cứu sẽ không bao giờ chia sẻ bất kỳ thông tin cá nhân nào về em với bất kỳ ai khác. Tên của quý vị sẽ không được sử dụng trong các báo cáo hay giấy tờ về dự án này. Thông tin về quý vị là ai hay những gì quý vị nói sẽ không được chia sẻ với trường học, giáo viên khác hay quản trị viên MCPS.

Rủi ro là rất tối thiểu khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Nghiên cứu này không được thiết kế để giúp cá nhân em, nhưng kết quả có thể giúp điều tra viên tìm hiểu thêm về EML và học sinh Latina/o/e/x trong MCPS.

Tôi đồng ý tham gia cuộc khảo sát này

- ◯ Có
- ◯ Không

73. Quý vị nhận thấy mình thuộc nhóm nào trong số những nhóm này? Xin chọn tất cả những gì thích hợp với quý vị:

- ☐ Người Mỹ bản địa hay người thổ dân Alaska
- ☐ Á Châu
- ☐ Da Đen hay Mỹ Gốc Phi
- ☐ Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic
- ☐ Trung Đông hay Bắc Phi
- ☐ Người gốc đảo Hawaii hay đảo khác ở Thái Bình Dương
- ☐ Da Trắng
- ☐ Tôi không muốn trả lời
- ☐ Một số chủng tộc, dân tộc hoặc nguồn gốc khác (xin nêu rõ)

74. Tôi có con đang vào cấp lớp sau (xin đánh dấu tất cả những gì thích hợp):

- [ ] Chuẩn bị Mẫu giáo
- [ ] Lớp Mẫu Giáo
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7
- [ ] 8
- [ ] 9
- [ ] 10
- [ ] 11
- [ ] 12

75. Quý vị có nói một ngôn ngữ khác ngoài tiếng Anh ở nhà không?

- ( ) Có
- ( ) Không

76. Ngôn ngữ nào?

[   ]

77. Đây là năm đầu tiên tôi ghi danh một em trẻ vào MCPS

- ( ) Có
- ( ) Không

78. Tôi hiện có một người con mà nhận dịch vụ phát triển tiếng Anh

- ( ) Có
- ( ) Không

79. Tôi có một người con mà đã nhận các dịch vụ phát triển tiếng Anh trong quá khứ

- ( ) Có
- ( ) Không

80. Please rate the following statements

	Rất Đồng Ý	Đồng Ý	Không Đồng Ý	Hoàn Toàn Không Đồng Ý	Không thích hợp
Gia đình tôi cảm thấy được chào đón tại trường học	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tôi thường xuyên nhận được thông tin liên lạc bằng văn bản từ các trường học của con tôi bằng ngôn ngữ mà tôi có thể hiểu được	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tôi có thể dễ dàng truy cập các dịch vụ thông dịch nếu tôi cần	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Đăng ký cho con tôi đi học là dễ dàng	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tôi hiểu các con tôi học tốt như thế nào ở trường	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tôi hiểu con tôi tiến bộ như thế nào trong việc học tiếng Anh	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tôi cảm thấy là MCPS đang chuẩn bị cho con tôi thành công sau khi tốt nghiệp trung học	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

81. Yêu cầu cung cấp cho chúng tôi bất kỳ thông tin bổ sung nào mà quý vị muốn chia sẻ về kinh nghiệm của mình trong MCPS.