Renewing Our Promise

Research and Recommendations to Support California's Long-Term English Learners

CALIFORNIANS TOGETHER
CHAMPIONING THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

A CALIFORNIANS TOGETHER RESEARCH & POLICY REPORT

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- Alhambra Unified School District
- Chula Vista Elementary School District
- Elk Grove Unified School District
- Garden Grove Unified School District
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Oak Grove Elementary School District
- Sanger Unified School District

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past ten years have shown considerable progress in California's education system but also exposed how much work there is left to be done. When Californians Together released *Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners* ten years ago, it was a call to action to address the needs of this student population. Since its release, California school districts now have a clear definition of long-term English learners (LTELs) and students at risk of becoming LTELs and can identify them at the Local Educational Agency (LEA) and school level. Many have identified strategies to promote their achievement. However, there is much more work to be done to ensure that our educational investments and accountability systems promote a strong vision for the achievement that our education system should foster and expect for these students.

It is our hope that this report will continue to push the school, district, and state level conversation about how best to support LTELs and prevent students from becoming LTELs. As an organization focused on promoting the success of all English learners, we understand the need for the education system to not just see our students through their label, but as individual students with unique needs. Moreover, we see through this report that, while challenges remain, there are many opportunities for improvement in our education system.

Martha Hernandez
Executive Director, Californians Together

CALIFORNIANS TOGETHER
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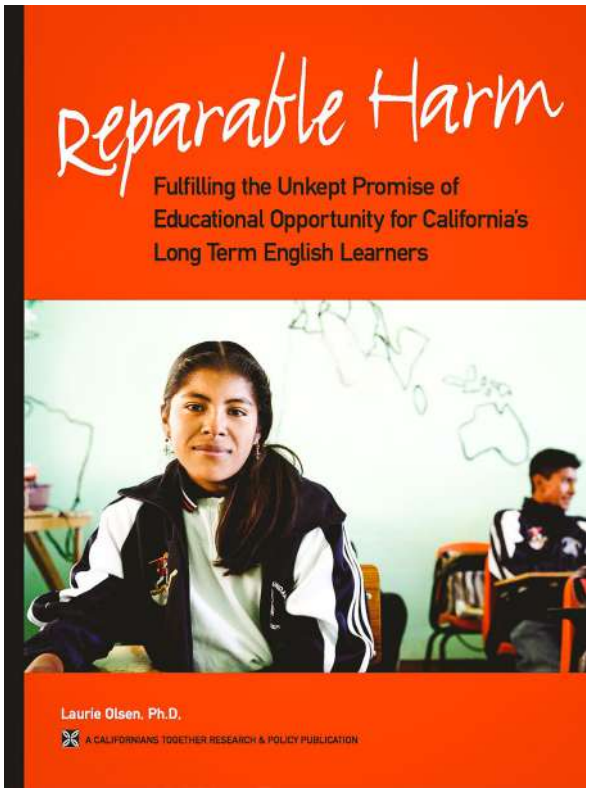
NOTE FROM LAURIE OLSEN, PHD, AUTHOR OF REPARABLE HARM



A decade ago I wrote *Reparable Harm* to call attention to something that should never have been occurring in our schools—the abandonment of a sizeable proportion of students who enrolled as English learners (ELs) and failed to be provided the education they needed to learn English sufficiently and thereby were foreclosed from equal educational opportunity and access to the full curriculum. Schools have a fundamental legal responsibility to ensure that ELs do not "incur irreparable academic deficits" as a result of inadequate education programs while they are in the process of learning English. *Reparable Harm* was meant to alert California to its failure to move students along the pathway to English proficiency and to provide meaningful access to the curriculum without them accruing gaps and harm. The report sought to describe and name the phenomenon of "long-term English learners" (LTELs), to rouse a commitment to preventing such harm from occurring any longer and instill a sense of urgency about providing support to repair the gaps and rectify the harms for those students who had become LTELs. Recommendations for action were offered for schools, school districts, and the state.

Reparable Harm was influential in creating legislation requiring the identification of LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs. The theory was that if people had the data and could see the extent of the problem, they would act to rectify it. To some degree, this happened. The report was met with immediate recognition by some secondary school teachers who were relieved to see the issue named and were inspired to seek answers for better serving their students. Over the course of the next two years, working with teams from districts concerned about LTELs and eliciting the experiences of teachers innovating responses to their LTEL students, we published, *Secondary School Courses Designed to Address the Language Needs and Academic Gaps of Long Term English Learners*. Throughout the state, some districts, schools, and teachers indeed redesigned their courses and instruction, and developed new services and supports for LTELs.

Attention began to be focused on the need to provide elementary level EL students with high-quality instruction that would ensure they would not become LTELs, and new models for elementary EL education emerged. Meanwhile, new state policies and guidance emerged emphasizing educational approaches aligned with research that would more adequately address the LTEL issue. The ELD Standards focused on academic uses of English, the combined ELA/ELD Framework described a robust focus on language in and across the curriculum through Integrated and Designated ELD and called for attention to the specific needs of LTELs, the CA English Learner Roadmap called for assets oriented and intellectually rich instruction for ELs adapted to the needs of various typologies including LTELs, and Proposition 58 did away with Proposition 227's restrictions on the use of students' primary language for instruction—all creating a new policy landscape and direction for EL education in the state.

A decade ago, *Reparable Harm* was meant as a call to action. Looking now at this new report ten years later, clearly, that call to action and the response since has not been enough. It is heartening to see that there has been some attention to LTELs in some districts and classrooms, and evidence of some decline statewide in the numbers of LTEL, but this is not enough. And while there has been some improvement in educational outcomes for ELs and LTELs, there has been greater improvement for other groups, so the gap is widening. I sincerely hope that this new report with its sobering picture that LTELs remain a major challenge for California might light a fire and inspire a broader commitment to end the educational harm. ELs who were entering Kindergarten over a decade ago when *Reparable Harm* was published are now already nearing the end of their schooling journey in California. Despite the call put forth in that report, still far too many have ended up as LTELs. How many other generations of ELs will it take passing through our educational system before we finally enact what research suggests, implement the state's visionary EL policies, and commit our state to seeing to it that no more LTELs will develop? Our system must finally ensure that our ELs are provided full meaningful access to the curriculum, so no more gaps accrue; receive high quality comprehensive ELD building the language needed for participation, engagement, and mastery of academics; and are attending schools that embrace their languages and cultures and promote and support biliteracy. Let us renew our commitment to these students and redouble our efforts to ensure their achievement. And may we all agree that ten years hence, a new report will be able to look back and declare that the era of LTELs is over. Then we can say with pride and relief, "We took care of that!"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 08

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION 12

- Overview of the Report
- COVID-19 and the Report

SECTION 2: THE STUDENTS 16

- English Learners in California Public Schools
- Long-Term English Learners in California Public Schools
- Students At-Risk of Becoming Long-Term English Learners
- Outcomes for English Learners in Grades 6-12
- Summary

SECTION 3: RESEARCH SUMMARY 22

- Factors Contributing to Prolonged EL Status
- Understanding LTELs
- Strategies to Promote LTEL Success
- Strategies to Promote EL Success and Prevent their becoming LTELs or At Risk of Being LTELs
- Potential Unintended Consequences of the LTEL Label

SECTION 4: POLICY OVERVIEW 30

- Basic Education Rights of English Learners
- The English Learner Education Landscape in 2010
- The English Learner Education Landscape After 2010
- Pertinent Federal Policy

SECTION 5: RESULTS OF LANDSCAPE SURVEY 38

- Survey Methodology
- District Strategies to Support LTELs
- Obstacles to Meeting the Needs of LTELs
- Supports for Meeting the Needs of LTELs
- Local Changes Implemented During the Last Ten Years
- Survey Participant Suggestions for Needed State Policy Changes
- Serving LTELs During the Pandemic

SECTION 6: DISTRICT STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES 50

- Alhambra Unified School District
- Chula Vista Elementary School District
- Elk Grove Unified School District
- Garden Grove Unified School District
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Oak Grove Elementary School District
- Sanger Unified School District
- Lessons from the Pandemic

SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS 64

- Four Visionary Goals for California
- Key Focus Areas to Meet Visionary Goals
- State Policy Recommendations
- Recommended District Actions

CONCLUSION 75

APPENDIX 1: COUNTIES WITH ENROLLMENT OF LTELS IN GRADES 6-12, 2019-20 76

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ten years have passed since *Reparable Harm* called attention to California's long-term English learners (LTELs). And while it is gratifying to see that the numbers and percentage of English learners (ELs) who are LTELs have decreased slightly over the past decade—continuing this slow rate of change will leave far too many students behind. This report is a call to action to use the information and policy gains of the last decade to accelerate improvement for these students. In particular, the English Learner Roadmap offers key guidance to school districts for improving outcomes for EL students—including LTELs and those at risk of becoming LTELs.

THE STUDENTS

Of California's over six million public school students, 1.148 million are ELs, and 200,000 of these students are LTELs. They are ELs who have been in US schools for six or more years without reaching levels of English proficiency to be reclassified. Another 130,000 ELs are considered at risk of becoming LTELs.

The proportion of ELs in grades 6-12 who are LTELs ranges from 12 percent to 83 percent among districts with at least 25 LTEL students. The great majority of ELs (81 percent) speak Spanish. Almost all of the rest speak one of nine other languages. Over the last five years during which data have been available, there has been a slight decline in the percentage of ELs in grades 6-12 who are LTELs, from 52 to 46 percent—a positive trend that must be accelerated significantly to improve outcomes for these students. At the same time, there has been a two percent increase in the percentage of ELs in grades 6-12 who are at risk of becoming LTELs.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Research on LTELs reveals that they share certain experiences that may contribute to their prolonged EL status, including:

- Variability in the quality and approach to their education in the elementary grades,
- Lack of adequate English language development (ELD) instruction,
- Teachers who have not had the preparation to address their needs (which in turn results in lack of access to appropriate grade-level content and curricula), and
- An undiagnosed or unaddressed learning disability.

Among research-supported strategies to improve outcomes for these students are infusing high-quality language instruction across the curriculum (integrated ELD), specific ELD instruction (designated ELD), dual language programs, instruction that ensures access to a rigorous curriculum, mentorship, a culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum that contributes to motivation and engagement, and clustering LTEL students in heterogeneous and rigorous grade-level content classes with English proficient students taught using strategies designed to make content accessible. Additional strategies that contribute to ongoing success for younger ELs include dual language immersion and other bilingual programs, ensuring appropriately rigorous content from the beginning (not waiting for students to gain English language proficiency before introducing complex topics), and building students' background knowledge to increase their understanding. It is important to note a tension in the field of research and practice between the potential harm of labeling students as LTELs, for example possibly leading to lower teacher expectations and student self-efficacy beliefs—and the necessity of identifying the issue of long-term EL status in order to remedy a failure of the education system and improve outcomes for these students.

POLICY OVERVIEW

The last ten years have seen several policy changes that support EL students—including long-term English learners and those at risk of becoming LTELs. The local control funding formula provides districts with funding that can be targeted to meeting the needs of these students. Districts now must identify LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs and must inform parents of their children's status and plans for addressing their needs. With the 2016 passage of the California Ed.G.E. (Education for a Global Economy) initiative, school districts can make decisions about the best instructional approaches for their EL students—including those that promote biliteracy and call on students' primary language for instruction. The ELA/ELD framework provides guidance on targeted ELD and how to infuse English language development across the curriculum. And the 2017 California State Board adoption of a comprehensive EL policy, the EL Roadmap, provides districts and schools the guidance and tools to implement these and other policies in ways that best support ELs, LTELs, and those at risk of becoming LTEL students.

LANDSCAPE SURVEY

The report includes results of a survey of EL leaders from 107 California school districts chosen among those with the greatest number or percentage of ELs. The results indicated that many school districts are engaging in research-supported practices for serving their LTELs and preventing EL students from becoming LTELs. These include supports for A-G course completion, mentors, and instructional aides. The survey also revealed that some research-supported strategies are being under-utilized and thus offer potential for improvement. These include primary language assistance, professional learning specific to addressing the needs of ELs and LTELs, activities that build stronger relationships with students, and instructional materials designed specifically to support the learning of LTELs.

Some of the factors posed as potential obstacles were not significant challenges for serving LTELs in these districts. For example, few participants reported a lack of school district administration support as a significant obstacle. On the other hand, the ability to fit additional courses within the master schedule or having staff with the right expertise to serve these students were more significant obstacles.

Respondents found several supports particularly helpful. These included flexible state and federal funding that can be targeted specifically to LTELs; the LCAP engagement and planning process; learning from research, data, and best practices; and the EL Roadmap. Some participants added comments praising the EL Roadmap, the California Ed.G.E. Initiative, and the LCAP process as providing direction for serving LTEL students.

Most respondents shared policy and/or program changes implemented in their districts to address the needs of LTELs and prevent students from becoming LTELs. By far the most frequently mentioned were program and curriculum changes. Creating plans and policies for these students and monitoring their progress was the next most-frequently mentioned change.

Survey participants also offered suggestions for state policy changes. Among survey participants' suggestions for needed state policy changes were strengthening content and requirements for teacher preparation and professional learning specific to LTEL students; incorporating LTEL student outcomes into the California Data Dashboard; increasing targeted resources to meet the needs of LTELs; and making state reclassification criteria uniform and creating alternative pathways to reclassification.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

A subset of in-depth analysis and conversations provided examples of strategies being implemented in selected school districts. These include professional learning and collaboration for special education and general education teachers for serving LTEL students with disabilities, site-based professional learning for integrating ELD across the curriculum, shadowing EL students to deepen understanding of their experience and inform data analysis, greater opportunities for EL and LTEL students to participate fully in career pathway courses, making LTEL students' needs a priority in the district Master Plan, and ongoing individualized progress monitoring of ELs to prevent their becoming LTELs or at risk of becoming LTELs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report offers four visionary goals for California's education system and a set of 16 state policy recommendations and 16 recommended district actions to help meet these goals.

FOUR VISIONARY GOALS FOR CALIFORNIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

By the year 2030, California's public education system will:

1. Reduce by half the percentage of ELs in grades 6-12 who are LTELs,
2. Reduce by half the number of students at risk of becoming LTELs,
3. Ensure that half of reclassified fluent English proficient ELs (RFEPs) earn the state seal of biliteracy, and
4. Ensure ongoing RFEP achievement that is on par with that of fluent English proficient students.

The third and fourth goals are critical, not in reducing the numbers of LTELs or students at risk of becoming LTELs, but in ensuring that when students are reclassified, they have the skills they need to compete on an even playing field with their English fluent peers, and do not fall behind after initially achieving the necessary threshold for reclassification.

The state policy recommendations and recommended district actions are focused around five key areas:

A. **Educator Preparation and Professional Learning:** Stronger preparation and ongoing professional learning to help all educators to understand and work effectively with EL and LTEL students across the curriculum.
B. **Resources and Planning:** Focused resource allocation, goal setting, and planning to address the specific needs of ELs and LTELs.
C. **Curriculum and Instruction:** Support for research-supported education programs that provide ELs and LTELs the supports they need without segregating them into tracks. These programs are based on curriculum and instruction that is accessible, engaging, culturally relevant, rigorous, and addresses the socioemotional well-being and language needs of students.
D. **Data, Assessment, and Accountability:** Data on LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs that are accessible and useful for planning effective instruction, designing professional learning, monitoring student progress, and communicating with students and their families about successes and needs. The data and assessment hold schools, districts, and the state accountable for meeting the needs of EL and LTEL students.
E. **Engagement, Relationships, and Student Focus.** Frequent communication and meaningful engagement centered on listening and learning with students, their families, and communities to create relationships of trust.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

The policy changes that support EL students enacted over the last several years are essential and necessary but not sufficient. They require our investment of time, resources, and ongoing attention to achieve the vision proposed for California's education system in the EL Roadmap.

It is time to be bold and recommit to improving outcomes for ELs and LTELs. The pandemic has shed a glaring light on the gaps in student opportunity that have existed for years—and the influx of state and federal funds creates an opening for us to address these gaps. Now is not the time for complacency but for using these policy gains and new resources to redouble our efforts and accelerate progress so that the seeds of progress sown over the past decade bear fruit in the next.

SECTION
1

INTRODUCTION

More than a decade has passed since the publication of the groundbreaking report, *Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners*.[1] The report shed light on long-term English learners (LTELs), provided information on effective education strategies for these students—as well as ensuring that English learners (ELs) do not become long-Term English learners (LTELs)—and suggested changes in policy and practice to support EL and LTEL success.

CALIFORNIA DEFINITION OF LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS (LTELS) AND STUDENTS AT RISK OF BECOMING LTELS:

Long-term English learner: An English learner in grades 6-12 who has attended United States schools for six or more years, has remained at the same level of English proficiency for two or more years as determined by the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) or has regressed to a lower level of English language proficiency, and for students in grades 6-9 inclusive, scores below basic or far below basic on the English language arts standards-based achievement test.

EL at risk of becoming a long-term English learner: An English learner in grades 3-12 who has attended United States schools for four or five years, scores at the intermediate level or below on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), and for students in grades 3-9, scores below basic or far below basic on the English language arts standards-based achievement test.[2]

Although the federal government does not define LTELs, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that school districts (Local Education Agencies or LEAs) that receive Title III funds report on EL students who "have not yet attained English language proficiency within five years of initial classification as an EL and first enrollment in the Local Education Agency."[3]

While there have been gains, too little has changed in the intervening years since *Reparable Harm* was published and the potential of the changes recommended in the report to prevent students from becoming long-term English learners has not yet been realized. In fact, the chances that English learners will not reach the achievement threshold for reclassification after six years remain almost unchanged. It is urgent that we reassess and apply the policy and practice tools currently available—and continue to develop and promote others—to significantly reduce the number of English learners who become LTELs and improve outcomes for those who do.

These students have needs that are different from other ELs who tend to be younger or newer to US schools, and it is imperative that we find the will and the means to meet these needs. California's role as a leader depends on the success of all our students. We cannot lead—economically, intellectually, and morally—if we leave behind the 1.148 million English learners in our schools, including the over 200,000 of these students who are long-term English learners and the approximately 130,000 who are at risk of becoming LTELs.

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The information in this report is divided into seven sections, each contributing to understanding how to advance the goal of promoting an education system that results in fewer students becoming LTELs and better outcomes for those who do.

SECTION I, the Introduction, defines the focus and the goal of the report.

SECTION II provides background and outcome information, including the home languages, geographic locations, and grade level distribution of LTELs. That we have seen only a minimal decrease in the percentage of ELs who become LTELs in the last five years, along with the information on outcomes for secondary EL students—many of whom are LTELs—highlights the urgency of dedicating attention and resources to improving outcomes for these students.

SECTION III summarizes research on LTELs, including the importance of understanding the assets they bring to their learning, their education needs, and strategies to meet these needs. The section is a reminder that there are existing instructional and organizational tools that support immediate action to improve the education that schools provide these students.

SECTION IV reviews policies instituted over the last ten years, which were designed to promote greater success of ELs, students at risk of becoming LTELs, and LTELs. This section provides a summary of available policy tools and emphasizes the urgent need for additional improvements.

SECTION V reports the results of a new survey of 107 California school districts that have high proportions of ELs. Survey responses provide a foundation for key recommendations about how to improve the education system for serving ELs, students at risk of becoming LTELs, and LTELs.

SECTION VI includes descriptions of successful strategies for serving LTEL students and those at risk of being LTELs based on in-depth interviews in a small selection of school districts. The descriptions offer examples of steps that districts can take to ensure that ELs achieve the proficiency necessary for reclassification and improve outcomes for LTEL students.

SECTION VII offers a set of state policy recommendations based on the information provided in the report. The recommendations reinforce the urgency as well as the importance of the current moment to act to meet the needs of these students. It also provides examples of actions that school districts can take now to address the needs of LTEL students and those at risk of being LTELs. Districts can also use the list of actions to consider what they are doing now to serve these students and how they might improve current programs.

COVID-19 AND THE REPORT

The initial planning of this report occurred in the early winter of 2019-20—before the beginning of the pandemic's tragic health and economic consequences and its inequitable impact on low-income communities of color. While everyone who is touched by the education faces a new reality and unprecedented learning and teaching challenges, there has been a disproportionate impact on students who have been historically underserved by the education system. COVID-19 has posed additional challenges for English learners and their families, especially considering that 86 percent of ELs are socioeconomically disadvantaged, as are 89 percent of long-term English learners.[4] These demographic factors, coupled with the fact that ELs have the educational challenge of learning a new language while concurrently learning curricular content, place them among those most affected by the pandemic.

As important as COVID-caused learning inequities are today—and will continue to be for the coming years—this report's focus is on how schools, districts, and the state can improve on the limited progress of the past ten years to reverse these EL and LTEL student trends for the future.

SECTION
2

THE STUDENTS

California's English learners (ELs) reflect the rich mix of languages and cultures that helps define the state and contributes to its prosperity. The issue in our schools is not the presence of these students, but rather that our education system far too often has not provided what these students need to thrive in school and beyond. Symptomatic of this failure of our education system are students who remain ELs after years in California schools.

ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

According to the California Department of Education, in the 2019–20 school year, there were approximately 1.148 million ELs in California public schools, constituting 19 percent of the total enrollment. The majority of ELs (61 percent) were enrolled in grades K-5, and the rest (39 percent) were in grades 6-12.

In addition, more than two in five (42 percent) of California students speak a language other than English at home (this includes both ELs and Fluent English Proficient—FEP students). The languages spoken at home by California's ELs are many, and although 80 percent speak Spanish, the most prominent home languages can vary in each school and district. Some schools and/or districts have concentrations of students from a single language background, while others have students who speak a wide range of home languages. Table 1 summarizes the ten most common languages spoken by ELs, representing over 93 percent of all ELs.[5]

TABLE 1 | TOP TEN LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY ELS IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS, 2019-20

Spanish	81.4%
Vietnamese	2.2%
Mandarin (Putonghua)	1.9%
Arabic	1.5%
Cantonese	1.4%
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	1.2%
Russian	1.2%
Korean	0.8%
Punjabi	0.8%
Farsi (Persian)	0.8%

All these students bring their cultural and linguistic assets to our public education system. Nonetheless, in addition to understanding English learners' assets of language, culture, and experience—many have challenges that can impact their educational experience. For example, 86 percent of ELs are socioeconomically disadvantaged (compared to 61 percent of all students), and 17 percent of ELs are students with disabilities (compared to 12 percent of all students).[6]

LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By definition, all LTELs are in grades 6-12, so to understand LTEL trends and characteristics, we need to focus on data from these grades. Among California's 3.4 million 6th-12th grade students (See Table 2):

- Thirteen percent (442,000) are ELs;
- Forty-six percent (204,042) of these ELs are LTELs; and
- The proportion of LTELs increases with each grade level.

TABLE 2 | LTEL BY GRADE LEVEL, 2019-20

Grade	Number of ELs	% of Students who are ELs	Number of LTELs	% of ELs who are LTELs
6	86,777	19%	33,444	39%
7	74,547	16%	31,402	42%
8	68,600	14%	29,545	43%
9	65,417	13%	27,876	43%
10	56,516	11%	31,038	55%
11	46,665	10%	21,574	46%
12	49,012	10%	29,163	60%

Although LTEL students speak a variety of home languages, like California's ELs overall, most speak Spanish as their first language. A significant proportion of these students—89 percent—are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 36 percent are dually identified. That is, they are identified as English learners and as students with disabilities.

Distribution of LTELs Across School Districts and Counties

LTELs are enrolled in schools across California, although like English learners overall, they are concentrated in some regions more than others. Among the state's over 1,000 school districts and 58 counties:

- LTELs attend schools in 800 school districts;
- Over 500 of these districts enroll 25 or more LTELs;
- Over half of California's LTELs are concentrated in 52 districts; and
- In the 500 districts that enroll 25 or more LTELs, the proportion of ELs in grades 6-12 who are LTELs ranges from 12 percent to 83 percent—these different levels of concentration present different kinds of challenges.

While LTELs attend school in all but one California county, over 90 percent attend schools in twenty counties, and over 70 percent in just ten counties.

LTEL Trends Over the Past Five Years

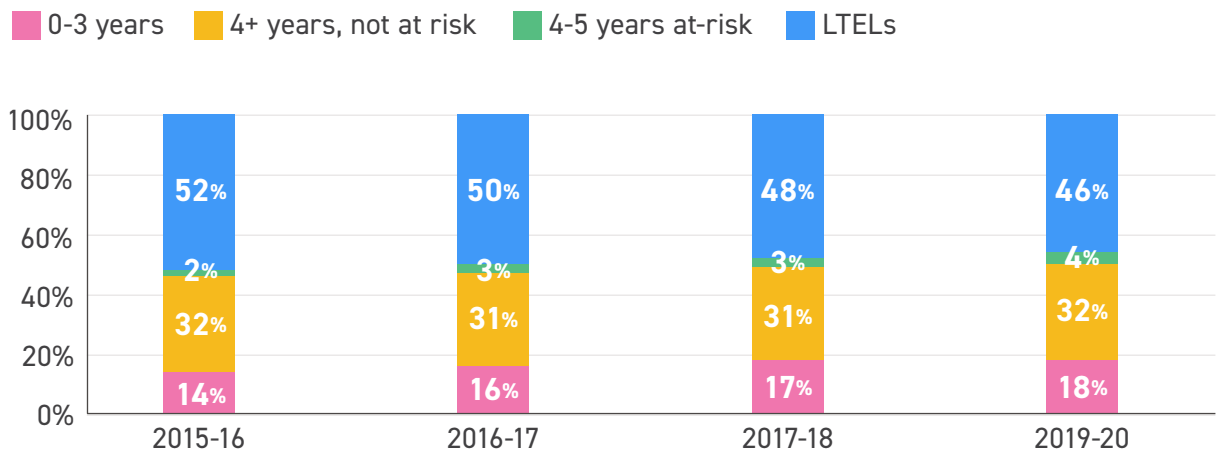
Over the five years in which data on LTELs have been publicly available, there has been a slight decrease in the number and percent of ELs who become LTELs. During the 2015-16 school year, California enrolled 238,572 LTELs, compared to 204,042 during the 2019-20 school year—a decrease of 34,530 students. This represents a decline in the proportion of ELs in grades 6-12 who are LTELs—from 52 percent to 46 percent (See Figure 1).

While it is still quite soon after the 2016 passage of Proposition 58, which ended the program limitations imposed by Proposition 227, this slight downward trend in LTEL numbers may be in part due to the post-227 ability of school districts to make local decisions about the best programs for their EL students, including multilingual approaches. Other district actions that could be supporting this decline in LTELs include:

- More focused attention on these students,
- Ongoing implementation of the ELA/ELD framework, and
- More and better instruction in integrated and designated ELD.

Although our survey participants employed all these strategies, we currently do not have extensive data to identify the reasons for this change. However, no matter what is contributing to the current trend, it must be accelerated to ensure that far fewer ELs become LTELs.

FIGURE 1 | DISTRIBUTION OF ELS IN GRADES 6-12 BY NUMBER OF YEARS AS ENGLISH LEARNERS, 2015-16 TO 2019-20



STUDENTS AT-RISK OF BECOMING LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS

English learners considered to be at risk for becoming LTELs are those in grades 3-12 who have attended United States schools for four or five years, score at the intermediate level or below on the ELPAC, and for students in grades 3-9, score below basic or far below basic on the English language arts standards-based achievement test. While the percentage of LTELs in grades 6-12 decreased by six percentage points between 2015-2018, this improvement was offset slightly by a two percent increase in students at risk of

becoming LTELs. These data highlight the urgent need for change at the state and district level to support the over 200,000 LTEL students and the over 130,000 who are considered at risk of becoming LTELs.

Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, there was a downward trend in the number of 5th grade students who were at risk of becoming LTELs. Across those years, the share of 5th grade ELs who were considered at risk for becoming LTELs decreased from 45 percent to 39 percent (from 51,220 to 38,584 students). This reduction is a reminder of the importance of monitoring to inform interventions as early as possible to support English learners and prevent them from becoming LTELs. A decrease in students entering the pipeline of LTELs is a sign that things are improving. However, we need to accelerate this positive trend to ensure that fewer of the over one million EL students currently in our schools do not become LTELs in the coming years.

OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS IN GRADES 6-12

Unfortunately, specific data on LTEL achievement is not provided to the public. In the absence of more precise data, given that half of all ELs in grades 9-12 are LTELs, information on the achievement of ELs in these grades can provide a window into possible educational outcomes for long-term English learners. Below, we compare results on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) for students in all language groups for grades 6, 7, 8, and 11 in 2014-15 and 2018-19. Due to the pandemic, there is no accurate and complete CAASPP data for 2019-20, so we have used the most recently available five-year span.

CASSPP Outcomes by Language Classification

By definition, ELs would be expected to score below English fluent students in English language arts, and this is the case. Only 8 percent of 11th grade ELs met or exceeded English language arts (ELA) standards, compared to 62 percent of non-EL students. The achievement gap for ELs is also wide in math. For example, only 5 percent of 11th grade ELs met or exceeded math standards, compared to 36 percent of their English-proficient peers. Although the achievement of students of all language classifications (English only, English learner, initially fluent English proficient, and reclassified English proficient) improved between 2014-15 and 2018-19, the gap between ELs and their non-EL peers remained large and, in fact, increased slightly. This low level of achievement for ELs in these grades is particularly concerning, as it is likely to be even lower for the nearly half (46 percent) of 11th grade ELs who are LTELs and the additional six percent who are at risk of becoming LTELs.

Regarding reclassified fluent English proficient students (RFEPs)—between 2014-15 and 2018-19, their achievement in grades 6, 7, 8, and 11 improved at a slightly faster pace than that of English-only students (except in 11th grade math). In addition, at the 6th grade level, RFEPs scored on par with or slightly higher than English-only students in both English language arts and math. However, this slight achievement advantage for 6th grade RFEPS over English-only students in both ELA and math tapers off in the 7th, 8th, and 11th grades. The drop in 7th, 8th, and 11th grades points to the need to focus not only on reclassification but on overall student achievement for ELs and the importance of monitoring and providing support as needed for RFEPs' continued success.

While all improvement is good news, these CASSPP data show us that students who are English proficient (either English only, reclassified fluent English proficient, or initially English proficient) are improving more than English learners. This indicates that schools need to pay more attention to improving EL outcomes and employ more effective strategies for addressing their needs.

TABLE 3 | PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 7, 8 AND 11 THAT MET OR EXCEEDED ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS BY LANGUAGE STATUS, 2014-15 TO 2018-19*

6th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	48%	60%	+12%
English Only	49%	55%	+6%
EL	8%	10%	+2%
IFEP	66%	78%	+12%

7th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	47%	58%	+11%
English Only	51%	57%	+6%
EL	5%	9%	+4%
IFEP	67%	78%	+11%

8th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	47%	53%	+6%
English Only	52%	55%	+3%
EL	5%	6%	+1%
IFEP	67%	76%	+9%

11th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	57%	59%	+2%
English Only	61%	62%	+1%
EL	8%	8%	+0%
IFEP	71%	77%	+6%

TABLE 4 | PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 7, 8 AND 11 THAT MET OR EXCEEDED MATH STANDARDS BY LANGUAGE STATUS, 2014-15 TO 2018-19*

6th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	35%	44%	9%
English Only	39%	43%	4%
EL	6%	8%	2%
IFEP	57%	68%	11%

7th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	35%	40%	5%
English Only	39%	43%	4%
EL	5%	7%	2%
IFEP	57%	66%	9%

8th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	33%	37%	4%
English Only	38%	41%	3%
EL	6%	6%	0%
IFEP	54%	63%	9%

11th Grade	2014-15	2018-19	Change
RFEP	27%	30%	3%
English Only	33%	36%	3%
EL	6%	5%	-1%
IFEP	44%	54%	10%

*RFEP percentages that are higher than those of English-only students are shaded in green and those that are lower in yellow.

A Significant Data Problem

The California accountability system combines the data for current EL students in any given year with the performance of students who have been reclassified in the previous four years. As a 2018 Californians Together and Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Center for Equity for English Learners report illustrated, this aggregation is a barrier to truly understanding the progress of both these groups and masks the education needs of EL students, particularly LTELs.[7] The 2014-15 to 2018-19 CAASSP outcomes illustrate the importance of disaggregating data for these students. For example, in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 11th grade math, there is a difference of about 30 percentage points between ELs and RFEPs who score proficient or advanced—with RFEPs bringing up the average significantly. In English language arts, the gap is even wider—40 or more percentage points. The size of this gap illustrates how combining EL and RFEP test score data clouds our understanding of English learner students' education needs. It also highlights the importance of further disaggregating EL data, reporting LTEL achievement data separately so that we have a clear picture of how these students are faring in California schools.

Graduation Rates and A-G Completion

English learners graduate at a much lower rate than their non-EL peers. The 2019-20 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for English learners was 69 percent, compared to 87 percent for non-EL students. And among students who do graduate, English learners graduate with less rigorous preparation than their non-EL peers. Only 25 percent of EL graduates met UC/CSU entrance requirements, compared to 54 percent of non-ELs. These outcomes have not changed significantly from those of 2016-17, when the EL graduation rate was only 67 percent, and of these graduates, only 24 percent met UC/CSU entrance requirements.

Although we do not have separate data for LTELs, 60 percent of ELs in grade 12 are LTELs, and an additional seven percent are at risk of becoming LTELs. And given that their challenge is the lack of academic English necessary for advanced coursework, we can infer that even fewer of these students graduate with post-secondary preparation. These outcomes indicate the need to offer ELs and LTELs access to more rigorous courses and the supports they need to succeed in them. It also emphasizes the importance of gathering more precise data on the progress of LTEL students to inform how best to help improve their outcomes.

Continuation High Schools

Out of the 447,534 English learners in grades 6-12, only about two percent attend continuation high schools. While this is a small proportion, it is important to note that English learners, and by extension, likely LTELs, are overrepresented in these settings. For example, 19 percent of students in continuation high schools are ELs, compared to 13 percent in grades 6-12 overall. Conversely, data indicate that ELs are under-represented in alternative high schools. They account for just 10 percent of student enrollment and make up only one percent of the EL student population in grades 6-12.

SUMMARY

In summary, achievement data available for California students offer the following overall insights:

- EL achievement lags significantly behind all other students across multiple indicators. Only five percent of ELs in grades 6-12 met or exceeded math standards in 2019, and one in four graduated from high school having met A-G requirements.
- While there has been some improvement for ELs and LTELs, there has been greater improvement for other groups, so the gap is widening.
- At 6th grade, reclassified students perform better than their English-only peers, but this achievement advantage tapers off in grades 7 through 12. This speaks to the need to monitor RFEP students in grades 6-12 and provide supports as necessary to ensure their ongoing achievement.
- Of additional concern is the data we do not have. The California Department of Education does not disaggregate data for LTELs or students at risk of becoming LTELs. We do not have outcome data for these students to see their achievement at a given point, track their progress over time, or, most importantly, understand what to do to improve their outcomes.
- Students who speak a language other than English at home and are fluent in English (IFEPs) outperform students at all grades and across all subjects.

SECTION
3

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Reparable Harm was one of the first works of research and policy to identify long-term English learners (LTELs) and provide recommendations for how schools, school districts, and the state could support their success.[8] The report was influential in encouraging California to establish policies requiring the identification of LTELs and students at risk of being LTELs. It also brought attention to the need to provide EL students with high-quality instruction that ensures that they do not become LTELs and provide those who do with the educational support they need.

Research on LTEL students, published both before and after Reparable Harm, has focused on three principal areas. These include:

1) factors contributing to prolonged EL status,

2) characteristics of LTELs, and

3) ways to promote LTEL success.

This section presents an abbreviated summary of some of the findings in these areas of research.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PROLONGED EL STATUS

Researchers point to several factors that contribute to English learners becoming LTELs. Most of these factors involve EL students' lack of access to appropriate and adequate educational programs and instruction that supports their academic success. These factors include:[9]

- Variability in quality and approach of programs and services in the elementary grades;
- Lack of rigor, consistency, and adequacy of English language development instruction both through designated and integrated English language development so that students do not develop the academic literacy skills they need to access grade-level content;
- Lack of access to appropriate grade-level content and curricula;
- Student absenteeism, which leads to gaps in knowledge;
- Changing schools, at times across country borders, that results in changing programs, curricular focus, and instructional strategies;
- Failure to identify or belated diagnosis of a learning disability and, once identified, failure to provide the English language development and special education services students need; and
- Instruction from teachers who have not had the preparation or professional development for providing EL students with appropriate language and content instruction.

DEFINITIONS OF INTEGRATED AND DESIGNATED ELD

Integrated ELD is provided to ELs throughout the school day and across all subjects by all teachers. The CA ELD Standards are used in tandem with the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards to ensure students strengthen their abilities to use English as they simultaneously learn content through English.

Designated ELD is provided by skilled teachers during a protected time during the regular school day. Teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build into and from content instruction to develop the critical language ELs need for content learning in English.

Definitions accessed from: https://www.scoe.org/files/framework-fig1.7.pdf

Although not a specific area of research, another factor that likely impedes ELs from making adequate progress and becoming LTELs or being at risk of becoming LTELs is a lack of attention and intentional support. We heard comments identifying this as an issue from several of the participants in our landscape survey. Some commented that one of the best tools for supporting LTELs was targeting resources and strategies specifically for these students in their LCAPs. Conversely, others said that a major obstacle to the progress of EL and LTEL students was a lack of educator focus on and responsibility for their learning. This idea is supported by a 2018 Californians Together and Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Center for Equity for English Learners review of four-year LCAPs from 24 school districts which revealed "a lack of district systemic approaches to articulating local policies and practices based on research for improving English learner achievement."[10]

UNDERSTANDING LTELS

While LTELs, like all student groups, are heterogeneous, researchers have sought to identify some general characteristics of these students that might help educators better understand them and better meet their needs. Those who research this topic have found that LTELs tend to:

- Be proficient in English listening and speaking skills but unable to bridge their oral proficiency to academic reading and/or writing skills;
- Often be unaware that they are still ELs;
- Have limited literacy in their home language;
- Earn poor grades and may have been required to repeat grade levels because of difficulties with academic reading and/or writing;
- Experience lower motivation and expectations for their own success, which may, in turn, lead to low teacher expectations;
- Observe classroom and school rules, do not get into disciplinary trouble, and as a result, often have their academic challenges go unnoticed; and
- Drop out of high school at higher rates and therefore graduate at lower rates.[11]

While the above characteristics may hold true for many of these students, as noted earlier, LTEL students are not a homogeneous group. For example, in small interview studies of LTELs, rather than low expectations for their academic success, the interviewed students believed they were doing much better than their low grades and limited progress indicated. While this research involved a small number of students, it points out the diversity of attitudes and beliefs among LTELs about their progress and highlights the need to maintain their motivation and high expectations along with a realistic understanding of their current progress and what is needed for them to improve.[12]

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE LTEL SUCCESS

An essential concept in the research on how to successfully address the needs of EL and LTEL students is that asset-based strategies and approaches are essential to avoid and overcome common and counterproductive student deficit models of thinking and acting. The importance of this principle is highlighted in the current California English learner policy, the EL Roadmap, which lays out the vision and expectation of asset-oriented approaches. A deficit perspective often results in lower expectations and reduced rigor. In addition, a deficit view of multilingual learners is often interpreted as a deficit of English. This results in all-English instructional methods despite research that shows that calling on students' assets of language, culture, and personal experience in their education leads to better outcomes and those instructional strategies that include EL students' primary languages can be highly effective.

An asset-based approach is based on a fundamental belief in students' capacity to achieve school and life success. This view supports a culture that values and respects the experience and knowledge of English learners and young dual language learners and how they

enhance the school environment and enrich the experiences of their peers. It views multilingual learners' native language knowledge as an asset and a tool for learning. Schools and school districts with an asset-based view of multilingual learners promote approaches to instruction, administration, organization, and relationships that foster the success of these students.[13]

Determining students' assets and strengths as well their educational needs is an essential step to improving their educational outcomes. Strategies for building this understanding include:

- Analyzing state EL proficiency exam data to look for language domains and levels that seem especially challenging for students;
- Reviewing a variety of content area measures such as formative assessments, interviews with content area teachers, and grades to see where students are struggling and to what extent and how this might be tied to literacy skills;
- Consulting student records to find out the type of programs in which they have participated and, for some students, for how long and if they have had educational experiences in their home country;
- Assessing students' primary language (L1) literacy skills for those who are L1 literate. These primary language capabilities can be an effective and essential learning tool;
- Talking with students to determine where they feel they need support and how to build confidence in their ability to achieve school success;[14, 15] and
- Building student self-esteem along with their academic and language development. Students often don't recognize the need for this intentional instruction and consider themselves fluent in English. Educators can reaffirm their fluency while helping them understand the need to build additional and different skills.

Once educators understand their students—including the assets they bring and their education needs—they can better understand how to provide effective instruction. Research-supported instructional strategies and interventions that can be effective with addressing the needs of LTEL students include providing:

- More professional development focused on addressing the specific needs of LTEL students for teachers and other adults who work with these students such as guidance counselors;
- Teacher professional development that is regular and ongoing, including time to collaborate with other educators who work with LTEL students;
- Separate and rigorous English language development courses specializing in academic language for LTELs while guarding against relegating them to an "LTEL track";
- Programs which value and celebrate LTEL's home languages and literacy practices, including biliteracy programs in students' native language and English;[16]
- Instruction that activates prior knowledge, explicitly teaches vocabulary, explores genre-based writing as a teaching and learning tool, teaches language within content, and teaches grade-level content;[17]
- School-work partnerships with internships and other job-oriented options that engage students in real-world experiences and make connections to the community that can motivate them toward the goal of graduation. These partnerships can also lead to mentorships and tutoring;[18]
- Engagement in school extracurricular experiences for authentic language use and building identity with schools and peers;
- Culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum and practice that is essential to motivating and engaging students;[19] and
- Clustering LTEL students in heterogeneous and rigorous grade-level content classes (including honors and A-G) along with English-proficient students and taught using strategies specifically designed for teaching rigorous content to EL students: specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies.[20]

There are additional ways in which schools and school systems can promote LTEL success that go beyond instruction, including:[21]

- Listening to, understanding, and respecting who students are and valuing what they bring to their learning;[22]
- Implementing family literacy programs that bridge the gap between home and school and support students' learning along with their parents and guardians. These efforts also help educators understand who their students are and what assets they bring to their education experience;
- Including students in setting their own goals for learning as a means of improving their engagement and self-efficacy;
- Using portfolio and other alternate assessments to gather accurate and complete information for charting students' linguistic and academic progress;
- Providing project-based learning that engages students in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question and demonstrating their knowledge by creating a product or presentation;[23]
- Offering engaging and effective extended-time learning opportunities to provide the extra time that LTEL students need for learning a new language while learning curricular content;
- Providing all teachers—including special education teachers—with extra time to determine the most effective and appropriate interventions for LTEL students and to work together to plan the best overall programs to meet students' needs; and
- Ensuring that LTELs have access to ongoing relationships with appropriately trained and supported mentors.[24]

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE EL SUCCESS AND PREVENT THEIR BECOMING LTELS OR AT RISK OF BEING LTELS

All the strategies discussed above are equally important for promoting the success of English learners who are not LTELs and ensuring that they gain the academic and language proficiency to be reclassified as English proficient, preparing them to learn on an even playing field with students who are fluent in English. Additional strategies for younger students contributing to their ongoing success include multilingual programs for dual language learners such as the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) model. This program begins in preschool, providing EL students with an enriched dual language learning experience from their earliest schooling that results in academic and language proficiency and prevents them from becoming LTELs.[25]

Dual language immersion and other bilingual programs also facilitate EL students' access to the full curriculum from their first school experiences, and promote their progress toward proficiency, reclassification, and achievement throughout their school careers and beyond. Additional strategies include ensuring appropriately rigorous content from the beginning (not waiting for students to gain English language proficiency before introducing complex topics or watering down content for ELs) and building students' background knowledge to increase their understanding.[26]

Teaching language across the curriculum and providing students coordinated instructional support (scaffolding) to understand and be able to use that language is a strategy that is critical to incorporate into the instruction of all English learners in every subject and course.[27] This is an essential premise of the ELA/ELD Framework and the foundation of integrated ELD. The California English Learner Roadmap provides guidance for how to create local systems and policies that support effective instruction for English learners.[28]

While it is crucial to reclassify students when they have reached the appropriate level of proficiency, it is equally essential to ensure that students have the necessary skills to achieve on par or at higher levels than their English-only peers before being reclassified. Assuming that EL students are receiving services designed to help them learn English and academic content—such as those described above—it is important not to reclassify them before they are ready. If students are not progressing toward reclassification, it is essential to improve the support they receive to meet reclassification criteria rather than lowering the standards to meet these criteria. Premature reclassification can lead to students who do well at first but fall off in their achievement as they move up the grade span because they do not have the skills necessary to succeed without the extra support that EL status entails.

POTENTIAL UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF THE LTEL LABEL

Some education scholars and others argue that labeling students as LTELs can contribute to their poor academic achievement by relegating them to remedial classes and foreclosing their access to the rigor and content necessary for school success and post-secondary options.[29] As presented above, our position is that students should by no means be relegated to less rigorous instruction based on their language classification.

There is a significant and growing body of research on the potential problems associated with the LTEL label.[30, 31] These researchers have pointed out that LTEL categorization focuses on what students lack and that this deficit model is associated with negative expectations among educators and students alike. There is a substantial body of research on the impact of negative teacher expectations on student outcomes, and the power—both positive and negative—of students' own self-concept as learners.[32]

The goal of education policy is to identify a lack in the system and propose a remedy to make the education system work better for students. Unfortunately, this can have unintended consequences when the students themselves are identified as lacking. This confounding of a deficit in the system with student deficiencies is a serious concern and one for policymakers to bear in mind as they seek solutions to the complex issues of EL and LTEL education—and for educators and educational systems to avoid as they implement these policies.

Nonetheless, identifying the issue—in this case, of protracted EL status—is necessary in designing and implementing policy to improve outcomes for LTEL students. Addressing the potential negative consequences of the LTEL label on student and teacher expectations can and must be a part of school and school district approaches to meeting the needs of their LTEL students. It is important to note that research shows that the vast majority of ELs can reach English proficiency in 4-7 years with sufficient support. When this does not occur, it is not because the students are deficient, but because the system is failing to provide access to an education that leads to English proficiency in a timely manner.

The brief review of recommended administrative and instructional strategies for LTEL students above, highlights the importance of an asset-based approach in supporting the success of these students and avoiding any potential negative effects of the LTEL label. That is, an approach that focuses on what students know, who they are, and what they bring to the classroom.

Current California policy, the EL Roadmap, incorporates the ideas summarized in this report's brief research section. The Roadmap's goals for EL education in California are for:

- Schools that view EL students' language and culture as assets, understand that ELs have differing needs, establish a climate of acceptance of diverse languages and culture, and build strong family-school relationships;

- Programs that provide meaningful access to a full standards-based curriculum, foster high levels of English proficiency, integrate language development, literacy, and content, and offer opportunities for proficiency in English and a student's native language;
- Systems with leaders from pre-K-12 who are knowledgeable of the strengths and needs of ELs, invest in and use valid assessments and data to inform instruction and continuous improvement, and provide resources to ensure strong programs and increase teacher and staff capacity; and
- Programs for English learners that include a coherent, articulated set of practices and pathways, extend from early childhood to reclassification, graduation, and higher education, and foster readiness for college—and career—as well as participation in a diverse, multilingual world.

California schools can use this policy guidance to take the steps necessary to pursue the vision laid out in the EL Roadmap—ensuring their EL students gain the language and academic proficiency they need for reclassification and continued success.

SECTION
4

POLICY OVERVIEW

As mentioned above, monitoring the number of LTELs and students at risk of being LTELs is essential to understanding the nature of the education system failure and informing policies designed to ensure that the system meets the needs of EL students and prevents them from becoming LTELs. Much of what needs to happen within our system is difficult to effect through legislation alone when what is required is a different mindset and culture. Nonetheless, thoughtful policy change has the potential to lead to shifts that can help ensure better outcomes for EL and LTEL students. In the following section, we explore some policy gains that have been achieved over the last ten years, and suggest what more needs to be done.

BASIC EDUCATION RIGHTS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

English learners are guaranteed certain education rights by the United States government. Title VI, part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964,[33] prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance, including public schools. Congress passed the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA)[34] to ensure that the legal rights of English learners under Title VI were met. The EEOA requires public schools to take necessary measures to ensure the rights of English learners to meaningful participation in education programs and services.

In 2015 the Department of Justice issued a "Dear Colleague" letter to the field, summarizing and updating the fundamental education rights of English learners under federal law.[35] These rights are based on the laws mentioned above as well as on key Court cases expanding on those rights (two of the most notable being *Lau v. Nichols and Castañeda v. Pickard*). A fundamental bottom line, as established in the landmark U.S. District Court case, *Castañeda v. Pickard*, is that it is the school district's responsibility to ensure that EL students

do not "incur irreparable academic deficits" as a result of inadequate education programs while they are in the process of learning English.[36] The Department of Justice letter identifies the fundamentals of what is necessary to fulfill these English learner rights. In summary, these rights include an obligation to ensure:

- Identification of EL students;
- Instruction that leads to their English proficiency and gives them access to the curriculum in the least-segregated manner possible;
- Teachers who are well-prepared to provide this instruction;
- Access to all extra-curricular opportunities and activities;
- Access to special education identification and related services and assurance that identification is not determined by a lack of English language proficiency;
- Monitoring of student progress;
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of EL instruction and adaptation as needed; and
- Meaningful communication with EL parents.

Each state interprets these federal requirements and implements state policies designed to fulfill them. California has stronger requirements than many states and, particularly in recent years, has passed legislation and implemented policies designed to support the success of English learners. These policies have led to and supported many effective school and school district programs for EL students. However, many of these programs were ended or curtailed during the almost two decades of limitations on instruction imposed by Proposition 227. Nonetheless, despite gains made in recent years, many English learners do not have access to programs, services, and supports that lead to their academic success. Often these are the students who become LTELs.

THE ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IN 2010

Federal protections for ELs based on civil rights and case law have existed since the 1960s and 70s (see above). Yet as recently as 2010, California, the state where approximately 30 percent of all U.S. ELs attended school, had very little in the way of policy designed to ensure the effective education of these students.

The mainstays of state EL education policy in 2010 were: Education Code and regulations stemming from Prop. 227; the state mandate for reclassifying ELs; and the assessment of EL students' English language development through the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Even the English Language Development Standards would come later, they were not approved by the State Board of Education until 2012 and would not be aligned with the English Language Arts standards until 2014.

In 2010, the overarching EL education policy enacted in 1998 by Proposition 227 was in place. Proposition 227 restricted school districts' autonomy to decide how best to serve their community's English learners. Instead, it required a single, non-research-supported all-English instructional approach. Because Proposition 227 severely limited the ability of schools to use students' primary language in instruction, very few schools were able to offer dual language instruction programs of any kind. While approximately 30 percent of ELs participated in some level of bilingual instruction before Proposition 227, only about five percent of EL students had access to these programs after the initiative passed. This decline in bilingual teaching and the associated teaching jobs inevitably led to a sharp decrease in teachers seeking bilingual authorization. This workforce depletion continues today, as far fewer teachers than are needed have the specialized language skills, cultural understanding, and pedagogical expertise gained through specialist-level programs.

Likewise, in 2010, no substantive policies were requiring instructional materials appropriate for helping EL students develop their English language and academic skills. At that time, scripted instructional programs were common. However, these scripted programs were not intended for or effective in providing meaningful and effective instruction for English learners. And for the few students who received some of their academic instruction in Spanish in 2010, there was no primary language assessment that could adequately determine how well students were learning in these programs. A primary-language exam in Spanish, The California Spanish Assessment, was not available until 2014-2015.

After the passage of Proposition 227, Californians Together advocated for changes to mitigate its potential negative impact on EL student progress by intentionally focusing on improving English language development. This began with a statewide effort to adopt ELD Standards, which the State Board of Education finally approved in 2012 after intense advocacy. The funds to develop and procure materials to aid instruction based on these standards came later in Senate Bill 201, signed in 2013.[37]

THE ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE AFTER 2010

After 2010, new policies designed to improve EL education began to emerge. While this section summarizes LTEL-specific policies and other policies separately, it is important to remember that these key policy shifts support one another.

The Impact of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

In 2013 the Local Control Funding Formula represented a major shift in California school financial policy, moving from categorical funds allocated for specific purposes or student subgroups, to a weighted student formula. LCFF is intended to distribute education funds more equitably. It does this by providing additional resources—called supplemental and concentration funds—for higher need students, including English learners, foster youth, and those from low-income families. Under LCFF, school districts receive a base grant for every student and an additional 20 percent for every high-need student. In the past, districts with 55% or more high need students received an additional concentration grant: 50 percent of the base grant for each such student above this threshold. Legislation passed after the COVID-19 pandemic augmented LCFF funds substantially by increasing the concentration formula—from 50 to 65 percent of the base grant for each high need student above 55 percent. Decisions about how to use these funds are now more firmly in the hands of local school districts.[38] Although LCFF does not mandate exactly how school districts spend the supplemental and concentration funds, it requires that these funds be used to support districts' high-need students.

As part of the state accountability system and LCFF, districts must write and submit a Local Control Accountability Plan. Through these plans, districts are to address the needs of the student subgroups that should be targeted for improved and increased services. According to a 2018 Californians Together and LMU Center for Equity for English Learners review of four-year LCAPs from 24 school districts, there is a lack of clear articulation of systemic approaches to address EL achievement, much less on supporting LTELs.[39] We also learned from the landscape survey that when districts did include long-term English learner students in their LCAP plans, the plans were much more useful, and the students' needs were more likely to be addressed.

LTEL-Specific Policies

In 2012, inspired in large part by the Californians Together report *Reparable Harm*, the governor signed AB 2193, which established a definition for long-term English learners and students at risk of becoming long-term English learners. It included "notification, reporting, and intervention requirements" for these

students. These definitions were amended in the 2015-16 legislative session through SB 750.[40] Thanks to this legislation, the California Department of Education is now required to collect statewide data indicating how long individual ELs remain in that status and identify how many of these students become LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs in a school and school district. These data can also be linked to the required CDE data on what type of programs and services these students have experienced. Together these data are designed to paint a picture of EL students' education trajectories—and for those who are not progressing to reclassification—shed light on why not and how to help them achieve that goal.

Meeting the specific needs of LTELs was further called out within the 2014 ELA/ELD Framework, which called for the submission of LTEL-specific instructional materials. This was the first time there was a recognition of the need for targeted and intentional materials to meet the needs of LTELs. Finally, in 2017, AB 81[41] was signed into law, establishing the requirement to inform parents of their child's status as LTEL or a student at risk of becoming an LTEL; and to provide parents with the details of how the school or district would address their needs.

Key Shifts in EL Education

Other shifts to support and strengthen English language development (ELD), course access, and the expansion of multilingualism began to take shape after 2010. This included expanding multilingualism with the 2011 passage of AB 815,[42] which became effective in 2012, recognizing the State Seal of Biliteracy. AB 1142 in 2017 specified that the Seal be placed on the high school diploma, distinguishing high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing one or more languages in addition to English.[43]

Access to language development was supported further in 2012, with the adoption of the California ELD Standards. This paved the way for stronger integration of the ELD and ELA standards with the adoption of the 2014 California ELA/ELD Framework. The framework included specific guidance for language instruction designed to ensure that ELs learned both conversational English and the same level of academic English as their English-fluent peers. A fundamental aspect of this guidance is the importance of the strongly research-supported language development strategy across the entire curriculum—not relegated to a discrete ELD instructional time (or course at the secondary level). And the ELA/ELD Framework was explicit and clear about the importance of providing ELD in and across the full curriculum.

These initial shifts were further supported by two overarching policy initiatives that fundamentally changed the EL education landscape in California:

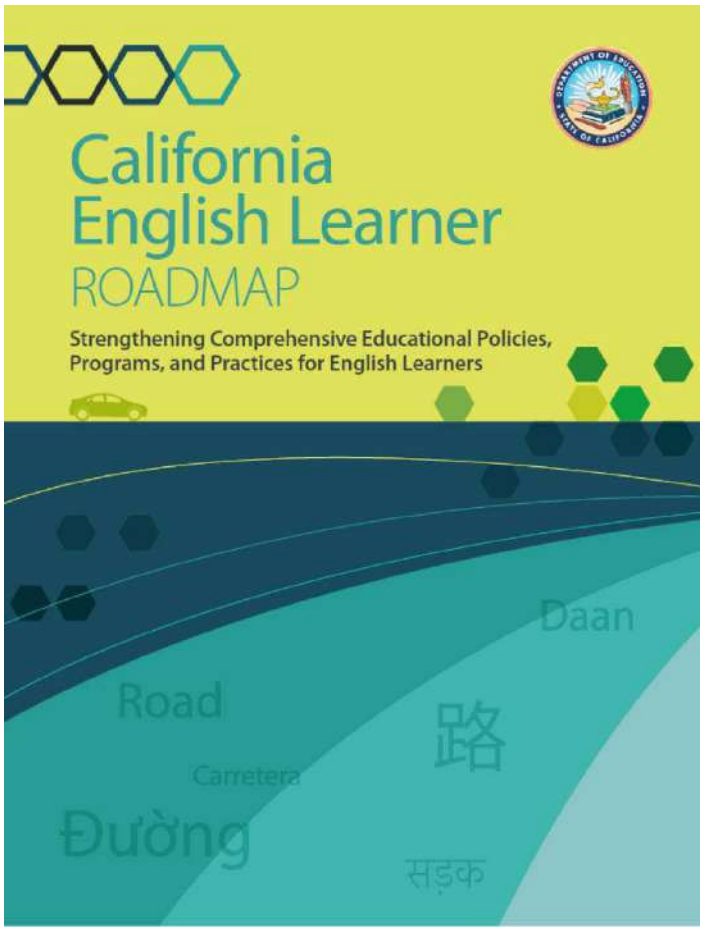
1. The 2016 passage of Proposition 58, otherwise known as the California Education for a Global Economy Initiative (Ed.G.E.), and
2. The 2017 State Board of Education adoption of the English Learner Roadmap policy.

These two events represented a sea change in California EL education policy and practice.

- The California Ed.G.E. Initiative did away with Proposition 227's restrictions on the use of students' primary language for instruction. This ruling provided school districts and schools greater freedom to decide how to best meet the needs of their ELs—including through multilingual programs that have proven to be particularly effective in promoting English language and academic proficiency for ELs. The initiative also added the requirement for integrated and designated ELD to be provided as a minimum within any language acquisition program—and that language development should be happening across all content and curriculum.
- The EL Roadmap articulated State Board of Education policy and provided guidelines supporting district decisions on how best to serve their EL students. The Roadmap includes comprehensive information and guidance on steps necessary to provide ELs with an effective education.[44]

THE EL ROADMAP POLICY: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

The Roadmap provides "guidance to local educational agencies (LEAs) on welcoming, understanding, and educating the diverse population of students who are English learners attending California public schools. The vision of the Roadmap is that "English learners fully and meaningfully access and participate in a twenty-first-century education from early childhood through grade twelve that results in their attaining high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade-level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages." Its mission is for California schools to "affirm, welcome, and respond to a diverse range of English learner (EL) strengths, needs, and identities. California schools prepare graduates with the linguistic, academic, and social skills and competencies they require for college, career, and civic participation in a global, diverse, and multilingual world, thus ensuring a thriving future for California."



Click image above to view EL Roadmap.

Other policy changes made in the last several years to support EL education include:

- **Passage of AB 2785** in 2016, instructing the CDE to develop a guide for teachers with respect to students who are dually identified as ELs and as qualifying for special education services. The guide was completed and published by the CDE in 2019.
- **Adoption of the California Spanish Assessment (CSA)** in 2017, providing a way to measure student's competency in Spanish reading/language arts.
- **Passage of AB 2735** in 2018, requiring that all ELs have access to grade-level and college prep courses in addition to ELD.[45] This was in response to the practice of enrolling secondary ELs, including LTELs, in low-level, less rigorous remedial classes. It also eliminated setting thresholds of English proficiency required for access to the full array of courses offered to English-fluent students.

In addition, there have been key investments to address the need to expand the bilingual teacher pipeline and support implementation of the EL Roadmap, including:

- **Appropriation of $5 million for the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program** (BTPDP) in the 2017-18 California State Budget, funding eight grantees, LEAs, or consortia of LEAs, to address the bilingual teacher shortage by supporting thousands of educators. Unfortunately, an expansion of this program was not included in the 2021-22 California State Budget, letting the eight grants expire on June 30, 2021.
- **Appropriation of $10 million to support EL Roadmap implementation in the 2019-20 California State Budget**, establishing the Educator Workforce Investment Grant (EWIG) Program. In March 2020, Californians Together and the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) were announced as the two EWIG EL Roadmap Implementation grantees. The English Learner Roadmap Implementation for Systemic Excellence! (EL RISE!) of Californians Together has collaborated with Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL), Loyola Marymount University's Center for Equity for English Learners (LMU-CEEL), other agencies such as the National Resource Center for Asian Languages, and 20 county offices of education to support professional learning focused on EL Roadmap implementation for educators and district leaders.
- **Appropriation of $10 million for the Dual Language Immersion Grant Program** in the 2020-21 California State Budget, enabling the CDE to award at least 25 Language Immersion Grants for LEAs to initiate or expand established dual language immersion programs. The grant awards will be up to $380,000 over three years.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE

Two recent state priorities are addressing the teacher shortage and expanding access to early childhood education.

1 Addressing the Teacher Shortage.

The ongoing and long-standing shortage of teachers with specialized skills to work with ELs continues to be a challenge across California. This includes teachers with bilingual certification who are authorized to teach in dual-language programs. As mentioned previously, the twenty years that Proposition 227 was in place resulted in the devastation of the bilingual teacher pool, as bilingual teachers retired or left the field and with universities dropping their Bilingual Certification programs or teachers letting their bilingual certification lapse. And in the absence of bilingual teaching jobs, new teachers did not seek this authorization due to a lack of employment opportunities in bilingual programs.

Californians Together conducted an analysis of the California teacher shortage,[46] as did the California Education Budget Policy Center.[47] These reports provided data to show lawmakers the need for funds to support the professional development of teachers with EL instructional skills. Some current major grant programs for teacher preparation call out the need and provide support for increasing the pool of teachers for EL students. In recent years there has been considerable investment in various teacher preparation programs, including Residency Programs aimed at addressing teacher shortages in high-need areas, including bilingual education. In 2018-19 the California legislature appropriated $75 million to establish the Teacher Residency Grant Program, which provides $20,000 to each resident. Teacher residencies consist of a yearlong classroom internship in a public school during which the intern is not the teacher of record. Often the residency experience and stipend are in exchange for the residents' commitment to teaching in the district for a minimum number of years. These programs hold potential for increasing the pool of well-prepared teachers who can teach ELs and LTELs in the districts where they are most needed. Ensuring that language addressing the critical need for more teachers with the skills to teach EL students is included in all such policy approaches is an ongoing and necessary focus of advocacy.[48]

2 Expansion of Early Childhood Education

Given that 60 percent of children under age six come from homes where English is not the primary language, it is important to ensure that this expansion is seen as an opportunity to support the language needs of these students early on and prevent them from becoming LTELs. The 2021-22 California State Budget laid out a plan to expand Transitional Kindergarten (TK) to all four-year-old children by 2025-26, along with opening additional slots for the California State Preschool Program (CSPP). These investments give districts an unprecedented opportunity to expand programs and services for dual-language learners. This expansion is supported by AB 1363 (Rivas), which was signed by Governor Newsom in October 2021, establishing a definition of dual language learners and a process for their identification.

The important policy changes summarized here reflect a research consensus about what works for ELs. However, we are still in the early stages of the implementation of these policies. The continuing LTEL challenges should not be seen as a failure of these policies but as a call to action to accelerate their implementation and expansion. While these changes are important, it is not the time to abandon our efforts. Far more can and should be done to ensure that these students gain the language and academic proficiency necessary for reclassification and continued success throughout their K-12 careers and beyond. We now have the guidance in the EL Roadmap for how to pursue those goals.

PERTINENT FEDERAL POLICY

There are several essential features of the federal EL education policy. One is the long-standing language in Title III that requires that funds supplement—not supplant—resources for EL students. Critical, as well, is the emphasis on ensuring services and programs for student subgroups and the data collection to show the progress of student subgroups based on these services. These requirements were first included as part of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act in 2001 and carried over into the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2016.[49]

SECTION
5

RESULTS OF LANDSCAPE SURVEY

There are currently over 200,000 LTELs in California schools, as well as over 130,000 who are at risk of becoming LTELs—and school districts are struggling to help them make educational progress. As noted earlier, ten years after *Reparable Harm* brought these students into greater focus for educators and policymakers, too little progress has been made in reducing their numbers. A fundamental goal of this report is to highlight the urgency of improving outcomes for EL students and decreasing the number of those who become LTELs or are at risk of being LTELs. Now—in an era of better tools in the form of the EL Roadmap, the California Ed.G.E. Initiative (Proposition 58), and major investments in early education—is a moment to weave our greater understanding, policy, and resources into an approach that can prevent students from becoming long-term English learners.

As part of this effort, Californians Together surveyed educators in school districts across California who are working with these students to learn about their experiences, successes, and challenges. Although the principal focus of the survey was LTEL students, inevitably, much of what we asked and learned about focused on English learners overall.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was launched in November 2020 and closed in January 2021. Two hundred and twelve small, medium, and large California school districts with the highest number or percentage of LTELs were invited to participate, and 107 school district EL leaders responded—slightly over a 50 percent response rate. California students in these school districts included:

- 37 percent of all students;
- 43 percent of ELs; and
- 46 percent of LTELs.

More than half of the survey participants were district EL coordinators, one-third were superintendents or held other district positions focused on English learners. The rest were individuals in a mix of positions, including a few principals.

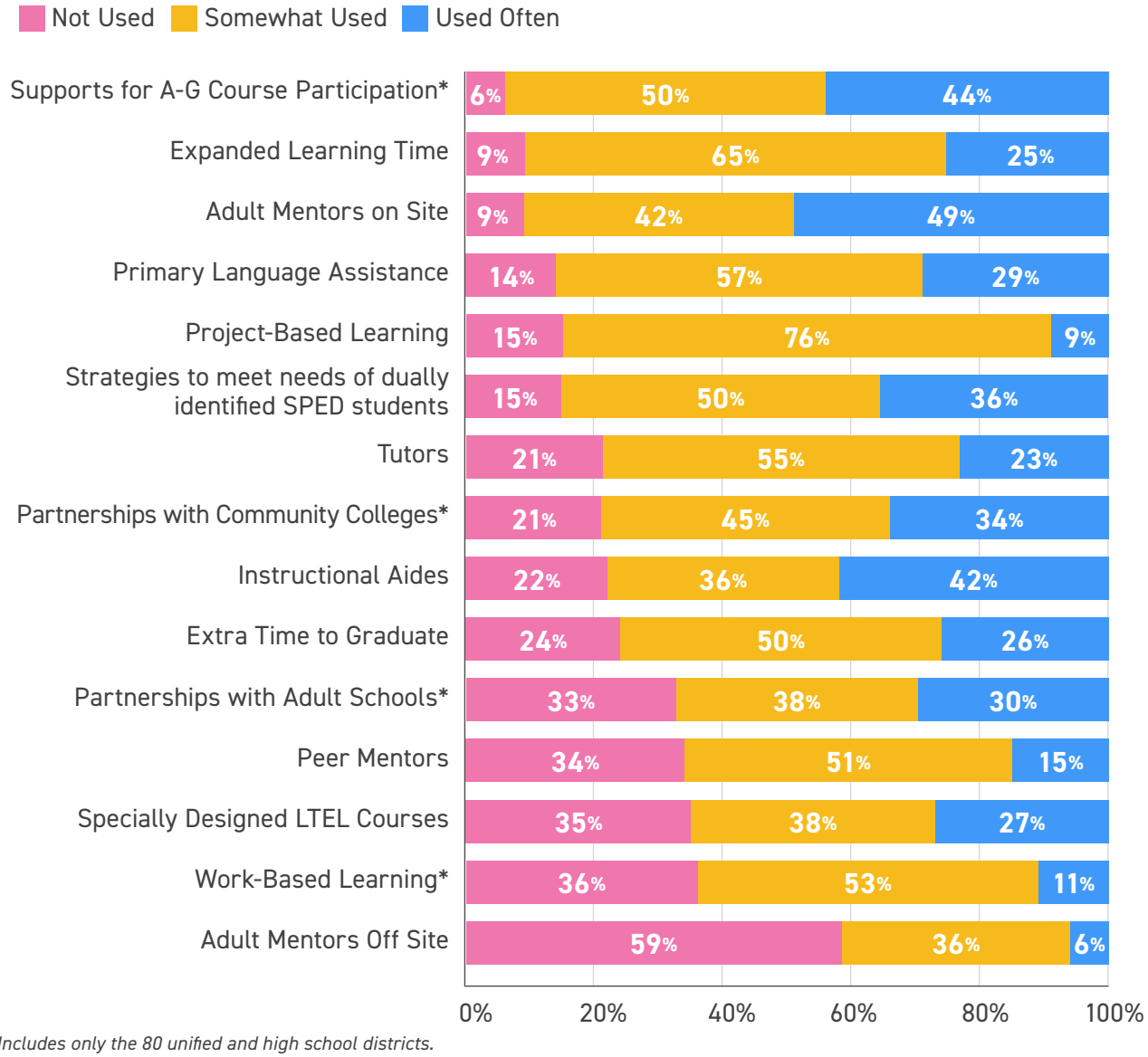
The 16-question survey covered a variety of topics related to EL and LTEL education. Some of the questions were open-ended, for example, asking what changes school districts had made to how they serve LTELs over the years and what additional state and local policy changes they believed would support the success of these students. Other questions were based on research, for example, listing research-backed strategies for supporting EL and LTEL students to see which were most- and least-often employed by school districts. We also asked which policy supports (such as changes to the state approach to funding, accountability, planning, and overall EL state policy) were most helpful to school districts—and asked about obstacles that school districts have encountered. The survey questions were reviewed by professional colleagues and piloted with a small selection of district EL coordinators. After taking the survey, these EL coordinators participated in cognitive interviews to ensure that our questions were clear and would elicit the intended information.

Most of the survey questions were answered by nearly all participants (the exceptions were three open-ended questions). Several of the questions included space for additional comments so surveyors could better understand survey responses; and many participants provided these. As almost all 107 survey participants answered nearly every question, the percentages reported below are based on this total unless otherwise noted. Some of the questions addressed strategies that did not pertain to the 27 participating elementary school districts. Therefore, in the summary of results, we report when responses only include the 80 unified or high school district participants. Following is information about what we learned from the survey.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LTELS

Survey participants were asked to rate several strategies according to how often each was used for addressing the needs of LTELs on a four-point scale with a low of "not used" to a high of "used often." In order of prevalence, the strategies that were most often mentioned as being either "somewhat used" (used sometimes and in some schools) or "used often" (used as a central district strategy across all schools) are listed in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2 | STRATEGIES USED BY DISTRICTS TO ADDRESS LTEL STUDENT NEEDS



**Includes only the 80 unified and high school districts.*

It is of note that among the most-frequently-used strategies, there was wide variation in those reported as being "somewhat used" and "used often." For example, while project-based learning was used as a strategy by 85 percent of school districts, only 9 percent used it often. Similarly, 91 percent cited expanded learning time as a strategy for addressing the needs of LTELs, but only 25 percent reported using it often.

Professional Learning Strategy

A separate question was asked about the use of professional learning as a strategy for addressing the needs of LTEL students. Among these responses:

- 38 percent used professional learning to address the needs of LTELs often;
- 48 percent used professional learning to address the needs of LTELs somewhat; and
- 14 percent did not use professional learning to address the needs of LTELs at all.

Eighty-four survey participants listed the top three topics for this professional development, with the most prevalent being:

- **Instructional strategies to support LTELs (mentioned by 54 participants).** These included tool kits and research-based strategies as well as professional development related to specific programs or curricula. Two common topics were providing LTELs with access to learning across all content areas and approaches to enhancing language learning.
- **Integrated and Designated ELD (mentioned by 37 participants).** This included a few who specifically named oral language development as a focus of professional learning.

A variety of additional topics were each named by a smaller share of survey participants. These included academic discourse and vocabulary building (18 participants), understanding LTELs and their needs (16 participants), monitoring LTEL progress and understanding LTEL data (13 participants), supporting ELs in distance learning (11 participants), reading and writing skills (11 participants), social-emotional topics (10 participants), student engagement (9 participants), ongoing educator collaboration and coaching (7 participants), and the EL Roadmap (4 participants).

Targeted Materials Strategy

Fifty-five percent of survey participants said they used materials targeted specifically for LTELs. However, in the comments section in which districts listed these materials, most were not designed for LTEL students. Among the 54 survey participants who described the materials, only five were curricula that are specifically targeted for LTELs. Most mentioned curricula that are designed either for ELs in general or struggling readers of all profiles. A strong focus of many of these materials was on high-interest content and activities to teach across the language domains. It is of note that, although well over half of the survey participants said that they employed primary language assistance as a strategy for addressing the needs of LTEL students, only one of the participants mentioned materials in students' primary languages. It is also unclear how these materials were being used, as this was not addressed in the survey.

Of the materials described by the 54 participants who offered that information, the most prominent one was English 3D (cited by 21 respondents), a curriculum that addresses language and other learning issues faced by ELs in middle school and beyond: there is a version for grades 6-9 and one for grades 8-12. No other category or materials received more than nine responses. Of these, the most prominent included:

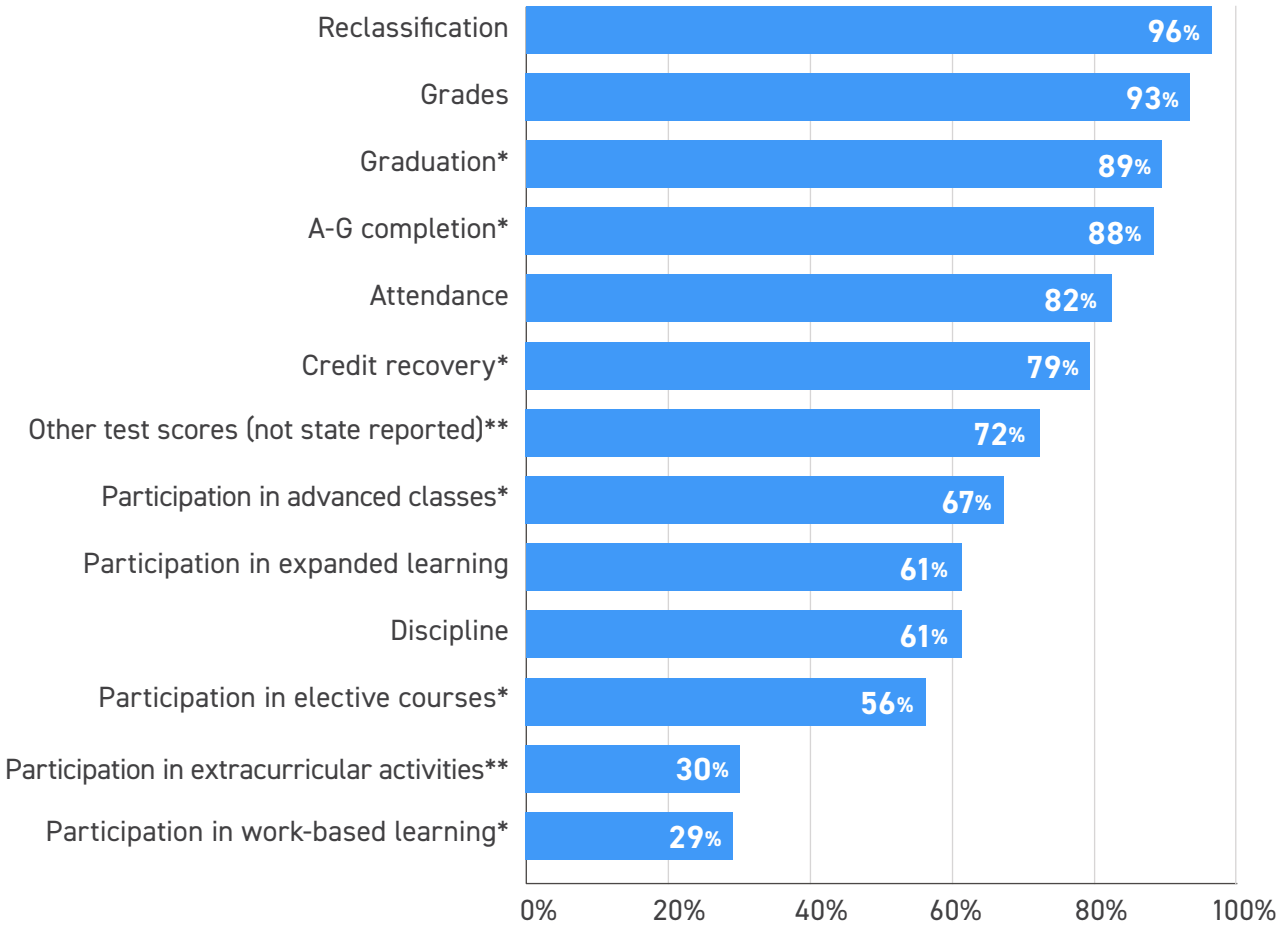
- **Programs designed for struggling readers of many profiles**, including but not exclusive to ELs or LTELs. These included Read 180, Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC), and Rosetta Stone.
- **AVID Excel**, a program developed specifically for LTELs in grades 7 and 8. It is a program (rather than curricular materials) designed to engage students and their families and build students' academic English skills.

- **Programs from National Geographic Learning** designed for English Learners that use a systematic approach to teach upper-grade language skills through high-interest content.
- **Various EL supplements** to district-adopted curricula across the content areas.

Student Monitoring

The final question on district strategies was about what districts monitored to determine student progress or engagement. It is important to note the difference between measuring student progress and measuring engagement. For example, some of the indicators in this list, such as reclassification, are more closely tied to student progress. In contrast, indicators such as attendance or participation in advanced courses are more focused on how students engage within the school. All but four districts said they monitor reclassification for student progress, with grades being the second most frequent. For engagement, attendance was the most monitored indicator, while participation in extracurricular activities and work-based learning were the least monitored (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 | FACTORS MONITORED BY DISTRICTS



** Includes only the 80 unified and high school districts: credit recovery and participation in advanced classes only 78 responses and participation in work-based learning 77.*

*** "Other test scores" and "Participation in extracurricular activities" were answered by 104 and 106 survey participants, respectively.*

Opportunities for Improvement in Several Areas of Strategy Use

While survey results indicated that many school districts are engaging in research-supported practices to serve their LTEL students and prevent EL students from becoming LTELs, the survey revealed that this was far from universal. There was a significant opportunity for greater use of the following strategies that were "used often" by a minority of school districts:

- Providing primary language assistance (29 percent used often);
- Implementing professional learning (38 percent used often);
- Building stronger student relationships with students (while nearly half of all districts cited using adult mentors across all school sites, peer mentors and mentors outside of school were cited as being used often by only 15 percent and 6 percent of districts, respectively);
- Pursuing partnerships with community colleges and adult schools (34 percent employed partnerships with community colleges often and just 30 percent with adult schools);
- Engaging specially designed LTEL courses (27 percent used often);
- Including work-based learning opportunities (11 percent used often); and
- Incorporating targeted instructional materials (while 55 percent cited using targeted materials, in districts with 2,500 or fewer students, only 45 percent did so). Perhaps more importantly, answers indicated the lack of materials designed specifically to support LTEL students' learning.

Finally, survey results indicate that there is much room for growth in implementing specific research-supported instructional strategies that are essential for improving outcomes for EL students and preventing them from becoming LTELs. These include scaffolding—targeting teaching techniques that support EL and LTEL students during content instruction, well-implemented ELD courses, and integrated ELD across the curriculum. While the survey did not address these instructional strategies specifically, it did so in a broader sense by asking about courses and materials designed for LTEL students and supports to ensure that LTEL students can participate in A-G courses. It is our assumption that these strategies are foundational to instruction in such courses.

We would also hope to see more school districts engage in professional learning as a strategy for addressing the needs of LTEL students. Among surveyed districts that did, a common topic of professional development was how to provide LTEL students access to learning across the curriculum. Providing more professional learning as a strategy for decreasing the number of EL students who become LTELs—and meeting the needs of those who do—would increase teachers' ability to implement these strategies. As noted earlier in this report, research tells us that EL students can reach the necessary levels of learning for reclassification in 4-7 years with adequate and appropriate supports. We hope that this report is a renewed call to provide this instruction.

OBSTACLES TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF LTELS

Survey participants were asked to indicate the level of significance of several potential obstacles to serving long-term English learners. The responses are listed below, from the obstacles most to least often indicated as significant or very significant.

Obstacles that 40 percent or more of participants indicated as significant or very significant:

- Unable to fit in additional classes due to master schedule (64%)
- Do not have the personnel with expertise to serve these students (49%)
- Not enough physical space for separate LTEL classes (49%)
- Challenge of serving LTEL students who qualify for special education (45%)
- Lack of adequate funding for additional supports for LTELs (40%)

Obstacles that between 20 and 40 percent of participants indicated as significant or very significant:

- Determining if LTEL's challenges were due to language or special education needs (29%)
- Lack of *school-level* administrative support (22%)
- Lack of transportation to and from extended learning opportunities (22%)

Obstacles that fewer than 20 percent of participants indicated as significant or very significant:

- Lack of information about which students are LTELs (17%)
- Lack of *district-level* administrative support (13%)
- Too few LTEL students (8%)

It is encouraging that some of the factors we posed as potential obstacles were not significant challenges for serving LTELs in these districts. For example, most of the participants felt they had the information they needed from their colleagues about which of their students were long-term English learners. This does not, however, indicate to what extent they felt prepared to meet the needs of these students. It is also encouraging that so few participants reported a lack of school district administrative support as a significant obstacle in serving LTEL students.

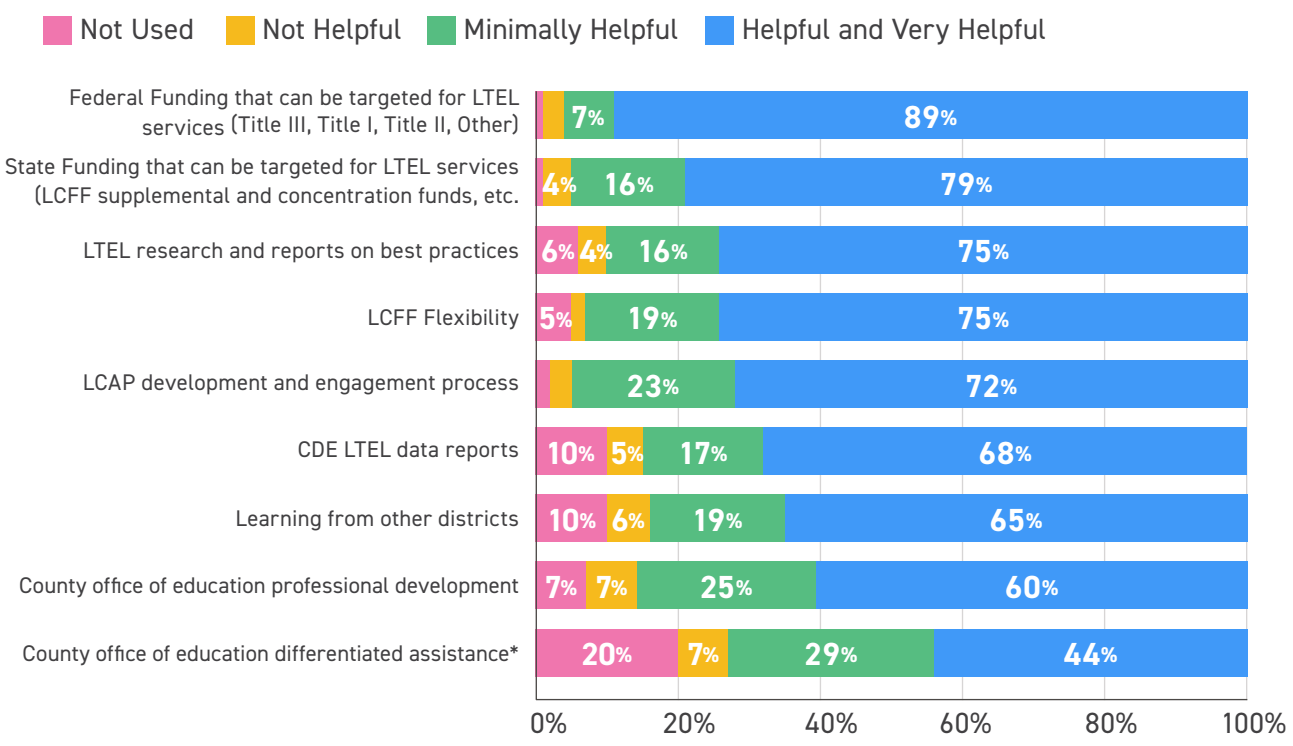
However, it is notable that lack of administrator and teacher focus was an obstacle to LTEL success in the view of several participants. Among the 29 survey participants who added comments expanding on the question about obstacles, the greatest number (13 of 29) said that site administrators and teachers do not take specific responsibility for these students, noting the obstacle of a lack of "accountability for, focus on, and ownership of " LTELs. Another six of the 29 survey participants commented that providing enough and appropriate professional learning for serving LTEL students was a significant obstacle.

That "lack of adequate funding for additional supports for LTELs" was a significant obstacle for 40 percent of respondents is notable given the greater funds for these students and flexibility on how to spend them. The increases in state funding targeted for ELs, foster youth, homeless students, and low-income students through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)—and the greater flexibility at the district level for how to support these students with the LCFF dollars—means that it is up to districts to prioritize and target these funds to support LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs.

SUPPORTS FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF LTELS

Study participants rated how helpful each of a list of possible supports was for meeting the needs of LTEL students. The ratings ranged from "not helpful" to "very helpful" (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4 | TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT YOUR DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF LTEL STUDENTS?



**It is unknown how many of surveyed districts qualified for differentiated assistance.*

LCAP as a Support Tool

Participants were asked a follow-up question about whether specific resources and strategies for addressing the needs of LTELs were identified in their district's approved LCAP, and if so, how helpful they had been.

- Ninety-two of the 107 participants (86 percent) said that their district LCAPs included specific resources and strategies for addressing the needs of LTEL students. Californians Together's earlier review of four-year LCAPs in 2018 found that specific information about strategies to serve ELs was lacking.[50]

- Of the 92 districts with LTEL-specific strategies and resources in their LCAPs, 67 percent indicated that identifying these strategies and resources in the LCAP was helpful or very helpful, with 33 percent indicating this to only be minimally helpful or not helpful.

Another follow-up question asked participants why the LCAP was or was not helpful. Sixty-four of the survey participants provided this information, and most of their comments (48) were positive, addressing why the LCAP was helpful.

- Fifty-six percent (27) of the positive comments were about the helpfulness of having a plan that included strategies and resources targeted specifically for LTEL students. Survey participants noted that these plans allow them to focus on LTEL needs, keep the district and sites on track with carrying out the plans, and reinforce and communicate their commitment to serving LTELs—across the district, school, and greater community.
- The remaining 44 percent (21) of the positive comments focused on the importance of resources in the LCAP for specific supports such as tutoring, monitoring, curricula, and designated staff and professional development for addressing LTEL needs.

Far fewer comments (16) were about why the LCAP was not helpful in addressing the needs of LTEL students.

- Six of these were the converse of why others found it helpful; that is because the resources and strategies in the LCAP were not specifically targeted to LTELs.
- Another five said that the LCAP plans were inadequate, for example, lacking data and best practice strategies.
- The five remaining comments mentioned that while the LCAP plan itself was adequate, it was not implemented consistently either districtwide or within school sites.

Given the centrality of the LCAP to the attempt to ensure education equity that promotes the success of high-need students such as LTELs, these participants' comments provide important insights.

EL Roadmap as a Support Tool

A final follow-up question about supports addressed to what extend the EL Roadmap had informed LTEL policy and practice in the district. The results revealed that the EL Roadmap was an important planning tool in most of the school districts, with 17 percent saying that it had extensively informed planning for LTEL education. An additional 50 percent noted that it had "somewhat" informed their planning. This result also indicates the opportunity for the EL Roadmap to have a greater impact by promoting its promise as a planning tool in a greater number of districts because only about one third of these districts—all of which have large numbers or proportions of LTELs—mentioned the EL Roadmap had "minimally" or "not at all" informed LTEL policy and practice.

Summary of Responses about Supports

In summary, the supports more commonly cited as the most helpful were:

- **Funding that can be targeted to LTELs.** Both federal and state funding were cited as helpful or very helpful by 89 and 79 percent of districts, respectively.
- **The LCAP engagement and planning process.** LCFF flexibility and the LCAP development and engagement process were cited as helpful or very helpful by 75 and 72 percent of districts, respectively.
- **Learning from research, data, and best practices.** Research and reports focused on LTELs were cited as helpful or very helpful by 75 percent of respondents.
- **EL Roadmap implementation.** Sixty-seven percent of districts mentioned that this policy has somewhat or extensively supported LTEL policy in their schools.

Study participants' views of the helpfulness of County Offices of Education (COE) were more mixed. Sixty percent of the participants found COE professional development to be helpful or very helpful. The remaining 40 percent said that professional development from the COE was either not helpful, minimally helpful, or not used. Study participants' responses about support from COEs could reflect the range of capacity among them to provide assistance and information to help districts meet the needs of their LTEL students. What is not clear from these responses is whether districts did not find the COE professional development helpful because it was not good quality, although it was focused on LTELs, or that it was not helpful because it was not focused on LTELs at all. In any case, responses indicate that this is an area where COEs have room to grow and need to build additional specialized expertise.

Fortunately, recent state investments, such as the $10 million to support EL Roadmap implementation in the 2019-20 California State Budget, have expanded COE capacity to support ELs and LTELs. This investment has funded two Educator Workforce Investment Grants (EWIG), including the EL Roadmap Implementation for Systemic Excellence! (EL RISE!) project led by Californians Together, Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL), and LMU's Center for Equity for English Learners. EL RISE! has supported the capacity of 20 COEs and the districts they support with specific professional learning on LTELs.

LOCAL CHANGES IMPLEMENTED DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS

An open-ended question was asked about local program and policy changes school districts implemented during the last ten years to better serve LTELs. Ninety of the 107 study participants provided answers. Most districts had introduced multiple policy and/or program changes during this time to address LTEL student needs and to prevent students from becoming LTELs. By far, the most frequently mentioned were program and curricular changes. Together, creating plans and policies for these students and monitoring their progress was almost as frequently mentioned. Strategies involving staff (either adding extra staff or providing

professional learning for existing staff) were somewhat less common. Least often mentioned were changes related to in- and out-of-class supports, including extended learning time or summer school. Note that the percentages below add up to more than 100 as some participants mentioned more than one strategy.

Specific examples of these changes:

- **Program or curricular changes (67 percent).** These included a combination of support in the early grades for ELs to promote their success and prevent their protracted EL status and additional support for LTELs in the later grades. It also included using bilingual approaches with LTELs, offering them more rigorous content and A-G courses, as well as providing high-interest classes such as those focused on a career and ethnic studies. The most common curricular change was implementing ELD classes designed for LTEL students and incorporating more integrated ELD into instruction. Three districts mentioned implementing or expanding dual-language courses.
- **Systems for monitoring and identifying EL and LTEL students (29 percent)** to be able to support them.
- **EL and LTEL plans for guiding their efforts to improve outcomes for these students (26 percent).** Aids in this planning included the EL Roadmap, the ELD and ELD/ELA standards or framework, and the LCAP.
- **Extra in- and out-of-class supports for LTELs (18 percent).** Most described these generically as academic supports, but four mentioned after-school and summer extended learning time specifically.
- **Professional learning for teachers (15 percent).** Often this was described generally as learning for understanding and serving LTELs. Specific topics of ELD and data use were mentioned, as were specific programs, including AVID and bilingual authorization.
- **Hiring additional and/or specialized staff (10 percent).** These were principally coaches and ELD specialists.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS FOR NEEDED STATE POLICY CHANGES

Another open-ended question, answered by 76 of the 107 participants, asked about policy changes needed at the state level to help improve outcomes for LTEL students. There was no single policy change that stood out. In addition, 17 participants said that they did not know or were not sure if state policy changes were needed. The 59 suggestions regarding policy changes to improve outcomes for LTELs were relatively evenly divided among the following five areas:

- **Changes in educator preparation (24 percent).** This included strengthening content and requirements for teacher preparation and professional learning (pre-service and in-service) specific to understanding and serving LTEL students.
- **Changes related to data, monitoring, and accountability (21 percent).** Examples included better data, incorporating LTEL student outcomes into the California Data Dashboard, and improved monitoring of LTEL students.
- **Changes related to funding (21 percent).** Suggestions were for increased funding and resources to meet the needs of LTELs and more targeted funding for these students. A few noted a need for improvements to the LCFF and LCAPs to more specifically address LTELs.
- **Changes to reclassification (19 percent).** This included uniform state reclassification criteria and alternative pathways to reclassification.
- **Need for increased policy guidance (19 percent).** Among these comments was praise for the EL Roadmap, Proposition 58, and the LCAP process as providing direction for serving LTEL students.
- **Changes related to specific programs (9 percent)**, including greater support for multilingual education and improvements to English language arts curricula for LTELs.

SERVING LTELS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Survey participants were asked to share comments about serving LTELs during the pandemic. Seventy-two of the 107 participants shared 84 comments. Most of the comments addressed challenges the pandemic presented for families and students, and those for educators. Following are the challenges described in these comments:

- **Connecting with students (21 percent),** including engaging them in instruction, and maintaining relationships and a human connection.
- **Providing LTELs the language support they need (15 percent)**, and the interaction necessary for language development.
- **Students' well-being and socio-emotional state (15 percent)**, including considerations for the economic and social hardships of the pandemic for families and the need for students to help families financially, being torn between work and school.
- **Technology (14 percent)**, including the problem of "virtual" exhaustion as challenges.
- **Teacher professional learning to develop supports for LTELs (12 percent)**, and finding ways to help teachers in this challenging situation.
- **Monitoring of students' academic progress and participation (8 percent)**, and the quality of instruction.

CONCLUSION

These survey responses show what educators are struggling with, their appreciation for the support they receive (and the need for greater assistance), and their care and concern for the success of their EL and LTEL students. Their responses offer a view of the landscape of LTEL education in California. This landscape view provides information on what is working well, and what can and should be augmented; what needs more support for effective and widespread implementation; and where opportunities for new resources and approaches reside. It guides our steps toward fulfilling California's promise to our LTEL students and fills our hopes that we have the will and the means to get there.

SECTION
6

DISTRICT STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

Survey participants' responses give us a useful overview of school districts' strategies to support long-term English learners and prevent ELs from becoming LTELs. In this section, we provide concrete examples of specific strategies in a small selection of school districts. The examples are based on interviews with district EL leaders. Each report focuses on a single strategy that the school district identified as central to its approach and success with serving these students. Interviewees also offered advice to other school districts about serving LTELs, discussed areas where the district needs greater assistance, and shared how the pandemic has affected their ability to serve their students.

These districts were selected to highlight a variety of strategies. Recommendations of potential districts came from colleagues in the field, and outcome data were considered in making the final choices. It is important to note that many other districts could have been highlighted as many are employing interesting and effective strategies. These offer a small sample of how districts are improving outcomes for ELs and LTELs in California.

SUMMARY OF FEATURED DISTRICTS

Name	Profile	Top Five EL Primary Languages
Alhambra USD	Located in Los Angeles County. Serves 16,278 students across 18 schools, of which 27% are ELs, and 63% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 31% are LTELs, and 37% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Mandarin (1,419) • Spanish (1,256) • Cantonese (1,058) • Vietnamese (322) • Filipino (41)
Chula Vista ESD	Located in San Diego County. Serves 30,066 elementary students across 49 schools, of which 29% are ELs, and 54% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 30% are LTELs, and 33% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Spanish (7,914) • Filipino (295) • Korean (78) • Japanese (66) • Arabic (49)
Elk Grove USD	Located in Sacramento County. Serves 64,480 students across 68 schools, of which 15% are ELs, and 53% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 47% are LTELs, and 44% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Spanish (3,710) • Vietnamese (979) • Hmong (921) • Cantonese (673) • Punjabi (507)
Garden Grove USD	Located in Orange County. Serves 41,423 students across 64 schools, of which 33% are ELs, and 71% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 41% are LTELs, and 43% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Spanish (9,030) • Vietnamese (3,919) • Arabic (205) • Filipino (54) • Korean (51)
Los Angeles USD	Largest district in CA, and second-largest district in the US. Serves 596,937 students across 1,008 schools, of which 20% are ELs, and 80% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 43% are LTELs, and 42% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Spanish (110,168) • Armenian (1,782) • Filipino (885) • Korean (881) • Russian (816)
Oak Grove ESD	Located in Santa Clara County. Serves 9,757 elementary students, across 18 schools, of which 24% are ELs, and 37% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 39% are LTELs, and 40% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Spanish (1,523) • Vietnamese (314) • Filipino (45) • Mandarin (34) • Punjabi (33)
Sanger USD	Located in Fresno County. Serves 12,641 students across 20 schools, of which 14% are ELs, and 66% are economically disadvantaged. Of its secondary ELs, 44% are LTELs, and 17% of its LTELs are dually identified for special education services.	• Spanish (1,479) • Hmong (154) • Punjabi (97) • Arabic (23) • Khmer (7)

ALHAMBRA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

AUSD designed and implemented an EL Master Plan in 2015, which has ensured that teachers have information on different typologies of ELs and strategies to support them. The district works to ensure that teachers and administrators can see beyond labels to understand and know the story of each individual student. They note that this type of connection and attention is particularly important for ELs. In this district, 6th to 8th grade ELs are taught by multiple subject teachers who are trained in all subject areas and ELD strategies. Among its key strategies, AUSD supports school-level investments in social-emotional learning, deploying positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) teams at each school site to help build staff capacity, and site-based school and community coordinators who speak their students' home languages.

Focal Strategy: Site-specific Professional Development Including Integrated & Designated ELD

The AUSD implemented a new professional development strategy in 2018 based on their experience that supports a conviction that educator professional learning is more effective when it takes place at each school site, focuses on the direct application of strategies, and centers on educator collaboration. Site-based, in-depth professional learning is conducted twice a year in the Fall and Spring and is led by district specialists and principals. The professional development is focused on grade-level teams at each school, which allows teachers in each team to share, practice, model, and observe strategy implementation. These grade-level teams debrief after each session and collaborate throughout the year.

The content of professional development varies according to students' needs at each site. However, to support the achievement of ELs and help ensure that they do not become LTELs, all teachers receive professional development focused on ELD in addition to ELA, math, and other content areas. To address the many LTELs and students at-risk of becoming LTELs who can speak English socially but need to develop language that promotes their learning of academic content, the district offers professional learning focused on academic language and on the incorporation of strategies that support English language development within content instruction. GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) ELD strategies and thinking maps would be good examples.

AUSD teachers are equipped to be more effective in delivering designated and integrated ELD due to the district's investment in site-specific professional learning. In addition to the guaranteed 30 minutes of daily designated ELD built into the master schedule for ELs, the team-oriented professional learning and K-8th grade school organization have created other benefits. For designated ELD, teachers across grades and different classrooms have organized ELD lessons grouped by EL level and other student needs. Teachers can also better meet the needs of ELs within the content areas by sharing students across classrooms to focus on specific standards through small-group instruction or co-teaching.

> **"As it relates to LTELs, our teachers are looking at data on an ongoing basis and having conversations with their teams about improving services and instruction."**
>
> **CHRISTA VAN ORDEN**,
> DIRECTOR OF PREK-12TH INSTRUCTION

This professional learning approach, along with other school-level supports, has resulted in gains for AUSD ELs. The percentage of district EL students that met or exceeded standards across all grades in Math and ELA on the 2018-19 CAASPP is higher than the state average for ELs. While the number and percentage of LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs did not decrease between the 2015-16 and 2019-20 school years, the recent achievement gains for ELs should contribute to fewer students becoming LTELs or at risk of becoming LTELs in the future.

CHULA VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

While the Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) does not have secondary schools, it is an example of a district that works within the elementary sphere to ensure that EL students achieve linguistic and academic proficiency for reclassification and to prevent their becoming LTELs. Their approach regarding English learner education is for all educators and staff to share responsibility for EL outcomes, rather than relegating the responsibility for these students to EL coordinators and bilingual teachers alone. This is reinforced by a layered system of support that assists all 42 district schools and six charter schools. The layered system of support is a comprehensive strategy with multiple elements, including district leadership, partnership with families, staff professional learning, and strong classroom support. Data, monitoring, and targeted investments tie all aspects of the system together. With a continuous improvement mindset, the district learns from prior practice and makes adjustments.

CVESD has made a concerted effort to improve EL outcomes by providing professional development on the California ELA/ELD framework. This professional learning focuses on the needs identified at each school. It is centered around a cycle of training that includes providing pre-reading about an identified challenge and practicing solutions. This work is followed by a guided visit that includes classroom teachers or instructional leadership teams. The professional learning also involves building instructional capacity in designated and integrated ELD and Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies, learning about different EL typologies, understanding the ELPAC task types, and understanding the deeper academic language skills that students need. The district has two GLAD trained bilingual resource teachers and prioritizes providing additional support to sites where there are a high proportion of ELs.

Another central CVESD strategy is to support and build on student assets, including their home language. This is woven through the layered system of support and their Multilingual EL Master Plan, which reinforces the principles of the EL Roadmap. The district also encourages native Spanish speakers to participate in one of the district's 22 Spanish/English dual language programs. The professional development plan also includes training for all teachers on both designated ELD and Spanish language development, which reinforces the assets-based approach.

Central Strategy: Detailed, Ongoing, Individualized Progress Monitoring

Chula Vista Elementary School District works hard to support elementary ELs who are at risk of becoming LTELs. The district's position is that they cannot wait for statewide data or for students to reach 6th grade before determining which students might be at risk. To make this determination earlier in a student's school career, the district developed its own report, using the state definition, to identify those who might be at risk of becoming LTELs.

Every CVESD school site maintains an LCAP matrix with the number of LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs. The district monitors a variety of additional data for understanding individual student progress. For each student this includes a monitoring form for LTELs or students at risk of becoming LTELs, the ELD Report Card, and a Student Profile Report. These include the specific language challenges keeping the student from reclassification, whether the student is at risk of becoming a LTEL, special education identification and services, attendance, and instructional adaptations being used to support the student's

growth. This individualized report creates a better understanding of each student's path and progress, including beginning-of-year local measures and actions and the end-of-year outcomes Further, because all teachers and school staff have access to the same Student Profile Report and student data, they can share observations and collaborate to address the needs of each student.

> **"At the end of the day, when we serve over 6,000 English learners with various needs, we need to respond with a comprehensive and strategic approach. Our layered system of support puts students in the center — ensuring that they succeed both academically and linguistically."**
>
> **LALAINE PEREZ,**
> EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Family engagement is a critical aspect of the student monitoring. There are regular parent conferences with families to discuss the ELD Report Card and student progress. Teachers can collaborate with family support services and other departments to better engage families. The district has also added a new requirement for teachers to monitor LTELs and students at-risk of becoming LTELs further through a special form in the data management system, which is used during parent conferences. These forms must be signed by the teacher, parent, and principal, and revisited during the first and third quarter of the school year.

Data use is further supported by additional positions for teachers (called executive directors) who are assigned to work with principals and teachers across eight to ten schools to improve outcomes for ELs, with a specific focus on students at risk of becoming LTELs in each classroom. One strategy they employ is to collaborate with the principal to identify three to five ELs at risk of becoming LTELs. These students are shadowed by the executive director, principal, and other educators. The shadowing provides insights into how students are engaging and sheds light on EL students' experience at the school. The information gained through these observations informs recommendations for school-and student-level interventions. The student-level data are critical to targeted and tailored interventions given the variety of student needs. During the pandemic, site visits and shadowing were paused, with plans to resume these once schools reopen.

These approaches have been enhanced by recent investments made from Expanded Learning Opportunity Grants and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Federal funding. The district has used these funds to hire a certificated Impact Teacher for every school site, tasked with providing individualized learning support for foster youth, homeless students, students at-risk of becoming LTELs, and LTELs. These funds have also increased hours for classified English learner instructional assistants at every school site, which support ELPAC testing, parent notification, monitoring, and providing supplemental instructional support. These investments ensure that there are minimum hours of EL support based on the number of ELs at each school.

ELK GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A fundamental approach to supporting ELs in the Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) is to ensure that all staff share the responsibility for ELs' education. The EGUSD has made meeting EL needs a team approach, from the school to the central office level. The district "recognizes and celebrates the rich language and cultural diversity that our students bring to all of our schools." EGUSD uses a Program

Implementation Continuum (PIC), a data analysis approach to reviewing data on LTEL outcomes, including relating them to the particular EL program, teacher preparation, and instructional strategies. Both of these approaches help ensure that at the central office and school level, there is a focus on LTEL outcomes and on strategies that should be implemented to meet their identified needs.

> "We **all** hold the privilege and responsibility to serve our English learners."
>
> **LUCY BOLLINGER**,
> DIRECTOR OF EL SERVICES

Focal Strategy: Blending Career Technical Education (CTE) and ELD to Increase EL Opportunity to Participate in Career Pathways Courses

District data analysis revealed that ELs were not included as often as other student populations in the district's CTE pathways. In response, the district secured the support of the California Department of Education and its CTE department to pilot a blended CTE and ELD unit in two EGUSD schools during the 2020-2021 school year. The blended CTE/ELD lessons leveraged the student asset of bilingualism for college and career readiness; met ELs' English language development needs; built awareness of an available career pathway; and actually increased engagement even with distance learning during this unprecedented school year.

The ELD and CTE teachers collaborate to implement the courses. The ELD teacher focuses on delivering the content, while the CTE teacher concentrates on creating project-based learning opportunities. Both educators with EL education expertise and those with CTE capacity are on the district planning team for these courses. This provides for effective integration between the different departments and areas of expertise.

During this unprecedented year, EGUSD modified the approach to delivering blended CTE and ELD lessons. The EL Coach, working closely with the CTE and ELD teachers, created and delivered lessons that focused on both language development and coding/programming. Computer programming was selected for several reasons. Computer science and engineering are pathways at almost all EGUSD high schools. Developing lessons in this area of study would therefore make them transferable to any school. Coding is also something that could be done with the equipment that the students had available. This equipment included "GiggleBots," coding robotic kits, which were delivered to students for them to program from home. The blended programming units were delivered in two different Designated ELD environments: a newcomer 9-12 class at a high school and an LTEL 8th-grade class. A sample project from an LTEL can be found here: Student Sample: Final Project

A "before" and "after" survey given to the 8th-grade students revealed that overall, students enjoyed computer programming, had some level of interest in learning more about it, understood the role of programming, had learned academic language in the class and, and wanted to do more of these projects in their ELD classes.

> "Our time together has helped me with my English because I have gotten to know more vocal words and because I have been doing presentations in this class, I got to use those words."
>
> 8TH GRADE LTEL STUDENT IN CTE/ELD PATHWAY

Although the expansion of the pathways was placed on hold during the 2019-20 school year due to the pandemic, the district is looking forward to its growth. In the 2021-2022 school year. They hope to expand the CTE and ELD blended instruction to more EL students in their designated ELD courses. The current focus will continue to be on the computer science pathways because they are the most common pathways at each of the high schools. CTE teachers within the computer science pathways have worked collaboratively with an EL Coach to develop new ELD-supported computer science units of instruction.

A panel of CTE leaders, CSUS faculty, and district EL representatives will select a couple of units to be built out further in collaboration with designated ELD teachers and delivered to students during the 2021-2022 school year. In addition to these lessons, students will learn about opportunities on campus (and beyond) to engage more deeply in the fields related to computer science. After the 2021-2022 school year, EGUSD plans to expand these learning opportunities to even more EL students and build awareness of and engage students in pathways other than computer science. For this endeavor to succeed, there will need to be continued support from the central office (time and resources) and a willingness on the part of CTE and ELD teachers to continue to collaborate and further develop instructional units.

GARDEN GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Garden Grove Unified School District (GGUSD) believes in the value of the rich linguistic diversity of its students. It builds on this diversity by implementing programs to "encourage all students to maintain and enrich their primary language while working toward the acquisition of academic English."[51] The district has implemented various strategies to support the achievement of ELs in elementary school. In addition to providing designated ELD, dual language immersion programs, and heritage language extended day enrichment in Spanish and Vietnamese, a concerted effort has been placed on the integration of ELD throughout content instruction. These programs and strategies are informed and supported by the district's longstanding use of data to support programs and shifts in practice as necessary.

Focal Strategy: Progress Monitoring, Shadowing, and Placement

EL shadowing has been part of the Garden Grove Unified School District since 2013 in secondary grades. In the 2017-18 school year, it was expanded to TK-12 as a way to collect qualitative data on English learners. The district worked closely with site administrators to assemble grade level teams of teachers and teachers on special assignment (TOSAs) to participate in EL Shadowing at their respective schools. The process is grounded in quantitative data. After spending the day observing and documenting the experiences of these students, the teams review EL data from a variety of sources informed by what they learned about the students' classroom experience through the shadowing exercise.

This strategy is intended to support students who might be at risk of becoming LTELs—so the students who are shadowed at each grade level at each site are selected from among ELs who are not making progress toward reclassification. By combining student shadowing and data monitoring, school teams can associate achievement gaps with information about EL students' classroom experiences that might help explain why they are occurring. In addition, the district has developed EL Progress Monitoring packets with key data, suggested interventions, and targeted questions for educators in grades K-6, 7-8, and 9-12. These packets support educators in reflecting about their practice and constantly thinking about the progress of their ELs across all subject areas.

> **"We believe that observing the classroom experience of English learner students provides meaningful insight we might not otherwise see during data collection. Our student-centered approach helps drive and inspire improvement to our instructional practices."**
>
> **TERI ROCCO,**
> TRUSTEE

District educators indicate that they've learned many important lessons from the EL student shadowing. Examples include that ELs are often not engaged in classroom discussion, so teachers need strategies to include these students. They have observed many students who speak English with their peers but who do not have the academic language necessary to master course content—supporting the district's increased investment in integrated ELD and academic language instruction.

While GGUSD hopes to continue this practice in the 2021-22 school year, the pandemic has exacerbated a substitute teacher shortage, which places a strain on all professional learning that requires taking educators out of the classroom, including for student shadowing and monitoring. Among possible solutions that the district has considered is raising pay for substitute teachers, conducting the additional day of progress monitoring during teacher collaboration time or staff meeting times, or negotiating pay for teachers' extra duty time (which cannot be required).

Monitoring and use of data is central to the district goal of ensuring that all students are placed in rigorous coursework across all subject areas and are provided with appropriate interventions. This goal is further supported by the district's Placement Guidelines for students in grades 7-12. These guidelines were developed in collaboration with teachers, counselors and administrators and provide for a seamless transition for students as they move through schools within the district. This has led to a significant improvement in the proportion of ELs meeting A-G coursework requirements within all of the district's high schools, from 2018 to 2020.

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

LAUSD makes explicit its commitment to improving outcomes for long-term English learners and students at risk of becoming LTELs, by specifying actions and goals for these students in its LCAP. These include individual reclassification plans for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs; targeted language development, literacy development, and instructional programs and services that address LTELs' specific academic, linguistic, and academic needs. The district's motto to "know students by name, need, and asset" informs an approach to ensure that educators not only identify their LTELs but nurture their assets to give them a sense of belonging and motivate them to make progress in their classes. They encourage family and student engagement in developing the individual reclassification plans so that students and families understand the progress students are making toward English proficiency and what they need to do to meet the reclassification criteria. LAUSD promotes the strengthening of study skills and learning strategies, and targets professional development on model Designated and Integrated ELD to enhance teacher capacity.

The district also monitors various data and provides assistance from district EL coordinators based on what is learned from this analysis as an integral approach to helping school sites improve EL student outcomes. One strategy in this data-driven approach is for EL coordinators and staff at each school site to work together to identify a problem of practice as a focus for improving LTEL instruction—followed by monitoring students' outcomes to determine how the changes are working.

The district has also made efforts to ensure that LTELs have access to rigorous coursework and meet A-G requirements in middle school and high school. The LTEL courses provide A-G credit and are UC Office of the President approved to ensure that all students are college ready. The district provides a sequence of differentiated LTEL courses that consider students' needs and assets in meeting English language proficiency and meeting A-G graduation requirements. Both courses are based on the state-adopted ELA/ELD Framework and the California ELD standards. The first course is focused on building language and literacy skills, and the second one is designed to build language and improve literacy skills and content knowledge as the student concurrently takes a mainstream, grad-level ELA course. Both courses use thematic units that ensure that students make connections to science, math, and social studies core content.

Additionally, these courses use an inquiry-based process, building on background knowledge. Teachers of these courses employ research-based strategies for teaching reading and writing, and providing access to

the curriculum. These courses have ensured that LTELs get the differentiated support that they need while keeping them enrolled in core content courses with other peers and ensuring that they are making progress toward meeting A-G requirements.

> **"We need to own that we create long-term English learners by not preventing the LTEL label. Especially during the two years as potential long-term English learners. It is on us to own it and take action on behalf of our diverse English learner typologies."**
>
> **LYDIA ACOSTA STEPHENS**,
> EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Focal Strategy: Professional Learning for Serving Dually Identified LTELs

Many of LAUSD's long-term English learners are dually identified as ELs who qualify for special education services. In the 2019-20 school year, they represented 42 percent of the district's LTELs (7,610 students), compared to 36 percent statewide.[52] In response, LAUSD has made this an intensive focus of district efforts. A central element of these efforts is to ensure that both general and special educators are well-prepared to serve dually identified long-term English learners. This focused professional learning was developed as a component of an agreement with the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, which required LAUSD to improve its special education services.

To inform these improvements, the district established a task force of LTEL students, parents, teachers, and school and district administrators who worked together to develop a plan for serving dually identified long-term English learners. Collaboration between the district's Division of Special Education and the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department, is essential to the plan. Every year the Special Education Division and the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department provide a district-wide series of professional development for all general education and special education teachers of dually identified LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs. Both department also collaborate on creating and updating district policies related to reclassification of dually identified students.

The content of this professional learning includes Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), building literacy skills, using specialized curricula, and placement and reclassification policies—all focused on dually identified students. This professional learning includes opportunities and time for collaboration, especially among special education and general education educators who share students. These teachers work together to develop IEP/ELD goals for Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. The district also offers professional learning for educators in Alternate Curriculum classrooms, which is designed for students with moderate to severe disabilities who are not able to access the course content without significant modification.

The district plans to expand the Alternate Curriculum component of the professional development and is also considering further differentiating this professional learning for teachers who work in Alternate Curriculum classrooms. The pandemic did not end this professional development program. During the 2020-21 school year, approximately 470 teachers participated through virtual sessions. In addition, due to the move to online learning, the district developed a web-based course that mirrors the live professional development, which will be available to all district employees.

Teachers have not only improved their skills through this program, but both general education and special education teachers express a greater appreciation for the work being done by their colleagues. The district also credits the improved teacher skills with contributing to an increase in the reclassification rate for students with disabilities who are LTELs and at risk of becoming LTELs from 23.8 percent in 2018-19 to 27 percent in 2019-20. In addition, the number of LTELs and percentage of Ever-ELs who are LTELs has decreased significantly from 2015-16 to 2019-20—from 28,793 to 18,011 LTELs or from 9 percent to 6 percent of all Ever-ELs.

OAK GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Oak Grove Elementary School District leadership team supports a strong focus on English learners and on a data-informed culture. They understand that there are many different profiles of ELs, and therefore, data are disaggregated for ELs and analyzed through various cycles of inquiry. As part of the district's School Improvement Plans for Student Achievement (SIPSAs), LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs are the main data points analyzed to establish goals and build actions and services.

The district has also empowered teachers by establishing an application and review process, where they can apply for Title III, EL-focused mini-grants from the district. This idea came from federal program monitoring and feedback from the District English Learner Advisory Committee.

As a way of improving outcomes for EL students, Oak Grove ESD has moved from an early-exit to a late-exit bilingual education model and has expanded Spanish dual-language programs. This change is based on the principle that students are high performing when they are proficient in their home languages and that students are not exchanging the home language for the English language but adding to what they already know. The district now has three dual-language programs in grades K-6 and is planning to expand up to the 8th grade.

> **"The achievement gap is not an Oak Grove issue. It's a state, it's a national issue. Finding research-based approaches that help support our students, our English learners, be successful academically is a need everywhere in our educational system. So, SEAL is one of those approaches that we believe will make an impact in erasing that achievement gap."**
>
> **JOSÉ MANZO,**
> SUPERINTENDENT

Focal Strategy: Promoting Students' Home Language and Assets through SEAL

The Oak Grove Elementary School District has had a partnership with the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) model since 2011. As it began the partnership, the district tested this model with a cohort of four of their Title I schools, focusing on Kindergarten and 1st Grade. This allowed for successful implementation and buy-in from staff, which then supported further expansion into other grades and schools.

The model is now in every elementary school, and every school site has at least one SEAL-certified teacher as well as teachers in the process of certification in every grade level from TK through 3rd grade. Six schools are SEAL-certified through 6th grade. The SEAL model impacts multiple aspects of how education is delivered for ELs, including through the delivery of integrated units, and using an assets-based culture where students' home languages are valued, and engagement with families is valued. At the dual language sites the units have been created, and in parts translated, where appropriate in Spanish.

During 12 days of professional learning throughout the year and multiple collaboration days, the SEAL model trains teachers on how to implement best practices for all students. To promote integration across all subject areas, the district makes sure their teachers are trained through integrated units and are given the opportunity to develop their own units as part of the training. This focus on integration holds for students and subject matter alike and is reflected in the district's decision to disband its newcomer centers after learning that these students were missing out on grade-level instruction. Instead, to address newcomers' needs, the district invested in professional learning resources to support multiple subject teachers providing these level-one students with a quality education through scaffolding and other strategies.

This investment included resources for coaching and professional development for principals on what they should expect to see in every classroom. The result is that all teachers have been trained in effective strategies for ELs, including visuals and scaffolding—and are expected to use these in the classroom. When teachers need extra support, instructional coaches are available to model lessons for students. Instructional outcomes connect back to the data-driven approach to understanding and addressing student needs. ELPAC data for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs are analyzed, and specific domains holding students back are identified. This information is used for targeting teachers' professional development to the specific skill areas that ELs need to master as indicated by their ELPAC outcomes.

Given the large proportion of dually identified students as LTELs with special education needs, the district also offers professional learning on SEAL practices to all its special education teachers. To date, all special day teachers have received SEAL training, and the district plans to use the new alternative ELPAC during the 2021-22 school year as part of its strategy to better identify the learning needs of these dually identified students.

The impact of the SEAL strategy is reflected in how much more students are talking and using language in class. Classrooms are organized with ELs of different proficiency levels grouped heterogeneously, working together, and communicating with each other routinely. This is coupled with small group instruction focused on ELD and groupings based on teacher observations of students' needs. Instruction is also multimodal as costumes and movement are used to practice the language.

The SEAL model is based on a strong assets-based focus that includes family engagement and values students' home languages. The family and community component of the SEAL units provide students with the opportunity to walk with their families through the classroom and conduct an at-home project. There is a focus on building self-identity through culturally-relevant books and lessons on how to show up as a social actor and be an advocate for change. During the pandemic, all teachers used SEAL's welcoming and affirming toolkit, even if they were not SEAL certified, as a way to address a need during a difficult time. Teachers were also creative during distance learning, employing SEAL strategies virtually.

The success of SEAL strategies has been seen in Oak Grove and other districts that use the model. SEAL students have strong reclassification rates and reclassified SEAL students continue to outperform other reclassified students in the state in both ELA and Math.

SANGER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sanger Unified School District (SUSD) has spent several years focusing on systems change and collaboration by using data to understand the needs of individual students. District leaders understand that not all ELs have the same needs and have built a system that focuses on their different typologies. Furthermore, SUSDs' approach to implementing practices to support language and content learning includes a strong focus on building upon students' assets. This has led to expansion of the district's dual-language programs and support for dual-language learners in preschool. The district also has a dedicated position at every site—the EL site contact—whose job is to help guide and lead conversations and take responsibility for improving EL outcomes.

Focal Strategy: Building Capacity and LTEL-Specific Support in an EL Master Plan

In 2011, SUSD established a collaboration with Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District, funded by the Central Valley Foundation, to improve outcomes for all students, particularly ELs. The grant supported these districts in collecting data and implementing differentiated support for EL students of different typologies (e.g., newcomers and long-term English learners, among others). Beginning in 2014, the partnership narrowed its focus to improving outcomes for LTELs. By bringing in experts from universities and other districts and County Offices of Education, the two districts were able to learn about research and evidence-based practices. Over 100 teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators participated in learning modules focused on designated and integrated ELD, core content support, and collaboration.

Just as important was the inclusion of teachers from across the curriculum: science, social studies, ELA, and ELD, and from alternative school sites.

This work laid the foundation for SUSD's new EL Master Plan, which was approved in February 2021. The plan is aligned with the EL Roadmap policy and includes supports focused specifically on LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs. The supports include the means by which all educators can deliver designated and integrated ELD across all content areas, secondary course pathways for LTELs, and individualized language plans prioritized for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs. The Master Plan includes a section with recommended placements, interventions, and supports for LTELs in middle and high school. This allows counselors and EL specialists to provide stronger guidance to long-term English learners regarding which pathway or course to take based on their previously completed courses and most recent assessment data. The LTEL course map for high school includes specialized ELD courses and placement in rigorous coursework to ensure that they are on track to meet graduation and college entrance requirements. The EL Master Plan includes additional support for 8th grade students transitioning into high school because many students lose ground during this transition. The district also has procedures to monitor and support RFEPs to ensure that these students continue to achieve at a high level after reclassification.

These approaches are starting to show success. From 2015-16 to 2019-20, the district reduced the number of LTEL students by a third (from 354 to 235). In addition, the share of district RFEPs who have met or exceeded grade-level standards in Math and ELA is higher than the state average across most grades. It is important to note that the pandemic is likely to have an impact in part due to missing data. District leaders did not want to reclassify students with missing information, so there is likely to be an increase in LTELs in the short run, followed by a steady decrease once additional data are collected.

The district's next phase of work is to continue to strengthen guidelines and supports to ensure that LTELs are meeting A-G requirements. They will support counselors toward receiving additional professional learning that builds on the training they received in the past. And they will provide opportunities for professional learning related to serving EL, LTEL, and students at risk of becoming LTEL for new staff and all content area teachers (math, ELA, social science, and science).

LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

In addition to the above strategies, staff we interviewed from these districts noted some implications and lessons from the pandemic. These include that:

- They gained a deeper understanding of how they were not serving all students and too many students were falling through the cracks. They have concluded that it is not acceptable to go back to "normal" and committed to focusing on closing gaps for EL and LTEL students.
- They have learned the importance of, and are committed to, ensuring that the EL perspective is at the table throughout all planning and budget work. The pandemic has highlighted their understanding of the need to share responsibility for EL and LTEL outcomes across the district rather than prioritizing their needs in a single department.
- They are working to revamp professional learning, especially considering limitations of a possible teacher and substitute shortage. This includes revisiting past professional learning for new teachers who are joining the field and for experienced teachers who need to refresh and rebuild their capacity concerning LTEL strategies.

SECTION
7

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is an urgent need to take action to support improving EL students' progress toward English and academic proficiency so that they are not at risk of being—or do not become—LTELs. As mentioned in the introduction to this report, there have been gains in policy and practice over the last ten years, designed to support this improvement. There are now tools that were unavailable in 2010. For example, Proposition 58 gave school districts the freedom to implement highly effective dual language programs. The EL Roadmap provides policy guidance on how schools and districts can support ELs. The ELA/ELD Framework provides a robust understanding of language development integrated with content knowledge. The ELD Standards are direct pathways to academic proficiency. And the state collects data on LTELs and those who are at risk so that they can be identified and supported early. It is encouraging that attention and advocacy have led to these and other policy gains. However, more energy, attention, and investment are needed to accelerate that progress. It is time to renew our commitment to these students and redouble our efforts to ensure their achievement.

The following goals and recommendations are driven by the urgency and the moral imperative to address the needs of LTELs—and to support ELs so that they do not become LTELs. They are informed by three key sources:

1. The research on EL and LTEL students summarized in Section Four;
2. Data from a survey of 107 California school districts with the greatest number and/or percentage of English learners described in Section Five; and
3. In-depth conversations with educators in districts that are successfully keeping students from becoming LTELs and improving outcomes for those that do, re-discussed in Section Six.

FOUR VISIONARY GOALS FOR CALIFORNIA

Not only is there an urgency to act, but the actions we take must be sufficiently bold to meet our objectives. Therefore, the goals we recommend are far-reaching. These state-level visionary goals aim to ensure that students who become LTELs or who are at risk of becoming LTELs have the support and assistance they need to improve their outcomes. In addition, ELs must be provided programs and strategies to promote their reclassification and ongoing school success. Note that in these recommendations our reference to EL students includes ELs who are at risk of becoming LTELs.

BY THE YEAR 2030, WE WISH TO:

1. Reduce by half the percentage of ELs in grades 6-12 who are LTELs,
2. Reduce by half the number of students at risk of becoming LTELs,
3. Ensure that half of reclassified ELs (RFEPs) earn the state seal of biliteracy, and
4. Ensure ongoing RFEP achievement that is on par with that of fluent English proficient students.

The third and fourth goals are critical—not specifically in reducing the numbers of LTELs or students at risk of becoming LTELs, but—in ensuring that when we reclassify students, they have the skills they need to compete on an even playing field with their English fluent peers and do not fall behind after initially achieving the necessary threshold for reclassification. If we reclassify students who are not ready and/or we don't provide supports so that some of these students continue to achieve, we are reducing the number of LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs without actually improving their academic achievement and other outcomes.

The third goal also echoes the vision of the EL Roadmap policy for all ELs to develop proficiency in multiple languages and the Global California 2030 Initiative goal to, by 2030, "have half of all K–12 students participate in programs leading to proficiency in two or more languages."[53] This initiative is the California Department of Education's call to action urging parents, educators, and legislators to support a multilingual California, where students are proficient in more than one language. Meeting this goal will require expanding bilingual programs, which, as previously discussed, lead to biliteracy and can help prevent students from becoming LTELs.

KEY FOCUS AREAS TO MEET VISIONARY GOALS

To improve outcomes for EL and LTEL students in significant and long-term ways requires efforts that include changes across the entire education system, including in the following key focal areas:

A. **Educator Preparation and Professional Learning.** Stronger educator preparation and ongoing professional learning for all educators to understand and work effectively with EL and LTEL students across the curriculum, including time for collaboration. *This is aligned with principle three of the EL Roadmap focused on "system conditions that support effectiveness," including capacity building for leaders and teachers.*

B. **Resources and Planning.** Focused resource allocation, goal setting, and planning that address the specific needs of ELs and LTELs. *This is aligned with principle three of the EL Roadmap focused on "system conditions that support effectiveness," including investing adequate resources and principle four focused on "alignment and articulation within and across systems."*

C. **Curriculum and Instruction.** Education programs that provide all ELs and LTELs the supports they need without segregating them into tracks, are based on curriculum and instruction that is accessible, engaging, culturally relevant, and rigorous, and attend to the socioemotional well-being of students along with their language and academic needs. *This is aligned with principle two of the EL Roadmap focused on "intellectual quality of instruction and meaningful access".*

D. **Data, Assessment, and Accountability.** Data on LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs that are accessible, included in the accountability system, and useful for a variety of purposes. The data are used for planning effective instruction, designing professional learning, monitoring student progress, and communicating with students and their families about successes and needs. Another effect of using data and assessments is to hold the system accountable for meeting the needs of ELs and LTELs, including schools, districts, and the state. *This is aligned with principle three of the EL Roadmap focused on "system conditions that support effectiveness," including assessment, and principle four focused on "alignment and articulation within and across systems".*

E. **Engagement, Relationships, and Student Focus.** Frequent communication and meaningful engagement (centered on listening and learning) with students, their families, and communities to create relationships of trust. *This is aligned with principle one of the EL Roadmap focused on "assets-oriented and needs-responsive schools".*

Within these areas of focus, both state policy and local school actions can be undertaken to meet the needs of ELs, including LTELs. The following two sections lay out those policies and the action agenda.

STATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. **Educator Preparation and Professional Learning** *(aligned with principle three of the EL roadmap focused on "system conditions that support effectiveness," including capacity building for leaders and teachers).* Improving outcomes for LTEL and EL students requires teachers to develop the mindset, cultural understanding, language skills, and pedagogical expertise to promote their success and well-being. This does not happen in a single year of teacher preparation or a few additional professional learning sessions. Rather, building these skills and understanding is part of an ongoing professional trajectory and requires the investment of time and funding to support teachers through this journey. This requires an infrastructure that includes time for planning and collaboration time, teachers on special assignment, instructional coaches, and other supports built into the system.

1. **Invest in District and Regional Efforts to Recruit and Retain Highly Qualified Educators.** The state must continue to support efforts to recruit teachers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds who have the skillsets to support ELs and LTELs. Recruitment efforts can include additional investments in teacher residency programs (see page 36), loan and tuition forgiveness, and financial support for classified staff to obtain a teaching credential. All state investments to increase the teacher pipeline should prioritize the recruitment and retention of bilingual educators and include a component related to promoting the success of EL and LTEL students. Given that all LTELs are in grades 6-12, it is essential to focus a significant effort on building the pool of educators with such specialized skills in these grades. And, because students who do not progress in the elementary years are those who become or are at risk of becoming LTELs, it is equally urgent to make similar investments in building the capacity of elementary school teachers. These efforts would help restore the pool of teachers with the expertise necessary for fostering the success and well-being of EL and LTEL students that was decimated during the almost 20 years under Proposition 227.

2. **Invest in Professional Learning, Support, and Collaboration for Current Educators.** School districts need resources and guidance to ensure that they can provide all teachers with effective, professional learning opportunities focused on meeting the learning needs of ELs and LTELs. This should include ongoing professional learning for bilingual teachers who provide instruction in dual language programs and linguistic support in all program models, and professional learning for special education teachers, focused on meeting the needs of EL and LTEL students to support ELs dually identified for special education services. To ensure that ongoing professional learning is sustained, these investments must also focus on the infrastructure of teacher learning and support, includes time for planning and collaboration, teachers on special assignment, instructional coaches, and other supports built into the system.

3. **Invest in an EL and LTEL Initiative Focused on Building District and School Leadership Capacity.** The Initiative could provide grants to districts and county offices to build capacity and provide ongoing professional development for teacher leaders and administrators to meet the needs of LTELs and prevent those at risk from becoming LTELs. This would help expand the pool of current and future leaders prepared to plan and implement effective and equitable programs for these students. Research supports the importance of leadership at all levels of the education system in providing guidance, oversight, allocating resources, and setting organizational priorities—among other roles that facilitate all the factors discussed in these recommendations. The importance of state, school district, and site leadership was highlighted by participants in the LTEL survey, for example, noting the positive influence of leaders' attention to supporting LTEL outcomes. This LTEL Initiative could be modeled on the 21 California School Leadership Academies.

B. **Resources and Planning** *(aligned with principle three of the EL Roadmap focused on "system conditions that support effectiveness," including investing adequate resources and principle four focused on "alignment and articulation within and across systems").* The importance of LTEL-specific plans and goals with dedicated resources was a common sentiment of survey participants. They mentioned that the plans they developed kept them focused on these students and held them accountable to work toward the goals for improvement set in their LCAPs and other plans.

1. **Ensure Equitable Allocation and Investment of Funds.** Ensure that all state and federal funds, including resources designated for COVID rescue efforts, are equitably allocated and that school districts intentionally target some of these funds for ELs and LTELs. This includes ensuring that adequate proportions of the investments in the 2021-22 California Budget[54] for specific programs, such as expanded learning, community schools, early education, and dual enrollment, among others, reach EL and LTEL students. These investments can be coupled with stronger accountability and guidance for funding currently targeted to these students, such as LCFF concentration and supplemental funds.

2. **Require identification of LTELs and Students at Risk of Becoming LTELs in District Plans.** Amend the state LCAP Template to specifically identify LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs as a cohort of ELs that should be addressed when defining actions and services for ELs. In addition, require districts to set specific differentiated growth targets in their LCAPs for ELs and LTELs.

3. **Invest in and Ensure that CDE and County Offices of Education Deliver Support Focused on Meeting the Needs of LTELs and Students at Risk.** Provide additional investment for the California Department of Education and County Offices of Education (COEs) to promote and facilitate school districts to implement the program and policy guidance provided in the English Learner Roadmap. Within their differentiated assistance, COEs should include strategies for LTEL success at all three levels of differentiated assistance, plans for assisting districts with these strategies over time (rather than "one and done" efforts), and personnel with the expertise to provide this assistance. Within the COE's Multi-Tiered System of Support, ensure that strategies for supporting these students are provided at all levels of intervention.

C. **Curriculum and Instruction** *(aligned with principle two of the EL Roadmap focused on "intellectual quality of instruction and meaningful access").* State policy support and encouragement are necessary to ensure the development and implementation of curriculum and instructional practices that improve outcomes for ELs and LTELs. We learned from our survey and interviews that while many school districts were engaging in research and practice-supported strategies and approaches, many were not, for various reasons, including a lack of available appropriate materials.

1. **Invest in the Expansion and Support for Implementation of Research-Based Instructional Programs that Prevent Students from Becoming LTELs.** This includes investments in the expansion of dual-language programs that promote EL's language and content progress in both English and their primary language. It also includes investing in language-rich and intentional high-quality integrated and designated ELD so that language development is provided across the curriculum. These investments will facilitate the ability of ELs to meet the threshold necessary for reclassification and success beyond reclassification.

2. **Prioritize Expansion of Programs and Services for Dual Language Learners in the Expansion of the California State Preschool Program and Transitional Kindergarten.** Ensure the expansion of programs and services for dual language learners as part of the state's investment in early childhood education. This includes California's recent commitment to provide access to universal

transitional kindergarten for all four-year-old children by 2025 and expand the California State Preschool Program (CSPP). By some estimates, 60 percent of children under age six come from homes where English is not the primary language. By supporting these students early on in their home language and English, California can reduce the number of those who become LTELs or at risk of becoming LTELs.

3. **Ensure LTELs Can Participate in the Full Curriculum, Including all Courses to Meet High School Graduation and Post-Secondary Requirements.** To support expanded access to the full curriculum, the state must invest in expanding opportunities for ELs and LTELs to engage in work- and project-based learning as ways of deepening their understanding and demonstrating what they've learned. Programs such as those supported by the Career Pathways Trust[55] and Linked Learning among others can facilitate and support the meaningful and equitable participation of EL and LTEL students. Within middle school and high school, expanding the AVID LTEL program can be helpful.

4. **Expand the Variety and Availability of Instructional Materials that Support English Language Development.** Clarify that within all curriculum frameworks, alignment to standards includes both content and ELD standards, as exemplified by the ELA/ELD Framework. This will support the state and district material adoptions to ensure that all approved materials are designed to meet the needs of ELs. The state should also continue to support the submission of much-needed instructional materials that promote ELD designed specifically for LTELs as well as materials to support instruction in dual language programs. These materials would support our vision of an integrated curriculum designed to meet the academic language needs of students that unlocks access to the content. Several survey participants indicated the need for interesting, rigorous, and grade-level-appropriate curricular materials to support LTELs in classrooms with their English-fluent peers where they should spend the great majority of their learning time, and in well-designed rigorous courses providing the targeted academic language skills these students need. Note: In no circumstances should LTELs be relegated to an LTEL "track."

D. **Data, Accountability, and Assessments** *(aligned with principle three of the EL Roadmap focused on "system conditions that support effectiveness," including assessment, and principle four focused on "alignment and articulation within and across systems").* Data collection on LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs is essential for understanding the strengths and needs of these students. Data should be accessible to inform the development of intentional, targeted courses, instruction, curriculum, materials, and professional learning across the disciplines. This information should also be used to monitor student progress for state and local accountability and communicate with families and students about successes and areas for improvement.

1. **Set Statewide Goals for EL, RFEP, and LTEL Student Achievement.** The state must set clear visionary goals for districts to meet when it comes to the achievement of these students. Specifically, a goal must be set to reduce the number and percentage of LTEL students and students at risk of becoming LTELs by half by 2030. To determine that RFEPs are continuing to succeed after reclassification, set a clear goal for their achievement to remain on par or above that of English only students across all measures monitored at the state and local level (e.g., ELA, Math, A-G completion rates, graduation rates).

2. **Disaggregate Achievement and Progress Data for Different Typologies of ELs.** Within the California Schools Dashboard, DataQuest, and all state-level reporting on student outcomes—EL, RFEP, LTEL, and newcomer student achievement outcomes should be reported separately. Within the current accountability system, which combines RFEP and EL students into a single EL indicator, the need to support ELs, LTELs, and RFEPs is masked. This is most problematic in grades 6-12 since there

are many more RFEPs than ELs in these grades, making LTELs invisible. This change will also help RFEPs continue to achieve after they are reclassified by tracking their ongoing achievement on all measures monitored at the state and local level. Further, this will help districts and the state determine progress toward meeting previously mentioned goals.

3. **Report Data on ELs and LTELs Dually Identified for Special Education Services.** The numbers and outcomes of students dually identified for special education services must be reported in the state data system, including Data Quest. Further, the state should strengthen guidance and resources to ensure these students are correctly identified and provided with targeted interventions that best meet their needs.

E. **Engagement, Relationships, and Student Focus** *(aligned with principle one of the EL Roadmap focused on "assets-oriented and needs responsive schools")*. There is extensive research on the positive impact of strong family-school relationships as well as a body of work on the importance of students' connection and relationship with school and the adults and youth they encounter there. This was reinforced both by survey responses about the importance of relationships for EL and LTEL student learning and well-being, and by what we learned in the deeper-dive interviews with districts that are successfully supporting the success of these students.

1. **Support Efforts to Develop District Capacity to Meaningfully Engage with Families and Communities.** The state can strengthen its efforts and support for LEAs to foster the meaningful engagement of EL stakeholders and families. Moreover, all state guidance must continue to emphasize that effective engagement must be ongoing and continue to adapt based on feedback. One example of how the state can support such engagement is by continuing to support the CCEE Community Engagement Initiative and including information for parents about LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs.

2. **Support the Expansion of School-Based Mentors Focused on Engaging LTEL students.** Create a program of community and/or school-based mentors for LTEL students both to increase students' knowledge and understanding and reinforce their connectedness and relationships with trusted adults.

3. **Expand Student Voice Across the System.** The state should invest in an initiative to expand youth voice. This can include grants to districts seeking to pilot innovative ways to engage students in the LCAP development process, including students who are ELs and LTELs. It can also include the dissemination of district best practices with implementation support coming from COEs, such as the expansion of student shadowing and other strategies that focus on the student experience.

RECOMMENDED DISTRICT ACTIONS

The above changes in state policy would provide districts with additional support and guidance in their efforts to improve outcomes for ELs, LTELs, and students at risk of becoming LTELs. Nonetheless, there is much that districts can do within the existing state policy context. The following are potential actions that school districts can take to address the needs of these students. Districts can also use this list as a tool for reflecting on strengths and need for improvement in how they are currently serving EL and LTEL students.

A. **Educator Preparation and Professional Learning.** To support educator preparation and professional learning, does the district:

1. Have a comprehensive professional learning plan that includes teachers, school leaders, and district leaders, focused on meeting the needs of LTELs, including:
    a. Adequate human and financial resources dedicated to carrying out the plan?
    b. The professional learning and collaboration of 6th-12th grade counselors and teachers across subject areas?
    c. Regular time and space for teachers across curricula and courses to collaborate on programs, strategies, courses, and to identify materials and best practices for serving LTELs and monitoring their progress?
    d. Professional development focused on implementing specific components of the EL Roadmap for all staff?
2. Ensure professional learning and time for collaboration between classroom and special education teachers to understand the needs of LTELs, including:
    a. Differentiating language issues from special education issues?
    b. Reviewing students' cumulative records to determine the specific learning disability and how best to target the language and learning needs of the dually identified students?
    c. Providing effective services to ELs and LTELs who have been appropriately identified for special education services?
3. Invest in the development of school and district leaders with the skills and understanding to promote the success of all EL and LTEL students?
4. Partner with local universities, community colleges, and other entities to establish and grow your programs, teacher residencies, intern programs, and other programs that support the recruitment and preparation of teachers with the appropriate credentials?

B. **Resources and Planning.** To support resource and planning, does the district:

1. Have an EL Master Plan (or similar plan) that includes a clear plan for placement and program for LTELs that:
    a. Is developed through the engagement of educators across all curricula and courses?
    b. Is developed with the engagement of counselors to ensure appropriate placement and counseling for LTELs?
    c. Includes clear goals and expectations for language development, achievement, and reclassification?
    d. Allocates adequate resources to meet these goals?
    e. Has goals and resources written into the LCAP to ensure alignment?
    f. Ensures that all necessary elements are drafted in a way that is understandable, available, and frequently communicated to all stakeholders, including students, families, and educators?

2. Make planning and resource-use decisions prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable students, including LTELs. (For example, by ensuring that classes for LTELs are the first rather than the last consideration in crafting the master schedule, again to avoid the development of an LTEL track of classes)?
3. Allocate resources to monitor and support RFEP student achievement in grades 6-12 to ensure their achievement remains on par with that of English-only peers?

C. **Curriculum and Instruction.** To support curriculum and instruction, does the district:

1. Include investments in instructional materials for meeting the needs of LTELs in the district master plan, LCAP, and other planning documents?
2. Ensure that LTELs are provided with a well-rounded education that meets high school graduation and college entrance requirements and does not separate them from their non-EL peers (except for designated or specialized ELD/LTEL classes), by:
    a. Providing supports for these students to enroll and be successful in the variety of content and language courses (along with their non-EL and non-LTEL peers) necessary to meet graduation and college admission requirements?
    b. Ensuring that specialized LTEL courses are designed to address their specific needs, and are engaging, rigorous, and meet A-G and graduation requirements?
    c. Reviewing student schedules to ensure that LTELs have access to the arts, physical education, and other electives encompassed in a well-rounded education?
    d. Implementing work-based learning opportunities and programs (such as Linked Learning) that provide students with highly motivating learning experiences, practical interpersonal and job skills, and a window into possibilities for ongoing education and future work?
    e. Establishing partnerships with community colleges and adult schools to ensure participation in dual enrollment courses?
    f. Expanding learning time during the school day to ensure opportunities for electives (such as through a zero period or an afterschool program)?
3. Deliver programs that are supported by research indicating their efficacy in promoting EL achievement in elementary schools as a way to reduce the number of students who might become LTELs or at risk of becoming LTELs, by:
    a. Expanding multilingual and dual-language programs?
    b. Aligning these programs with early childhood education to ensure that the needs of dual language learners are met in English and their home language?

D. **Data, Accountability, and Assessment.** To support data, accountability, and assessment, does the district:

1. Monitor and support the achievement of students at risk of becoming LTELs and LTELs by:
    a. Designing and supporting local assessment structures that provide information to identify and improve outcomes for these students?
    b. Providing time and support for teachers to understand, share, and use these data to develop interventions?
    c. Establishing a plan for how teachers will share these data with students and their families?

2. Monitor and support RFEP student achievement to ensure it is on par with that of English-only peers, by:
    a. Tracking their progress across all grades and all statewide and local measures?
    b. Establishing a plan for supporting these students when necessary?
3. Disaggregate EL achievement data by LTEL and students at risk of becoming LTELs and use that information to inform planning?

E. **Engagement, Relationships, and Student Focus.** To support engagement, relationships, and student focus, does the district:

1. Authentically engage LTEL students and students at risk of becoming LTELs by:
    a. Working with students, educators, and communities to develop a plan for engaging and listening to these students about their experiences and needs?
    b. Convening a group of these students or conducting individual student interviews to discuss what support they need to develop proficiency in language and literacy and inform planning?
    c. Incorporating student shadowing to further inform data and monitoring structures?
    d. Engaging individual students to help them better understand their LTEL status, set goals, and monitor their own progress?
2. Expand student engagement and access to mentors, by:
    a. Developing and supporting partnerships with local businesses and organizations that can provide meaningful work-based learning opportunities, exposure to bilingual professionals, and mentors?
    b. Providing guidance on appropriate conditions and actions both for businesses and students who participate in these programs?
    c. Linking coursework to these real-world engaging experiences?
3. Develop a plan for communicating and engaging with families in ongoing, varied, and meaningful ways, by:
    a. Ensuring that parents informed of their child's status as "at risk" or LTEL, are provided with a description of the intentional instructions and program services that will be provided, along with goals for developing language and literacy proficiency?
    b. Allocating resources for ensuring that non-English fluent families can participate fully within all school and district activities?
    c. Ensuring regular communication with families in their home language that includes updates about student progress, requirements for graduation and college entrance, student successes, and opportunities available for students and families to participate?
    d. Developing partnerships with organizations that can help plan and facilitate family engagement in ways that are meaningful and culturally relevant?

CONCLUSION

California's future demands a public education system that serves each and every child, one that fully prepares students for graduation and success after high school. This requires an educational system that prioritizes the success of California's over one million ELs and over 200,000 LTELs.

The last ten years have seen several policy changes that support EL students—including long-term English learners and those at risk of becoming LTELs. The local control funding formula provides districts with funding that can be targeted to meet these students' needs. Districts now must identify LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs and must inform parents of their children's status and plans for addressing their needs. With the 2016 passage of the California Ed.G.E. Initiative, school districts can make decisions about the best instructional approaches for their EL students—including those that promote biliteracy and call on students' primary language for instruction. The ELA/ELD framework provides guidance on targeted ELD and how to infuse English language development across the curriculum. And the 2017 California State Board adoption of a comprehensive EL policy, the EL Roadmap, provides districts and schools the guidance and tools to implement these and other policies in ways that best support EL, LTEL, and those at risk of becoming LTEL students.

These policy tools are necessary but not sufficient. They require our investment of time, resources, and ongoing attention to achieve the vision proposed for California's education system in the EL Roadmap. The survey results included in this report show that while many districts are implementing research-supported strategies to meet EL needs and avoid their becoming LTELs, many others are not. And while it is gratifying to see that the numbers and percentage of ELs who are LTELs has decreased slightly over the past decade—continuing this slow rate of change will leave far too many students behind.

It is time to be bold and recommit to improving outcomes for ELs and LTELs. The pandemic has shed a glaring light on the gaps in student opportunity that have existed for years—and the influx of state and federal funds creates an opening for us to address these gaps. Now is not the time for complacency but for using these policy gains and new resources to redouble our efforts and accelerate progress so that the seeds of progress sown over the past decade bear fruit in the next.

APPENDIX 1: COUNTIES WITH ENROLLMENT OF LTELS IN GRADES 6-12, 2019-20

County	ELs	LTELs	% of ELs who are LTELs	% of All CA LTELs
Los Angeles	99,213	44,311	45%	21.7%
Orange	41,431	19,062	46%	9.3%
San Diego	37,289	15,786	42%	7.7%
Riverside	30,721	15,690	51%	7.7%
San Bernardino	26,158	13,513	52%	6.6%
Santa Clara	21,992	9,290	42%	4.6%
Fresno	14,462	7,340	51%	3.6%
Alameda	17,047	6,802	40%	3.3%
Sacramento	16,111	6,801	42%	3.3%
San Joaquin	12,686	6,160	49%	3.0%
Kern	13,215	6,098	46%	3.0%
Contra Costa	11,908	5,639	47%	2.8%
Stanislaus	9,874	4,785	48%	2.3%
Tulare	9,757	4,638	48%	2.3%
Monterey	8,745	4,452	51%	2.2%
Ventura	9,369	4,262	45%	2.1%
San Mateo	7,649	2,887	38%	1.4%
Santa Barbara	5,560	2,752	49%	1.3%
Imperial	6,838	2,622	38%	1.3%
San Francisco	7,086	2,454	35%	1.2%
Merced	5,039	2,314	46%	1.1%
Santa Cruz	3,778	2,118	56%	1.0%
Sonoma	4,284	1,879	44%	0.9%
Madera	2,729	1,392	51%	0.7%
Solano	2,746	1,227	45%	0.6%
Kings	1,966	1,005	51%	0.5%
Yolo	1,769	810	46%	0.4%
Napa	1,572	736	47%	0.4%
San Luis Obispo	1,649	711	43%	0.3%
Marin	1,896	647	34%	0.3%
Placer	1,747	614	35%	0.3%
Mendocino	1,064	530	50%	0.3%

County	ELs	LTELs	% of ELs who are LTELs	% of All CA LTELs
Sutter	1,175	507	43%	0.2%
Yuba	1,066	496	47%	0.2%
San Benito	1,178	472	40%	0.2%
El Dorado	749	374	50%	0.2%
Colusa	680	359	53%	0.2%
Inyo	473	356	75%	0.2%
Tehama	712	310	44%	0.2%
Butte	594	279	47%	0.1%
Humboldt	540	276	51%	0.1%
Nevada	737	252	34%	0.1%
Lake	536	238	44%	0.1%
Shasta	380	162	43%	0.1%
Glenn	364	150	41%	0.1%
Mono	301	133	44%	0.1%
Modoc	126	72	57%	0.0%
Del Norte	132	72	55%	0.0%
Siskiyou	81	39	48%	0.0%
Calaveras	90	39	43%	0.0%
Tuolumne	77	35	45%	0.0%
Lassen	54	28	52%	0.0%
Plumas	37	20	54%	0.0%
Trinity	27	15	56%	0.0%
Mariposa	33	15	45%	0.0%
Amador	36	13	36%	0.0%
Sierra	6	3	50%	0.0%
Alpine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
California	**447,534**	**204,042**	**46%**	**100%**

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