



Data, Assessment, and Accountability: Reflections for Goal Setting

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Understanding multilingual learner data for continuous improvement means prioritizing the right data and conversations to highlight multilingual learners in the school community.

School leaders can hone a culture, routines, habits and authentic purposes for engaging a school community in understanding the experiences of multilingual learners, and then, collectively, they and their teams can reflect and discuss data linked to strengthening multilingual learner student experiences and outcomes. Making this a focal point of discussion for continuous improvement is a way to invest time for data dialogue, and develop skills for data analysis across interest holders like families, staff, teachers, and administrators. This tool can support a facilitated conversation about how to link data to goals and generate a shared sense of accountability.

This tool was adapted from **The EL Roadmap Admin Toolkit Vol. IV** in partnership with Californians Together and Community Schools Learning Exchange.

Engaging the School Site in Data Practices

Annual assessments and district benchmarks are essential markers of student outcomes, but engaging educators at the school site in understanding data about current students and current practices requires focusing collectively on assessments of *learning*. Engaging school faculty in focusing on and becoming practiced at using data can powerfully illuminate what's working and what needs work, can spark productive dialogues and sharing about practice, and help shape a sense of schoolwide direction. An example from one elementary school demonstrates how this can work.

At McNeil Elementary School, before the start of the year, the faculty together choose three anchor standards (one in reading, one in writing, one in math). Grade-level teams focus on determining or designing specific assessments, performance tasks or rubrics they will use to assess student progress on those standards, and decide upon a timeline for when and how they will be administered. Using examples from the prior year, the team works to calibrate their scoring. This gives them a shared system of assessing learning on a few anchor standards that they have decided are key. The results are shared on report cards. The district office provides a data person who pulls data from the report cards and sorts and analyzes the data into accessible formats displaying both grade-level and school level trends. Work sessions (in grade-levels, and cross-grades) look for patterns in the data, explore hypotheses about what explains those patterns, and set up inquiries to be used over time to look at student learning and share effective strategies. This creates a shared focus on instruction, ownership of the data analysis process, and a culture of collective inquiry and learning.

The CA EL Roadmap is a state policy meant to guide and ensure that multilingual learners are provided the education they need—and have a right to—under equal educational opportunity protections. Schools have an obligation to provide that education and to hold themselves accountable for doing so. Under California’s local control approach, the responsibility for setting goals, monitoring progress toward goals, and allocating resources in alignment with attaining those goals is squarely on the school district. The following chart lists key hallmarks of a strong, equity-focused accountability system for multilingual learners, with description and room for your own reflections about whether and the degree to which your local system exhibits those hallmarks.

Hallmark	Reflection
<p>We have set high expectations and aspirational goals for ML progress.</p>	
<p>We focus on closing opportunity and academic gaps between ELs and non MLs.</p> <p><i>This includes comparative analyses between MLs and monolingual English students, and setting accelerated differentiated growth expectations for MLs in the LCAPs and SPSSAs that commit all educators to catching MLs up to their English-fluent peers.</i></p>	
<p>We articulate and set clear goals for the development of English proficiency, and define benchmarks along the pathway toward proficiency.</p> <p><i>This includes defining normative expectations of progress by years, and incorporating ML elements in the data such as tracking the length of time MLs have been in the system. It also requires assessing and monitoring progress against those expectations.</i></p>	



Hallmark	Reflection
<p>We set clear goals for the development of biliteracy for students in DL programs, and define benchmarks along a biliteracy trajectory.</p> <p><i>This includes defining normative expectations of progress along a biliteracy trajectory by years in the program AND by primary language, and using comparable assessments in both the target language and English.</i></p>	
<p>Our ML goals and what we measure aligns to the assets-based vision and 21st-century education goals for ML achievement as articulated in the CA EL Roadmap — including its priority on developing students’ dual language proficiency.</p>	
<p>Our goals, data entry and analyses identify and differentiate subcategories of MLs.</p> <p><i>This includes transparency about which MLs are included in definitions for calculating and analyzing specific indicators (e.g., newcomers, LTEL, SLIFE, MLs with disabilities), and articulating specific goals for these subcategories.</i></p>	
<p>We utilize meaningful and reliable assessments that reflect what MLs know and can do.</p> <p><i>This means assessments that are valid and reliable and normed for multilingual learners, are culturally and linguistically accessible, are free of bias, are administered using appropriate accommodations for MLs, and match the language of instruction.</i></p>	
<p>We monitor access and opportunity by tracking the inputs in the education of MLs.</p> <p><i>This includes placement in specific language acquisition program options, instructional minutes, access to digital and other materials, access to the full curriculum, provision of D and IELD, and appropriate staffing of programs.</i></p>	
<p>We focus on ML growth, with clear tracking of starting points, and articulation of growth expectations by year.</p>	
<p>Our system addresses goals of biliteracy by incorporating assessments that track biliteracy progress.</p>	
<p>We look for and shine a spotlight on successes and promising practices within our schools that result in progress toward our goals for MLs.</p> <p><i>This includes disaggregating ML data by program and interventions to identify successful models. High levels of progress, participation and achievement of MLs trigger identification of successful practices.</i></p>	



Hallmark	Reflection
<p>We look for and highlight areas needing improvement, and support learning and inquiry enabling schools to form hypotheses about why they have obtained certain results, and to inform further actions such as program planning and resource allocation.</p> <p><i>This fosters continuous improvement and encourages open conversations about the need for improvement, acknowledging low achievement instead of hiding it. It keeps urgency when goals for MLs are not met and identifies schools not meeting ambitious goals so support can be targeted.</i></p>	
<p>We build the capacity of educators to understand and use assessments and data meaningfully for inquiry, planning and to inform instruction, by providing training, time and support</p>	
<p>We use data collection and analysis to build understanding, inform planning, drive continuous improvement, and trigger action (including allocation of funds and resources)</p>	
<p>Decision making includes a process of asking questions about the specific impacts of programs and services and policies on MLs.</p>	
<p>We engage input from diverse interest holders—and where possible with the support of an external partner—in order to step back, look, and reflect on our overall system and practices for ML education.</p>	
<p>Educators across the system effectively analyze ML data (multiple measures, quantitative and qualitative) to make informed programmatic and instructional decisions.</p>	

(This set of indicators is derived from the Californians Together Accountability Framework, 2020)

