

# The Campaign for a Multilingual Schooling System for California

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Californians Together is a statewide advocacy coalition of powerful organizations from all segments of the education community including teachers, administrators, board members, parents and civil rights non-profit groups. Our member organizations come together around the goal of better educating 1.1 million English learners by improving California's schools and promoting equitable educational policy.

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## INTRODUCTION

California is a multilingual state with nearly 200 languages spoken in California homes. We are the most linguistically diverse state in our nation. About 41.5% of California's school students speak a language other than English in their homes. About 60% of children ages zero to eight have home languages other than English. California schools enroll nearly 1.1 million who are classified as English Learners (ELs). Positioned on the Pacific Rim, with the fifth largest economy in the world, California is a major player in a global economy. Our cultural and linguistic diversity are remarkable assets for the state, as bilingualism is linked not only to economic growth, but also to improved health, social empathy, community cohesion, educational attainment and civic engagement. Our cultural and linguistic diversity enriches community life across the state.

In a turn away from what had been a quarter century of English-Only education campaigns and policy, in the past decade California began to build a policy framework to foster more robust, research-based language and dual language education. Our State Seal of Biliteracy fostered a national movement to honor the skill of proficiency in two or more languages on the diplomas of graduating seniors. Now every state in the union has adopted the Seal, and over a half million California students have received the honor. In 2016, California voters overturned key provisions of the restrictive English Only Proposition 227 policy—opening the door again to bilingual approaches. The following year, the aspirational California English Learner Roadmap policy was adopted to supersede Proposition 227, calling for assets based education that values the cultures and languages of students and provides intellectually rich instruction and meaningful access to the full curriculum for the state's English learner students. In 2020, a Global California 2030 call to action from the then State Superintendent of Instruction issued a set of goals towards creating a schooling system to support biliteracy.

Yet “on the ground”, California schools continue to perpetuate subtractive schooling in which students who enroll in CA schools lose their home language as they develop English, only a small minority of students graduate biliterate, and gaps in educational outcomes persist between English learners and students who are “English Only”. As research increasingly documents the benefits of dual language education over English-only instruction, and evidence builds about the benefits of biliteracy to individuals and to society, a far more robust strategy is called for in order to create the schooling system appropriate to who California is and what California needs.

The following Framework for a Multilingual Education for All Campaign outlines the vision and goal of a comprehensive long-view campaign, a suggested rationale, components and strategy to build the conditions and policy commitments in California to embed multilingualism as a signature feature of our schools. The Framework was developed after a year of exploration, research, interviews and dialogues—with educators, advocates, policymakers. We are particularly indebted to the UCLA Civil Rights Project and their briefs on moving Bilingual Education forward, to the participants and co-sponsors of our April 2024 convening kicking off this effort, to the entire Californians Together coalition, and to the many educators and advocates who consented to be interviewed for their perspectives on a campaign for multilingual education in California.

## THE VISION

The affirmation and development of multilingualism will be a signature feature of California education P-12, as is appropriate for our richly diverse state and our global economy. The development of multilingualism will be a core feature of a rigorous educational program that prepares all students for a global world, and closes achievement gaps for the culturally and linguistically diverse students in our state by providing research-based dual language educational models. Multilingualism will be a win for the California economy providing a labor force with skills to participate and lead in our diverse communities and in an international and global economy. Through the emphasis on multilingualism, our schools will foster connections across communities, across the world, and prepare our students to thrive in an interconnected diverse world. Multilingualism is internationally the norm, and by developing schools that promote multilingualism, we join with nations throughout the world that recognize the social, intellectual and economic benefits of multilingual skills.

In a multilingual schooling system, every student will be engaged in some form of language study, affirmation of multilingualism will be a permeating value, opportunities for development of proficiency in two or more languages will be built into the schooling of all students, and dual language/biliteracy programs will be the standard for English learners.

California is a large state with a wide range of local community contexts. The demographics of each community, the size and resources of school districts, and local priorities all shape the specific options for multilingual education that are possible and preferable. The vision is a state with multiple multiliteracy programs and delivery options –all serving as pathways to the benefits of multilingualism. This will include dual language/biliteracy programs, but will also allow for the district and demographic contexts that require other program models including, for example, world language programs, bilingual language enrichment opportunities, community-based models, heritage language, and tribal language revitalization, etc.

Because home language abandonment and language loss occur at very young ages, and because 0-8 is a major phase for language development, the commitment to multilingual education will begin with preschool/early education and will continue through graduation from high school. No languages lost! The program models and delivery are not a one-size-fits-all mandate, but all are focused upon affirming multilingualism and preparing all students for engagement with languages in addition to English—with the goal of literacy and proficiency in two or more languages—and the promise that all students in California will experience engagement in language study in two or more languages.

Whether this eventually is approached as a high school graduation state requirement for all students, an EdCode programmatic requirement P-12, as a formal board-adopted State Plan for Multiliteracy, or approached through a different policy mechanism is yet to be identified. However, it will specifically impact the base English Learner program by augmenting the current Integrated and Designated ELD with bilingual/ dual language instruction as the standard program for all English Learners (wherever possible). The “roll out” will prioritize EL-classified student access to programs. The promise is that every child who enters as an English learner will become English proficient, will leverage and develop their home language as part of their educational journey, and graduate from high school literate in two or more languages.

A vision is a description of the end-goal, of a systems commitment. Once the vision and end goal are established and committed to, the work focuses upon creating the conditions for effective and successful implementation.



## COMPONENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN:

### BUILDING THE CONDITIONS, PAVING THE WAY

For each of the following “conditions” that need to be addressed in order to pave the way for statewide provision of multiliteracy education, there are interim policy steps and investments proposed. Each of these areas require “building out” into specific policy proposals and recommendations for philanthropic action, legislation, budget asks, and other actions.

#### A. Establish the vision as a state commitment with benchmarks and timelines

The framework and basic commitment to creating a schooling system for California with the goal of multilingual proficiency for all students should be formally established with a timeline for establishing the conditions and fully implementing the promise by 2035. This commitment should include benchmark indicators, and a state process for measuring progress towards those benchmarks.

#### B. Address the Teacher Shortage/Build the Teacher Workforce

A major lesson from history is that mandating programs before there is sufficient capacity for districts to be able to implement those programs is a recipe for ineffective programs, backlash and rejection. A major roadblock even to the current level of effort to start and expand dual language/bilingual programs has been the shortage of bilingual teachers. This was one of the first and highest priority challenges to a Multilingual Education for All campaign that was raised by people interviewed in the past year. A primary component in creating the conditions for our vision will be a robust set of initiatives and investments to build the bilingual teacher workforce. Lessons from the Bilingual Teacher Pipeline Development Project grants should be gleaned. A specific omnibus bilingual workforce development piece of legislation could include support for all/some of the following ideas—or these could be approached as pilots for philanthropy to support:

- Require all teacher education programs in the state to offer bilingual authorizations, with funding to build and support those bilingual authorization programs.
- Amend the Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) for all California teacher credentials to include competencies related to bilingual pedagogy and global education.
- Provide stipends for candidates to obtain their bilingual authorizations
- Expand and support the development of the Integrated Credential with the bilingual authorization within a system of 4-year BA Bilingual Teacher credential programs at CSU and UC teacher preparation programs.
- Create a pipeline for Bilingual instructional Assistants to move into teaching positions
- Grant additional credential flexibility and provide substantial resources for Seal of Biliteracy recipients interested in pursuing bilingual teaching roles in TK or the broader TK–12 education system. Include collaboration between high schools and universities on the development of high school CTEs, Bilingual clubs, etc.
- Create high school bilingual teacher academies as career education pathways.
- Recruit high school seniors upon graduation with the State Seal of Biliteracy to be employed to work in TK classrooms while enrolled at the university.

- Provide professional development aimed at non-bilingual teachers on supportive bilingual pedagogy within English instructed settings—with certificates/badges
- Grow the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program by an order of magnitude, providing at least \$200 million in funding for the next round of grants.
- Concentrate future Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program grants into larger awards for teacher training programs with strong foundations in bilingual teacher preparation, as well as with the potential to scale up rapidly.
- Commit at least half of future Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program grants towards alternative teacher credentialing pathways, such as apprenticeships, residencies, and/or “grow-your-own” models.
- Prioritize the training of bilingual teachers in all subsequent rounds of California’s Teacher Residency Grant Program, Golden State Pathways Program, and Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program
- Launch a statewide program to provide bilingual teacher candidates with stipend support during their student teaching service.
- Invest greater resources in new pathways for bilingual early educators to gain the credentials they need to serve in California’s rapidly growing transitional kindergarten system.

### **C. Develop, Define, Describe diverse Delivery Models and Program Options**

Multilingual Education for All depends on providing a variety of models and delivery options that address local contexts and demographics. While strong documentation, definition and guidance exist for effective two-way Dual Language programs and Developmental Bilingual programs, there is less field knowledge or clear definition and guidance for other multilingual education models. To some degree this is a task of pulling together existing research and program descriptions that address specific contexts (e.g., superdiverse language settings, specific languages, small rural districts with fewer teaching resources, community-based language programs and partnerships, tribal language revitalization). It may require combing the state for a variety of multilingual Bright Spots and approaches that serve different demographic, linguistic and district contexts. It might also include funding pilots of delivery approaches for contexts that are less well developed and tested (e.g., small dispersed rural districts). The end result should be a description of a variety of options for multilingual education for inclusion in state policy and guidance. The process of selecting, piloting, researching and defining these options should include a review of research and evidence on effectiveness, good documentation of components of the models, and vetting of the approach by educators, school leaders and community members in the various contexts that options are meant to address.

### **D. Design accountability measures and systems, and develop biliteracy assessments**

Goals for California school outcomes must be measured, and provisions put in place that meaningfully, fairly and equitably hold our schools accountable for providing effective programs and supports that enable students to reach desired outcomes. The disincentives to multiliteracy education of an English-only assessment and accountability system that currently exist have to be erased. The second language has to “count”, and attainment of biliteracy and proficiency in multiple languages has to be assessed as part of state monitoring of outcomes. This requires developing systems indicators based on “inputs”, as well as student assessments that validly measure student multilingual skills through which students can demonstrate performance and growth towards

multilingual proficiency. It also requires adjusting current monolingual expectations applied to multilingual learners in order to measure growth along biliteracy trajectories. While bilingual/biliteracy assessments are needed for all languages, the priority should be given to developing/selecting assessments in at least the top five languages in California schools—beginning with Spanish. A Dashboard category of Multilingual/Multiliteracy Engagement and Attainment can incorporate participation data, Seal of Biliteracy awards, progress towards attainment of standards of proficiency in languages other than English, etc. The State System of Support can incorporate the implementation of biliteracy programs as one model of differentiated assistance leading to better outcomes for ELs.

### **E. Develop strong state guidance and resources on effective multiliteracy program models—and build/draw upon external expertise**

To develop and ensure quality multiliteracy programs, the state needs to adopt clear guidance articulating the components and characteristics of effective approaches, and couple this with the provision of technical assistance and professional learning related to implementation. While the Guiding Principles for DLI provides guidance for two-way dual language programs, similar guidance does not currently exist for other models of multiliteracy programs and multilingual approaches. A state Framework for Multilingual Education would serve as both an important resource to districts in implementing programs, and as the basis for building coherence across the state.

There are existing non-profit technical assistance and professional development organizations that provide support and training in dual language education and multilingual approaches. Their current capacity is limited, however, and far from adequate to support a statewide initiative. Funding for those entities to increase capacity, plus the development of additional California state resources (e.g., CDE positions, frameworks and guidance, funding for building multilingual capacity within county offices of education, etc.) is needed to support the field.

As an aspirational and systemic initiative, the building of multilingual education into CA education will require a state INFRASTRUCTURE to coordinate, monitor and support.

### **F. Build a Funding model that incentivizes and adequately supports the expansion and implementation of Multilingual Education statewide**

Starting, expanding, building programs require investment. To the extent that multilingual education is an expansion of the curriculum and reach for California schools, resources are and will be needed to support staffing, materials and infrastructure. It cannot be done responsibly or well without a funding mechanism that both incentivizes multiliteracy education and also addresses the supplemental costs of implementation. California's current financial situation, and the school funding mechanisms are not adequate, and this makes adopting and delivering multiliteracy programs statewide as problematic.

Funding needs to provide for the initial costs of starting and expanding programs, as well as the ongoing costs of delivery. It needs to support building capacity and a workforce adequate to delivering effective practices. Costs would include, for example, bilingual teacher stipends for the extra work of curriculum planning across languages, collaborative time for teachers to align curriculum across languages, materials development and purchase, addressing extra time in the day for curriculum delivery, expanding world language/bilingual staffing positions, etc. The development of materials (particularly for languages other than Spanish) involves searching for what is

available and adapting it for California standards-based instruction. Planning grants and implementation grants, start-up seed grants and short-term funding mechanisms to move the field forward, but the ongoing costs and incentives to build a system of multilingual education statewide would require changes in funding formula overall.

### **G. Infuse multilingualism as a value and a presence throughout California's education initiatives, frameworks and systems**

The value of and support for multilingualism should be reflected throughout California's education initiatives, frameworks and systems. Every major piece of California education guidance and policy should be reviewed through the lens of a multilingual "audit" to ensure they reflect the conditions and values that embrace multilingual students and multilingualism. This might include a Multilingual Impact Report or set of multilingual impact indicators that are applied to new initiatives and education legislation, or a set of multilingual supportive principles that infuse California frameworks and initiatives. This is part of dismantling what has been a subtractive schooling system and a monolingual lens in education, and also is needed to build coherence and synergy across the educational experience that is needed to give life to the commitment to provide a 21st century global and multilingual education for students across the state.





## STRATEGIES

### Collective Impact

The approach to fleshing out and implementing the Campaign is to engage in and leverage the power of collective impact. This means establishing the common agenda and shared vision of what we are trying to accomplish—our vision of multilingual education as a feature of California schooling—and then establishing and supporting mutually reinforcing activities to accomplish that vision. All with a central coordinating mechanism to facilitate connection, communication, alignment and coherence across the work. This will involve both focus-specific Working Groups, and also regional work.

#### A. Collective impact that leverages the expertise of focus-specific Working Groups

A comprehensive campaign has to draw upon diverse areas of expertise and reach. Those who can best inform and shape effective approaches to building teacher capacity are not necessarily the same as those who can provide thoughtful models of funding mechanisms, etc. The establishment of Working Groups focusing on key components of the campaign will enable deep thinking to occur simultaneously in each of the areas that a Multilingual Education approach for California has to develop. It also facilitates the engagement of people across the state in those aspects of the vision that most closely impact their part of the system. The coherence, communication and alignment across these Working Groups will occur through a coordinating body of representatives of the Working Groups convened by Californians Together.

#### B. Collective impact through development of regional models, regional organizing and regional voice(s) for multilingual education

A statewide movement towards adoption of multilingual education as a standard feature of California education should be built upon, in tandem with and through local/regional campaigns. California is a large diverse state—with a strong commitment to local control. The different regional and local contexts across our mighty land both enact and inform state policy in unique ways. And the “work” of creating change in our schools occurs differently and primarily within those regional contexts. Attention to building regional models and regional voices for multilingual education is a critical strategy for our statewide campaign. Ideally, regional campaigns would occur in at least three (if not all) of the following areas of the state: a) Central Valley, b) rural northern California, c) greater Los Angeles region, d) Silicon Valley and e) Imperial/San Diego “border” f) Inland Empire, and g) Central coast regions. The models of what multilingual education can look like and needs to be differs in each of these regions. The unique “voice” and set of voices representing each of those regions provides important heft, rationale and purpose for our campaign.

Comprehensive investment in at least a few of these regions is part of developing models of multilingual education that work in different contexts, and is necessary for building political relationships and rationale for multilingualism in California. Within each region, a preschool through graduation and workforce aligned approach can be modeled and a range of multiliteracy education approaches explored. The connection between IHE teacher preparation, workforce, and school district can be forged. Networks across districts within these regions can provide supports that individual districts may not be able to mount. Parent and community organizing around local

campaigns to build demand for and install aspects of multilingual education connect to other local priorities and concerns.

## **Build general awareness, understanding, demand across the state for a multilingual education system**

School board members, school leaders, the public, parents, communities, and legislators do not yet fully understand the “why” and importance of multiliteracy education for California as a state and for our students. A robust effort is needed to build attention to the issue through public meetings, conference presentations, written materials in magazines and blogs and social media, hosted visits to effective programs, working through the committee mechanisms of the key education organizations in the state (e.g., CSBA, CTA, CFT, ACSA, PTA) and embedding core messages across the work of education and social justice advocacy organizations in the state. Building and spreading a shared narrative and key messages across all of these venues will support the specific policy and program work of creating multilingual schools. Work on narrative change has been going on for a while in California. Shared messaging and additional local additive pieces that represent needs and demands in context will build both “echoes” across the state, and authentic voicing of how multiliteracy fits within and with other educational justice frames. A variety of voices and roles are essential. The voices of young people (those who are and prize multilingualism, as well as those who have been shut out from multilingualism), parent and community voices, business and industry leaders, entertainers, researchers on impacts and effectiveness of multilingual education, administrators and teachers telling the stories of effective programs—all are needed.

As part of building the demand across the state, the campaign strategy should support and provide training in advocacy skills related to moving a campaign for multilingual education forward. Advocacy can be supported through mechanisms such as ELLLI and Teach Plus and PIQE parent training, by providing a specific focus on what a multilingual schooling system can be, understanding levers and actions to attain changes in schools, and building advocacy skills to carry the message.

The campaign should be augmented by an Advisory group of business and industry leaders, school superintendents and educational leaders who understand the power of multilingualism and the important positive impacts a multilingual schooling system can have for our state, our economy and our communities.

## **Move with the Willing, and build momentum**

There are (and have been) communities, school sites and districts engaged in building multilingual and dual language schools. There are others “raring to go”, ready to move forward but grappling with various challenges in their way. When the California legislature funded Dual Language Immersion start up and expansion grants, many more districts applied than were able to be funded. And, the amounts were small. While down the road it may take state requirements and incentives and perhaps even mandates to bring about universal multilingual education, at this point there are many communities and districts willing and wanting to move forward. Those efforts need to be supported as part of getting multilingualism to as many students as we can now, and for purposes of building momentum and presence in the state. Investments (state grants, philanthropic grants, corporate partnerships) are needed to support the willing/wanting. Leveraging existing programs for publicizing the excitement and benefits of multilingual education is part of building momentum. The more parents, school board members, politicians SEE

what it looks like, and what it produces, the more champions for building a school system that delivers multilingual education for all students.

## Conduct and compile key research as tools for the campaign

Getting information and tools into the hands of people to advocate for building multilingual programs is essential. This includes research and talking points on the benefits of multilingualism, the efficacy of multilingual education, the purposes and impacts of providing multilingual education is important. While some of this research has been compiled and is increasingly known, there are additional pieces to be researched or compiled as part of making the case for multiliteracy education in California. These include, for example:

- Data on the achievement impacts/outcomes of dual language programs in CA specifically for ELs in comparison to ELs in English Only programs—including impacts on LTEL status, on reclassification, on fulfilling A-G. This includes data points on how multiliteracy helps close gaps.
- California data on specific employers and/or industries that prefer or seek to hire biliterate employees, and any analysis of shortages of bilingual/biliterate employees

Providing this data and analysis through written tools as well as opportunities such as webinars for people to hear about the data and engage in dialogue about implications is an important part of preparing advocates for the campaign, and also ensuring that the call for multilingual education is understood as research based.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Laurie Olsen, Ph.D. was the founding Director and now serves as Strategic Advisor to SEAL (Sobrato Early Academic Language) and has designed, demonstrated, evaluated and implemented effective PreK12th grade English Learner programs and services throughout California over the past four decades. As a researcher, writer and provider of leadership development and technical assistance related to immigrant and English Learner education and language access, Dr. Olsen has published dozens of books, articles, and videos on English Learner education, including the award winning “Made in America: Immigrant Students in U.S. School” and “Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Promise for Long Term English Learners”.

Dr. Olsen served as Co-Chair of the California Task Force to develop the English Learner Roadmap PreK-12 policy for the state, and currently leads the Design Team of EL RISE! to support statewide implementation of the CA English Learner Roadmap policy PreK-12. She holds a Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Studies in Education from U.C. Berkeley. Dr. Olsen serves as a Board Member of Californians Together.

CALIFORNIANS TOGETHER COALITION

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Alliance for a Better Community	California Council on Teacher Education	Multilingual Education for Early Childhood
Asian Pacific Islanders School Board Members Association	California Faculty Association	Multilingual Promise
Association of Mexican American Educators	California Federation of Teachers	National Resource Center for Asian Languages
California Association for Asian Pacific American Education	California Latino School Boards Association	Parent Institute for Quality Education
California Association for Bilingual Teacher Education	Catalyst California	Sobrato Early Academic Language
Association of Two-Way & Dual Language Education	Center for District Innovation and Leadership in Early Education	Teach Plus
California Association for Bilingual Education	Center for Equity for English Learners, LMU	The Children’s Partnership
California Association for Bilingual Educators PAC	Early Edge California	Unidos US
California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators	EdTrust–West	United Teachers Los Angeles
California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages	EDVance College	UNITE-LA
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