

How Educators Can Advocate for English Language Learners

ALL IN!

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LISTEN UP!

“All educators must become fighters for what they and their students need to be successful.”

—Lily Eskelsen Garcia, *NEA President*

I’m proud that educators are our nation’s fiercest advocates—whether lobbying for child labor laws, spearheading the modern civil rights movement, or laying the groundwork for the Bilingual Education Act, the actions of educators have helped change history.

Fifty years ago, NEA held a groundbreaking conference on bilingual education that led directly to the landmark Bilingual Education Act. Since that time, English Language Learners have grown from *The Invisible Minority* (the revealing title of NEA’s 1966 conference report) to the nation’s fastest-growing student group.

Despite this momentous demographic shift, there is a profound lack of urgency and understanding in the way in which schools perceive and educate ELL students. These bright young people have so much to offer their schools and communities, yet all too often they’re seen through a deficit lens. Too many are struggling in school when they should be soaring.

The forward-thinking educators at NEA's bilingual conference understood this reality, and five decades ago, they made a statement ahead of its time: Non-English speaking students were not deficient—the deficiency, they said, was in the materials, the techniques, and the schools. Their advocacy led to the first piece of legislation to spotlight underserved language minority students. It's a reminder to us that today's educators have the same power to affect history and the trajectory of a student's life.

NEA continues to champion English Language Learners—in court, in the community, and in the classroom. We've supported ELL-friendly legislation and education policies. We've partnered with ELL advocates around community-building initiatives. And we've provided professional development to educators throughout the nation. This amazing guidebook is the latest tool in our advocacy arsenal for educators, families, and community members who need practical strategies and step-by-step instructions on fighting for the rights of ELL students.

English Language Learners deserve the same right to a great public-school education as their English-speaking peers. They deserve access to a rich curriculum and validation of their home language and culture. They deserve educators who are trained to teach them, schools that welcome their families, and fair funding. They deserve an education community that shares a sense of urgency and responsibility for their well-being. They deserve the best we have to give them. These are America's students, and the nation can't afford to let them down.

WHY ADVOCATE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

“Advocacy is not for the faint of heart!”

—Wisconsin ELL Educator

As America’s fastest-growing student group, English Language Learners represent the greatest untapped reserve of brainpower, energy, and creativity in our schools. Like students throughout America’s history, ELLs bring cultural traditions and languages that enrich our communities, hopes and dreams that shape our nation. History teaches us that it’s a time of opportunity for our schools and our country, while common sense tells us the fate of ELLs and our nation are inextricably linked. So America’s schools have seized the moment, right? Astoundingly, the reverse is true.

This rapidly growing student demographic is so disproportionately underserved by the public school system, the number of programs and dollars spent per ELL student are in decline, even as the number of ELL students has skyrocketed. In just two short decades, ELL enrollment in U.S. schools has grown 57 percent, compared to less than four percent growth for all students. ELL students comprise more than 10 percent of the total student population, so why are so many—more than two-thirds of whom were born right here in the U.S.—caught in a struggle for equal access and opportunity?

Underserved and Underrepresented

Given their rich linguistic and cultural diversity—over 400 languages are spoken by ELLs nationwide—the dramatic leap in the number of language minority students presents great possibilities and great challenges for America’s school system. Unfortunately, these demographic changes haven’t seen parallel changes in the way schools perceive and educate ELL students.

“Advocacy is not what we do for others but what we do with others to transform our community.”

Consider the current reality:

- Many educators are underprepared to meet the linguistic and academic needs of ELLs, and many lack the cultural competence to deal with this diverse group of students.
- Current school resources are inadequate for educating ELLs. Many students tend to be enrolled in weak ELL program models; the majority receives English as a Second Language classes with little or no support for academic content, and a diminishing number receive primary language instruction.
- Lack of a standard definition for ELLs has led to inconsistencies in identifying and supporting ELL students. The programmatic support ELLs receive varies widely from school to school and district to district.
- A growing number of ELL students are becoming Long Term English Language Learners who are not progressing towards English proficiency but continuing to struggle without the skills they need for academic success.
- ELL students’ lack of proficiency or difficulty with, academic English has mistakenly led to low expectations and watered-down curricula.

All Advocacy Is Local

There is no one single method of ELL advocacy. In fact, one could argue that all advocacies, like all politics, is local, and how you advocate for your ELL students depends on the resources and opportunities available in your area. According to the U.S. Department of Education, ELL representation across states can be understood in terms of three categories:

- **High-density states**, where the percentage of public school ELLs is greater than 20 percent.
- **High-growth states**, where the shift in ELL numbers between 1999-2000 and 2009-2010 was greater than 200 percent.
- **Hybrid states** that are experiencing both high ELL density and significant growth in ELL numbers.

Different types of advocacy are needed depending on whether schools and districts have significant capacity and training in working with ELLs or whether ELLs represent a generally new population.

For example, high-growth states may have many teachers inexperienced in working with ELLs and a lack of resources to support ELLs' language growth. In contrast, high-density states may have sufficient resources but struggle with a lack of access to college preparatory courses and testing requirements that prevent ELLs from exiting ESL programs.

"Sometimes advocacy is loud and demanding. Sometimes it is silent and powerful. It burns deeply in the heart of an educator who sees a child judged by a standard that discounts her very being."

In addition to geography, it's important for advocates to consider the needs of specific ELL populations: ELL students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, migrants, refugees, gifted ELLs, recently arrived ELLs, and long-term ELLs are just a few common subgroups.

It's also important for advocates to recognize the great racial and ethnic diversity among English Language Learners. Although the majority of ELL students in U.S. schools are Hispanic, followed by those of Asian heritage, ELLs hail from around the globe. For example: Some school districts, like Dearborn, Michigan, have large concentrations of Arab-speaking students from North African and Middle Eastern countries, while school districts outside of Hawaii, like Portland, Oregon, and Kansas City, Missouri, have a growing population of Micronesian students who speak a variety of Oceanic languages.

The lesson here is that ELL students—their circumstances, countries of origin, and cultural heritages—are so diverse, the need for an in-depth understanding of the context in which students are operating can't be emphasized enough.

Demographics Are Destiny

Today, most general educators have at least one ELL in their classroom (and many have one ELL for every four students). The future of public education, and public educators, is bound with the future of English Language Learners. Schools and stakeholders can't afford not to advocate for ELL student-centered policies, funding, and learning conditions if we are to secure the future—not only of ELLs but all public school students.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

“I’ll never stop doing what I believe is right for my students.”

—Texas State Teachers Association Vice President and Civil Rights Activist

Advocacy holds different meanings for different people, but at its core, advocacy is about action. When confronted with an inequitable or unjust situation regarding English Language Learners, advocates can effect change, but they don’t always know the best way to turn their passion into action (see [Putting Our Values to Work](#), an NEA resource that shows education activists how to harness the power of organizing).

Sometimes advocacy is as simple and powerful as giving students and families the resources to advocate on their own behalf. Sometimes it’s building strong relationships with colleagues and community members. Sometimes it’s a ripple effect as the work of one person or small group empowers others to act.ⁱ There is a part for everybody—as individuals and as Association members. (Study the matrix on the next page for macro and micro actions you can take as an individual or as a member of an organization.) Remember, no matter what form it takes, the most profound and effective advocacy is borne of collaboration.

The following chapters show you how to use five practical action steps to advocate for a range of key issues affecting ELL students. Each chapter offers you a set of strategies to use as starting points for a particular issue, a real-life school scenario depicting a common challenge faced by educators, and a step-by-step description of the five action steps you would take to address the issue described in the scenario.

	Macro	Micro
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase knowledge of social justice/pedagogical issues. • Learn what district/school is doing. • Learn what federal/state is doing. • Learn what national/state/local advocacy organization are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join/lead/continue coalition building. • Continue/become a member of district or school committees. • Continue/join federal or state coalitions/organizations engaged in advocacy work. • Align classroom instruction.
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you're a member of an organization, what are its positions/policies regarding ELLs? • Are there others who share ELLs as a high priority? • What partnerships does your organization currently hold? • What is the organization's track record on ELLs? • Is there a plan to take action? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for adoption or modification of policies to meet ELLs' needs. • Form a caucus of like-minded individuals. • Assess the value of current and future partnerships. • Strategically map the next steps for advocacy. • Keep a scorecard on votes/actions that policymakers take and hold them accountable.

Five Steps to ELL Advocacyⁱⁱ

- 1. Isolate the issue.** Begin by clarifying the source of the issue, with the goal of identifying concerns in your immediate environment and gaining insights about broader, external factors. For example, imagine educators are complaining that many ELL families do not attend parent-teacher conferences. Speak with families and find out why this is happening. Are the conferences only occurring during hours when families have to work? Have the expectations and procedures for conferences been clearly conveyed to families in their home language? Is childcare provided if needed? Once the root of the issue has been identified, appropriate action steps can be planned.

“Advocates often upset the applecart in their pursuit of a fair and equitable society.”

2. Identify your allies. Advocacy occurs at different levels, alongside varied partners. To be effective, you must foster relationships with others, be willing to listen to opposing viewpoints, and use conflict as an impetus for change. There will be a wide variety of perspectives for any issue, and it's important not to dismiss those who do not share your beliefs. Despite differing opinions, the advocacy process has the potential to be a consciousness-raising experience for all participants.

3. Be clear on the rights of ELL students.

Have a clear understanding of the policies and laws that are in place to protect ELLs and their families. It empowers you to advocate from a position of what is ethically right and legally right. The rights of ELLs are encased in legislation, but also in hard-fought court victories that have been instrumental in actually protecting those rights and establishing educational standards: *Mendez v. Westminster* addressed the segregation of Mexican students in California schools and paved the way for *Brown v. Board*; *Lau v. Nichols* argued for ELL students' rights to have instruction in a language they understand; *Casteñeda v. Pickard* demanded high-quality bilingual education programs; and *Plyler v. Doe* secured the right of undocumented students to an education. (See page 14 for summaries of court cases.)

"An advocacy lens is always appropriate, but it is imperative in the face of injustice."

4. Organize and educate others. Remember you are not alone. Create opportunities to share what you are doing with others. Take advantage of community events to discuss the issues impacting ELLs. These steps will allow you to expand your network of allies and to inform others about issues occurring in local schools.

5. Identify your outlets for change. Consider asking the following questions:

- What can I do in my classroom?
- What can I do in my school?
- What can I do in my district?
- What can I do in my community?
- How can I collaborate with other non-school-based communities?

Web Resources

For more information on English Language Learner legislation and court cases, see the following resources:

- [Before Brown, There was Mendez: The Lasting Impact of Mendez v. Westminster in the Struggle for Desegregation](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Mendez_v._Westminster_032410.pdf) by María Blanco (2010).
www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Mendez_v._Westminster_032410.pdf
- [Landmark Court Rulings Regarding English Language Learners](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/49704) by W. Wright (2010)
www.colorincolorado.org/article/49704
- [Serving English Learners: Laws, Policies, and Regulations](http://www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/policy/ELL-Policy-Guide.pdf) by D. Zacharian (2012).
www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/policy/ELL-Policy-Guide.pdf

Additional Reading

For more background on the issues covered in this chapter, see the following book excerpts:

- [*No Undocumented Child Left Behind: Plyler v. Doe and the Education of Undocumented Schoolchildren*](#) by M. Olivas (2012).
- [*Undocumented Immigrants and Higher Education: ¡Si se puede!*](#) by A. Rincón (2008).
- [*Putting Our Values to Work: A Resource for Association Social Justice Activists and Organizers*](#) by National Education Association (2014)

Mendez v. Westminster School District, et al. (1946)

ELLs Cannot Be Segregated. During the 1930s, nearly 80 percent of California school districts placed Mexican children in separate “Mexican schools.”ⁱⁱⁱ Mexican parents attempting to enroll their children in Anglo-serving schools were refused. Five Mexican American parents whose children attended schools in four California school districts filed a class-action lawsuit. The federal court ruled in favor of the parents in the case. A year later, in 1947, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit handed down a unanimous decision upholding the original judgment. The California Assembly passed “The Anderson Bill,” calling for an end to segregation of public school students in California. The case inspired future legal segregation claims, such as *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*.

Lau v. Nichols (1974)

ELLs Have Right to Instruction in Comprehensible Language. In 1974, a group of Chinese-American ELLs brought a civil rights case against the San Francisco Unified School District, asserting they were not provided supplemental English language courses, and were therefore being denied equal access to the curriculum, instruction, and materials. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school districts must take the necessary steps to provide ELLs with equitable access to the curriculum. The outcome of the *Lau* case also led to the development of the “Lau Remedies,” a set of guidelines for assessing compliance with the *Lau* case and providing educational services—most important, the right to instruction in a language comprehensible to ELLs.

Castañeda v. Pickard (1978)

ELLs Have Right to High-Quality Language Acquisition Programs. In 1978, the *Castañeda v. Pickard* case argued that children were being segregated based on race and that the Raymondville Independent school district in Texas was failing to provide an acceptable bilingual education program in which children could learn English. In 1981, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit stated that a three-prong test must be used to ensure that bilingual or English language acquisition programs were meeting students’ educational rights. As a result of this ruling, English language acquisition programs are required to be: 1) based on sound educational theory, 2) effectively implemented with sufficient resources, and 3) evaluated and proven to be effective.

Plyler v. Doe (1982)

Undocumented Students Have Right to an Education. In 1975, the Texas state legislature passed a law that would withhold state funds from being used for children who were undocumented immigrants. This law further authorized local school districts to deny these same children access to public schools unless they paid an annual tuition of \$1,000. In some instances, the law was used to bar undocumented students from enrolling altogether. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students. At the heart of the Court’s conclusion: under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, it is unconstitutional to deny a free elementary and secondary public education to children living in the U.S., regardless of the immigration status of the student or their parent(s). Consequently, the case declared that immigrant children had access as residents to citizenship rights protections under the Fourteenth Amendment.

CURRICULUM ACCESS AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS

“I’m in a school without an ELL program, although we have more students than ever who speak everything from Farsi to Polish to Spanish. They’re the silent majority.”

—Colorado Educator

Education is the key and the promise—America’s promise—to a better tomorrow. To deny English Language Learners equal opportunity and access to a quality education is to slam the door on their future. What steps can we take to secure equal access and a promising future for ELL students, especially in this new era of college and career ready standards? We can start by providing programs and instruction that give ELLs access to the entire curriculum and by supporting policies that value students’ home languages.

Ensuring Equal Access

Despite the best intentions of educators, without the use of ELL-specific strategies and targeted language goal setting, ELLs are not being granted equal access to curriculum content, yet equal access is required by law. To meet the requirement, ELLs need instruction tailored to their backgrounds, academic needs, and skills,^{iv} including explicit instruction in academic language.

ELLs also need access to fair assessments—assessments that appropriately and realistically measure students’ progress in learning. How can ELL students be asked to reach proficient levels on a test when they haven’t reached proficient levels in the language required to understand and complete the test?

Valuing Home Languages

For many educators, language rights advocacy is overwhelmingly associated with supporting bilingual education, preserving ELLs' home language, and validating students' linguistic assets. Research has proven that dual language programs have the potential to enhance academic achievement, provide a unifying and inclusive educational experience for students, and expand students' worldviews.^v Yet, opponents debate the value of bilingual education and the preservation of students' home language.

"Seven languages are represented in my classroom, but in some school districts in my state, you can be terminated if you use native language instruction."

After California's English-only initiative sought to restrict bilingual programs and make English-only instruction the default, several other states have followed suit with similar laws.^{vi} Research has demonstrated how states with English-only laws have direct impact on ELLs' access to qualified teachers.^{vii} For instance, both California and Arizona showed a loss of nearly half of the state's credentialed bilingual teachers following the passage of English-only laws—proving that it's essential, whenever possible, to advocate for bilingual programs and home-language instruction.

"Advocates must be courageous enough to voice the unspoken."

Advocacy Strategies

Use the following advocacy strategies as starting points to help protect the language rights of ELL students and provide them with unfettered access to the curriculum:

- **Be informed.** Remember that federal law mandates student access to the curriculum and criteria for ELL programs. [The Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\) at the U.S. Department of Education](#) offers guidelines for ELL program development and evaluation. Also, clarify for yourself the value of bilingual education and use of home language in the classroom. The more you understand, the

more you'll be able to articulate your ideas and share them with others. [The National Association for Bilingual Education \(NABE\)](#) website defines bilingual education, explains why it can be highly beneficial for students, and highlights some of the key controversy connected to the issue.

- **Find strong models.** Whenever possible, visit bilingual programs in which ELLs and native English speakers reach fluency in both languages. Talk with educators in these programs about what works well.
- **Engage with others.** Look for opportunities to develop positive relationships with colleagues, families, and community members. Then, use these connections to create a sense of shared responsibility for ELLs.

Scenario 1

Are you faced with a challenge related to curriculum access and home language instruction for English Language Learners? Study the following scenario to see how René advocates for the supports his students need.

René is a high school English teacher who because of his added bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) certification has become the school's unofficial ELL teacher/advisor. He begins to notice that his ELLs visit him regularly seeking help with their math, science, and social studies coursework. Never hesitating, René openly accommodates the school's struggling ELLs, though he recognizes the additional work is taking a toll on him and is unfair to his students. What actions can René take to make sure the school fulfills its responsibility?

Action Steps

1. **Isolate the issue.** René recognizes that due to a scarcity of bilingual/ESL-certified teachers in his school, ELLs have few options for seeking help.
2. **Identify allies.** René identifies bilingual/ESL and general education teachers who share concern for the academic standing of ELLs in the school. Together they identify steps they can take in their school to address the issue.

3. **Be clear on the rights of ELL students.** René and his colleagues develop talking points and a reading list exemplifying the role of language in learning, as supported by court cases and the law. Central to their piece is the argument that all teachers are language teachers. To ensure ELLs' rights to curriculum access are upheld, René and his colleagues draft a four-prong action plan that includes staff development on cultural awareness, increased representation of bilingual classroom aides, co-teaching opportunities, and release time for educators to collaborate.
4. **Organize and educate others on the issue.** Hoping to increase general education teachers' understanding of their role as both content and language instructors, René and his colleagues prepare an action plan that will help foster awareness, provide information, and facilitate communication and support for ELL students among the school's general educators. They meet with school administrators to share their suggested action plan.
5. **Identify outlet(s) to address the issue.** After gaining support from their school principal, René and his colleagues organize an on-site staff development meeting. They expand their action plan to include input from the larger educator community on their campus.

Web Resources

For more information on supporting ELL student access to the curriculum and language rights, see the following resources:

- [Diversity Toolkit: English Language Learners](http://www.nea.org/tools/30405.htm), National Education Association
www.nea.org/tools/30405.htm
- [History of Bilingual Education](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/bilingual/langhst.shtml), Rethinking Schools Special Report
www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/bilingual/langhst.shtml
- [The Multiple Benefits of Dual Language by W. Thomas & V. Collier \(2003\)](http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el200310_thomas.pdf)
http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el200310_thomas.pdf

Additional Reading

For more background on the issues covered in this chapter, see the following books:

- *Advocating for English Learners: A Guide for Educators* by D. Staehr Fenner (2014).
- *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective* by O. García (2008).
- *Educating Emergent Bilinguals: Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Language Learners* by O. García & J. Klefigen (2010).
- *Educating English Learners: Language Diversity in the Classroom* by J. Crawford (2004).
- *Finding Joy in Teaching Students of Diverse Backgrounds: Culturally Responsive and Socially Just Practices in U.S. Classrooms* by S. Nieto (2013).

EDUCATOR TRAINING AND PREPARATION

“How many future teachers and engineers are written off because educators aren’t being trained to recognize and develop the potential of ELL students?”

—Colorado School Psychologist

There is nothing wrong with English Language Learners—no deficit to fix. They are whole students we must reach and teach in ways that open their minds to the amazing possibilities of their lives, and language must not be a barrier to that goal. ELLs desperately need educators who believe in them, who recognize their assets, and who have the support and training they need to do their best by all of their students.

A growing number of researchers maintain that educators of English Language Learners not only have to possess pedagogical knowledge and skills but must also have the right dispositions.^{viii} For example, educators should see the students’ languages and cultures through an asset-based, rather than deficit, perspective. However, the unfortunate reality is that many of the educators working with ELLs are underprepared to meet the diverse needs of their students.^{ix}

Here’s what we know about English Language Learner teacher preparation in the United States:

- Only 20 states require that all teachers have some training in working with ELLs, and these requirements vary greatly from state to state.^x
- The educators working with ELLs are primarily a monolingual English-speaking group.^{xi}

“We have to make sure students see themselves as valuable assets to the school community and we see each child as a unique treasure with great potential.”

- ELLs spend most of their day working with content-area teachers who are most likely unprepared to meet their content and language learning needs.^{xii}

The lack of preparation is not only unfair to students, it's unfair to the educators who are expected to serve them. The current landscape makes it essential for ELL advocates to push for more stringent requirements in teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development for educators working with ELL students.

Advocacy Strategies

Use the following advocacy strategies as helpful starting points for getting the ELL-appropriate training and preparation you and your colleagues need:

- **Make connections.** Look for multiple ways to collaborate and engage with educators as a means of sharing what you know about the English Language Learners in your community and effective instruction for ELLs. Possibilities include invitations to community events, home visits, informal conversations, co-teaching opportunities, professional learning communities, and professional development. Work to build a school and/or community environment centered on a commitment to ELL success.
- **Speak out.** Express the need to hire and appropriately train teachers, administrators, and education support professionals who are knowledgeable about and committed to ELLs. Look for opportunities to serve on hiring committees or give feedback on potential new hires whenever possible.
- **Highlight ELL achievement.** Look for opportunities to highlight the successes of ELL students; for example, acknowledge ELLs' achievement of language learning goals and/or progression to a higher proficiency level, include ELLs in semester and end-of-year awards, and celebrate ELLs' or former ELLs' high school graduation and college acceptance.
- **Emphasize culture.** Recognize the important role culture plays in student advocacy. When working with others, share relevant information on students' cultural backgrounds. What might be apparent to you might not be to all educators.

“Advocates must empower themselves to empower others.”

Scenario 2

Do you and your colleagues need more training to work effectively with ELL students? Study the following scenario to see how Leilani advocates for the professional development she and her co-workers deserve.

Leilani is an ELL-certified educator in an elementary school that has begun integrating the state's new teacher evaluation policy. She is aware of persistent low achievement of ELLs across the state and in her home district. In fact, ELL students and their academic standings were a central argument for why the state claimed it needed to hold teachers to greater accountability. As her school begins implementing this policy, she realizes more of her colleagues are anxious about flawed evaluation policies that will have practical implications for the success of ELL students and their teachers. What can Leilani do to help address this situation at her school?

Action Steps

- 1. Isolate the issue.** Leilani recognizes that her colleagues are worried about ELL student achievement and the impact of the new teacher-evaluation policy. Acknowledging that these anxieties could alienate ELL students and hamper, rather than promote, relationship building between teachers and ELL students, Leilani feels compelled to act.
- 2. Identify allies.** To raise her concern on campus, Leilani understands she must identify teachers and education support professionals who are willing to broach a difficult discussion on a newly passed piece of legislation.
- 3. Be clear on the rights of ELL students.** Leilani and a group of fellow educators cull research and information on how the new policy has direct negative impacts on ELLs and decide to take their concerns to their local Association president.

4. **Organize and educate others on the issue.** With the help of their local NEA affiliate, Leilani and her peers convene with educators across the district to draft a brief and talking points challenging the flaws of the state's teacher evaluation policy. They also work with the local to coordinate funding for professional development for educators working with ELLs.
5. **Identify outlet(s) to address the issue.** Leilani and a cadre of educators identify district-wide professional development forums, school board meetings, and legislative hearings as viable outlets for sharing their message and advocating for appropriate training.

Web Resources

For more information on advocating for educator training, see the following resources:

[Being Culturally Responsive, Teaching Tolerance](#)

<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/being-culturally-responsive>

Additional Reading

[Professional Development for General Education Teachers of English Language Learners: An NEA Policy Brief](#)

http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB32_ELL11.pdf

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

“We can undo the damage caused by cultural insensitivity by helping students and their families find their own sources of power.”

—Maryland ESOL Teacher

All families want the best education for their children, and ELL families are no different. English Language Learners of all ethnicities cite education as a priority for their children, and for the majority of Hispanics—the largest group of ELLs in the nation—education outranked every other issue on national surveys.^{xiii}

No wonder research continues to link increased parent engagement to better student attitudes, improved academic performance, and a reduction in dropout rates.^{xiv} Although the value of fostering family and community relationships is well documented, many schools still struggle with how to most effectively develop these partnerships.^{xv}

As you advocate for the rights of ELL students, never underestimate families as your most valuable allies. While there may be some constraints, such as language barriers or mismatches in educator and family schedules, everyone wins when educators and families partner in the education of children.

Advocacy Strategies

Use the following advocacy strategies as helpful starting points for partnering with ELL families and communities:

- **Be open to different forms of parental engagement.** Recognize that all families are involved, in varied ways, in their child’s education, and offer them a wide variety of opportunities for family involvement. Also, recognize that extended families and community members often play a significant role in the lives of

“Advocacy is the art of guiding students and parents in winning their educational rights.”

ELLs. Welcome extended family into the classroom and at school events, and look for ways to increase families' comfort level with being at the school by providing programs that directly benefit them (e.g., free English classes, information about immigrant rights or community services).

- **Recognize and eliminate barriers to family involvement.** Identify ways the school can support families in participating in school activities and events and provide what is needed (e.g., childcare, transportation to and from events, interpreters, dinner, flexible meeting times, and dual language resources).
- **Build relationships with family and community.** Developing trusting and respectful relationships with parents will go a long way toward helping ELL students succeed in school. Many districts have launched home visit programs as a way to enhance parent-teacher communication, help teachers learn more about their students, bridge cultural gaps, and show parents and students how much teachers care. Participating in local community events also helps show you are invested in the life of the community and helps inspire trust.
- **Immigration status matters.** Recognize that in many instances, families of ELLs are dealing with various factors associated with their immigration status. They may have feelings of dislocation and unfamiliarity with cultural and institutional norms. Take care in the type of information you request, and contact the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for guidance in navigating this issue.
- **Communicate in families' preferred language and in multiple ways.** If this is not possible, find a trusted, bilingual interpreter who can accompany you to a meeting and whom you feel would be comfortable around parents. Ask families what form of communication works best for them: email, notes home, phone calls, face-to-face school drop-off or pick-up.
- **Learn about your ELLs' funds of knowledge.** Allow your students to do projects that help you gain insights into their family and cultural backgrounds. Encourage families to come to the classroom and share one aspect of their culture. Let the family member and the student be the expert.^{xvi}
- **Share resources and your expectations for students with families.** Give all parents information about opportunities that will help ensure their children don't make harmful decisions or fall behind academically. Start sharing information

"The focus of advocacy is education and empowerment, not rescue."

early (e.g., talk about college planning in junior high so families know the type of coursework required). Familiarize parents with your expectations for their child.

- **Make sure parents know their rights.** Rights for parents of ELLs are often an amalgamation of district, state, and federal requirements. Identify and share resources that will help parents understand and exercise their rights in proactive ways, not just when faced with an issue.

Scenario 3

Are you concerned about the level of participation of the ELL parents at your school? Study the following scenario to see how Anita and Mark helped advocate for greater school involvement for ELL families.

Anita, a middle school math teacher, and Kuam, the class paraeducator, have noticed that on parent night most parents of English Language Learners don't attend. Anita and Kuam know the importance of having parents involved in the academic success of their students. While they are not language educators, they want to do more to help ELL students in their classroom and the school as a whole. What can Anita and Kuam do to advocate for, and increase, ELL family participation?

Action Steps

1. **Isolate the issue.** Anita and Kuam first have conversations with parents to better understand why they haven't attended parent night at the high school and discover that in addition to the language barrier, they're apprehensive about the subject.
2. **Identify allies.** To address both issues (e.g., language and content), Anita and Kuam identify a local community organization that provides adult English classes. In addition, they recruit educators who want to be part of an effort to include the families of ELLs.

3. **Be clear on the rights of ELL students.** Anita and Kuam know all students have a right to a great public school education and their parents have a right to be involved and informed of their children's progress. The two educators discover that schools can use their Title III and federal parental engagement program funds to hire translators and produce bilingual print materials.
4. **Organize and educate others on the issue.** With the help of their local NEA affiliate, Anita, Kuam, and their colleagues develop a joint plan with school administrators and the community organization to provide parents with opportunities to study English, acquire base knowledge on core subjects, and learn about helpful strategies for parental involvement.
5. **Identify outlet(s) to address the issue.** Anita and Kuam identify and utilize school classroom space for the English classes and parent involvement meetings and community bulletin boards to publicize the opportunity.

Web Resources

For further discussion of ways to partner with families and the community in advocating for ELLs, see the following resources:

- [A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders by L. Breiseth \(2011\)](http://www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/guides/Engaging-ELL-Families.pdf)
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/guides/Engaging-ELL-Families.pdf>
- [Engaging the Families of ELLs: Ideas, Resources, and Activities by R. Rubin, M Abrego, and J. Sutterby \(2012\)](http://www.colorincolorado.org/read/professional%20parents)
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/read/professional%20parents>
- [Increasing ELL Parental Involvement in Our Schools: Learning From the Parents by S. Panferov \(2010\)](http://suzannepanferov.faculty.arizona.edu/sites/suzannepanferov.faculty.arizona.edu/files/Increasing_ELL_0.pdf)
http://suzannepanferov.faculty.arizona.edu/sites/suzannepanferov.faculty.arizona.edu/files/Increasing_ELL_0.pdf
- [Welcoming ELL Parents into the Classroom by M. E. Flannery, NEA Today \(2010\)](http://www.nea.org/home/37022.htm)
<http://www.nea.org/home/37022.htm>

Additional Reading

- 50 Strategies for Communicating and Working with Diverse Families (3rd Edition) by J. Gonzalez-Mena (2013).
- Home, School, and Community Collaboration: Culturally Responsive Family Engagement by K. Grant, J. Ray (2012).
- Reaching Out to Latino Families of English Language Learners by D. Campos, R. Delgado, and M.E. Huerta (2011).

FAIR SCHOOL FUNDING

“The students in my school speak 35 different languages, yet they’re stopping services for ELLs and abandoning the reading program to redirect funds into other services.”

—Idaho Reading Teacher

Money is always a controversial subject, even when the issue is public education funds that are an investment in our children and our future. When it comes to ELL education, ELL advocates have had to be especially determined and vigilant as they battle decades of opposition to funding ELL programs. ELL advocates realize that as important as it is to secure effective programs and instruction for ELL students, these resources aren’t sustainable without the funds to support them.

Current funding for ELL students has been the result of vigorous ongoing advocacy set in motion decades ago. After NEA held the first national conference on bilingual education, advocates and community leaders began working with legislators to craft the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, the first piece of legislation that shone a spotlight on underserved language minority students. Although the advocacy to enact legislation was successful, it didn’t come with appropriations and the fight for fair funding continues today on several different fronts:

- Ensuring that funds allocated for ELL students are actually spent on them rather than on other school programs.
- Combatting the escalating efforts of opponents to bilingual education programs and school funds targeted to ELLs.

Advocacy Strategies

Building a solid understanding of ELL funding guidelines will support your advocacy efforts. Use the following strategies as helpful starting points:

- **Understand ELL federal funding provisions.** The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as No Child Left Behind, marked a bipartisan repeal of bilingual education support. Following the bill's passage, federal funding for language programs and the needs of ELLs became situated under the Title III section of the Act. Even though the Title III budget has increased over the past few years as the ELL student population has expanded, the proportionate amount per student has actually decreased.
- **Understand state flexibility as it relates to ESEA funding.** ESEA funding is now intertwined with waivers that expand the authority of states to use federal monies on new initiatives states have determined meet the needs of all students. These waivers also allow states flexibility in meeting the requirements of ESEA. While flexible spending allows them greater authority, states are not absolved from complying with civil rights laws, such as the obligation to identify ELLs and provide them with equal access to educational programs.
- **Understand how districts should use funding to supplement, not supplant, ELL programs.** Title III of ESEA has "supplement, not supplant" provisions meant to ensure that funds allocated for ELL students are enhancing rather than supplanting services that meet the needs of those students. For example, using Title III funds to pay for an ESL teacher who was already hired by the district would be an example of supplanting. However, hiring a literacy specialist to implement a new reading program would be an example of supplementing. For more information, view www2.ed.gov/programs/sfgp/supplefinalattach2.pdf.
- **Understand how your schools are funded.** State allocation formulas for students vary across states and are dependent on local districts' tax structure. There is wide disparity in funding in some areas across the country. Check your state department of education websites for funding information. A listing is provided in the resources section.

"An investment
in education pays the best
interest."

- **Get connected and stay up-to-date.** Connect with local, state, and national organizations and use online resources such as Education Votes (educationvotes.nea.org/topic/x-canonical/esea-nclb) as a way of staying up-to-date on funding issues, advocacy efforts, and policy decisions.

“Advocacy provides a level playing field so that all the players can attain the kind of education that allows them to pursue ‘life, liberty, and happiness’.”

Scenario 4

Does your school lack the resources—staff, materials, or programs—to provide ELL students with equal access to the curriculum? Study the following scenario to see how Barbara learns about—and advocates for—the resources she needs and the funding her students are entitled to by law.

Barbara is a high school science teacher. As she teaches a chapter on chemical reaction, she observes that her ELL students require additional support. She requests from her administrator supplemental materials specifically for ELLs, with bridge language that helps them access the curriculum. The administrator denies her request. After hearing similar feedback from her colleagues, Barbara decides to advocate for more ELL resources. What actions can she take to get the resources her students need?

Action Steps

1. **Isolate the issue.** After doing a little research, Barbara learns that ELL students are entitled by law to resources that help them access the curriculum. She suspects that some of the Title III funding allocated for ELLs at her school is not being spent as intended—that ELL services are being supplanted rather than supplemented.
2. **Identify allies.** After identifying other educators who would like to learn more about the difference between supplanting and supplementing, Barbara reaches out to her local association to request support. The local association identifies a regional affiliate of a national civil rights organization who offers to provide a professional learning session.

3. **Be clear on the rights on ELL students.** During the professional learning session, Barbara and her colleagues ask many questions, including how to identify whether ELL funds are being supplanted (that is, if funds that are supposed to be targeted to ELL students are being spent elsewhere), what can be done about it, and how they should approach the issue.
4. **Organize and educate others on the issue.** Empowered with their deeper knowledge, Barbara and her colleagues raise, with advice from their local association on approach, the issue with their colleagues.
5. **Identify outlet(s) to address the issue.** Barbara and her colleagues raise the issue in staff meetings. The local affiliate organizes ELL parents and families to attend their local school board meeting to demand that the Title III funds intended for ELLs be used to supplement their learning.

Web Resources

To learn more about federal funding streams for ELLs and financial compliance, see the following resources.

- [Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\): A federal interagency website](http://www.lep.gov)
www.lep.gov
- [Supplement Not Supplant Guidance](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sfgp/supplefinalattach2.pdf)
www2.ed.gov/programs/sfgp/supplefinalattach2.pdf
- [Title III State Formula Grant Program](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sfgp/index.html)
www2.ed.gov/programs/sfgp/index.html
- [Understanding and Abiding by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Department of Justice \(VIDEO\)](http://www.justice.gov/crt/pressroom/videos.php?group=1)
www.justice.gov/crt/pressroom/videos.php?group=1

Additional Reading

The following are links to images of books that offer more background on the topics covered above. They are not complete documents.

- [*Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States 1960–2001* by G. San Miguel, Jr. \(2004\)](#)
- [*Obituary: The Bilingual Education Act, 1968–2002* by J. Crawford \(2002\)](#)

Advocacy Spotlight

[Texas' Statewide Fair Funding Now! Campaign](#)

Following the 2011 regular Texas Legislative Session, Texas schools experienced a \$5.4 billion budget cut. These cuts led to mass elimination of programs (including services provided to ELLs) and thousands of teacher layoffs across the state.

In response, various civil rights groups and research entities partnered in an effort to find out how budget cuts were impacting schools throughout the state and educate parents and communities.

The Fair Funding Now! Campaign efforts consisted of the following:

- Ten-point action plan
- [Information sharing about school finance and the impact of budget cuts](#)
- Statewide forums
- [Online portraits of schools and their resources](#)

ELL ADVOCATES SPEAK

Ultimately, it's the students themselves who inspire us to act. The urgent circumstances of English Language Learners and their aspirations in the face of numerous odds compel us to advocacy. Listen to the voices of educators from around the country describing the daily challenges they and their ELL students navigate. Do you have a story to tell? Become a resource by sharing your story and lessons learned at nea.org/hcr.

Increasing Awareness and Improving Attitudes

"My first year as a school psychologist, I tested elementary students for special education eligibility. One teacher was thankful I was there because she was convinced her student, a first-year Hispanic immigrant, was, in her words, "learning disabled." She shared that he hadn't talked, was disengaged, and just sat at his

desk throughout most of the year. As soon as I met Alonso, I immediately connected with him. After testing him in his native language, I discovered that not only was his intelligence intact, he had a lot of cognitive strengths and the potential to go far in life. I told Alonso how smart he was and not to let anyone tell him otherwise. It gave me a lot of pleasure to meet with his teacher and give her the results of the test. It was a learning experience for both of us. I'm happy to report this attitude is no longer typical in my district. There has been a lot of training for general education teachers to increase their awareness. But I know not every district is as enlightened, and I wonder how many potential future educators and engineers and physicians are being written off as mentally deficient."

CHALLENGE: When ELL students struggle with academic English and lack the confidence and language skills to participate in class, school staff may mistakenly conclude they're lacking in academic ability or intelligence.

HOW TO ADVOCATE: Provide training and forums for ongoing communication between ELL teachers and general educators to increase awareness, improve attitudes, and share instructional strategies.

—Henrietta Pazos, Ph.D.
School psychologist, Colorado

Understanding Student Backgrounds

“Jason came to our school as a refugee student from Somalia, having suffered the ravages of a civil war described as “horrific” and “tragic.” Despite Jason’s lack of progress, something told me he was a bright child. Trying to solve the mystery, I asked his first-grade teacher for his assessment data. It turned out Jason’s tests had never been submitted for scoring and couldn’t be located. I noticed, however, that he never reacted to loud noises. Concerned his hearing was damaged, I asked a doctor friend to examine him. It turns out Jason had two ruptured eardrums, so he could hear little to nothing. Fortunately, the doctor donated his services for corrective surgery, and the hospital paid for the operation. Afterward, Jason made such amazing progress, he told me, “Thank you for making me feel smart!” How many kids coming from war-torn countries are like Jason—dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and physical health issues? How many smart students end up failing in school due to non-academic problems? Now my school has a team of teachers who collect background, health, and family information on our refugee students to ensure we have all the necessary data to provide them with a successful educational experience.”

—Sharon Gallagher Fishbaugh
President, Utah Education Association

CHALLENGE: Some ELL students, such as war refugees and migrant workers, have lived through extreme experiences that affect their physical and psychological health, which in turn impacts academic performance.

HOW TO ADVOCATE: Organize teams to gather useful background information on ELL students to help staff understand the context in which ELLs are operating. Keep in mind that while these students may be fragile in some ways, they have resilient survival skills that can help them be successful students.

Welcoming Undocumented Students

"There are 134 different languages spoken in my school, and seven languages in my classroom alone—Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Nepalese, Hindi, Haitian, and Creole. In my state, however, some school districts interpret the law as you're not allowed to use native language instruction, or you can be terminated. I use the students' language, because my district is supportive and I know what

CHALLENGE: The burden and secrecy of being undocumented prevents many promising students from fulfilling their academic potential, pursuing rewarding careers, and contributing to their communities.

HOW TO ADVOCATE:

Make sure your school provides a welcoming climate for ELL students and their families. Point students who ask towards immigration rights organizations that can provide resources and guidance, and refer them to the weownthedream.org website for information on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

these kids are going through. I was born in Columbia and came to the United States undocumented when I was 19. I got separated from my uncle and, after 10 days of trying to cross the border, ended up abandoned and terrified in a locked basement in San Diego. I thought I was going to die there and started screaming for help until I was rescued. After being reunited with my uncle, I was tutored at home so I could pass the GED. I went to college for one semester and aced all my subjects. I was the best in my class, but when they asked for documentation, I dropped out, fearful of being deported. Heartbroken, I went home to cry. It took a lot of people connecting to other people to give me the opportunity to go back to school. In college, I took my first education course and never looked back. Today, I am a teacher with undocumented students in my classroom, and they unburden themselves to me. One 10-year old boy who was separated from his mother came to my class from a detention center. To help students like these, I started a non-profit organization to connect undocumented families with

municipal and state resources. I dedicate a lot of hours to help students because this country has been so good to me. That's why the Dream Act is so dear to my heart."

—Gloria Salazar
Fifth grade ESOL teacher, Massachusetts

Building Community in the Classroom

“We’ve always had a diverse student body. The students in our school currently represent 30 countries—mostly Asian and African. One of my students, Hassam, only spoke Arabic and didn’t talk at all when he first got to school. To build community in my classroom, I greet my students every day in their own language, and I use music and technology to engage them and help them learn. I partnered Hassam with two other first graders who used an iPod with a bilingual Baby Flash Card app. Hassam’s classmates show him a picture, and he tells them what it is. By the end of the year, Hassam was able to communicate in sentences. The combination of community, friendship, music, and technology helped him feel comfortable enough to open up to us.”

—Ann-Marie Borders

National Board Certified elementary school teacher, Michigan

CHALLENGE: Language barriers can make ELL students feel isolated from their English-speaking peers, preventing the kind of communication and companionship that helps students build community and develop support systems.

HOW TO ADVOCATE:

Emphasize relationship building in your school or classroom, using multiple strategies to help students feel welcome, such as utilizing students’ home languages, when possible, and integrating community-building exercises into the curriculum.

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RESOURCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER—BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Colorín Colorado

colorincolorado.org

Colorín Colorado offers a wide range of resources in various languages to teachers and parents of English Language Learners in Pre-K to 12. Their resources are in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, and Hmong.

Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education (CLASE)

coe.uga.edu/clase

CLASE provides professional development and resources for educators working with K-12 Latino students. The Center also seeks to reduce the Latino achievement gap for Pre K-16 students.

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)

carla.umn.edu/lct/db

CARLA's database shows exact locations where you can learn a language not commonly taught in North America—with the purpose of increasing second language acquisition and multiculturalism.

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)

cal.org

CAL promotes language and cultural understanding through various outlets, guided by values that promote access, equality, and understanding.

Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA)

albany.edu/cela

CELA specializes in research, development, and services to improve literacy teaching and learning across the grades and subjects.

Chinese American Educational Research and Development Association (CAERDA)

caerda.org

CAERDA seeks to improve excellence in education for all students, particularly Chinese and Chinese Americans, through educational research, and development.

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)

idra.org

IDRA is committed to assuring that every child has an opportunity to attain a quality education. Through professional development, research and evaluation, and policy and leadership development, IDRA assures that its goals are met.

Institute for Language and Education Policy

elladvocates.org

Institute for Language and Education Policy educates the public on strategies that promote equality and academic excellence for English learners.

Language Diversity Network-Texas A&M

<http://ldn.tamu.edu>

The Bilingual Education Program seeks to mend communication that is lost when dealing with multiple languages. In the community and classroom settings, communication is bridged through research, instruction and services, and committed faculty and students.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition

ncela.us

Using a broad range of resources, NCELA works to provide a high-quality education to English Language Learners.

National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP)

<http://nlerap.org>

NLERAP connects the university, community, and Latino culture in order to form a curriculum that appeals to Latinos and therefore increases their academic success.

National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)

nnell.org

NNELL provides leadership, advocacy, and support to early language learning and teaching.

Migration Policy Institute, English Language Learners Information Center

migrationpolicy.org/about/mission

The Migration Policy Institute works to provide logical and thoughtful responses to large-scale immigration issues.

PEW Hispanic Research Center

pewhispanic.org

Through public opinion surveys, Pew Hispanic Research Center seeks to understand the Hispanic populations and their impact on the nation.

Civil Rights Project/Proyecto de Derechos Civiles University of California Los Angeles

<http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu>

The Civil Rights Project generates research in social science and law based on civil rights issues in the United States.

WestEd

wested.org/area_of_work/english-language-learners

WestEd uses knowledge derived from English language learners to advance student's achievements through practice and policy. WestEd also provides various services to address the many needs of English language learners, while simultaneously addressing academics.

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Advancement Project

advancementproject.org

The Advancement Project fights for human rights, equality, and justice by using innovative tools and strategies to achieve policy change.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice

advancingjustice.org

Asian Americans Advancing Justice works to empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by promoting a fair and equitable society.

California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)

bilingualeducation.org

CABE promotes quality bilingual education for all students in California.

Centro Hispano of Milwaukee

centrohispanomke.org

Centro Hispano of Milwaukee advocates for the social and economic well-being of Latinos. It improves the lives of Latinos through education, housing, and human services. To aid Latinos in economic challenges, Centro Hispano of Milwaukee provides high-quality bilingual programs and increases career opportunities.

International MultiCultural Institute (iMCI)

imciglobal.org

IMCI provides global education, training, advocacy, and research, to aid organizations in facilitating their diversity, social justice, and inclusion.

Intervention Action Network

rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/englishlanguagelearners

Through high-quality instruction and a multi-tier approach, RTI focuses on learning and behavioral problems, as well as early identification.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

lulac.org

LULAC was founded in 1929 and is one of the largest, well-respected Hispanic civil rights organizations in the United States. It seeks to advance Latinos in economics, education, political influence, housing, and civil rights.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)

maldef.org

A leading Latino legal civil rights organization, MALDEF creates change in advocacy, communications, community education, and litigation in education, employment, immigration rights, and political access.

National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian & Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA)

nafaonline.org

NAFEA seeks to advance Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese Americans in education, advocacy, networking, and cross-cultural exchange.

National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)

nameorg.org

NAME advances equity and social justice through policies that promote multicultural education.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

nclr.org

NCLR and its affiliates work to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans through research, policy analysis, and advocacy.

National Education Association

nea.org/ell

NEA advocates for English language learners by supporting education policy, professional development, and quality instruction (including bilinual ed) that facilitate ELL achievement.

National Immigration Law Center

nilc.org/ircoalitions.html

The National Immigration Law Center is the only national legal advocacy organization that is based in the U.S. It exclusively dedicates itself to defending and advancing the rights of low-income immigrant families.

National Opportunity to Learn Campaign

otlcampaign.org

OTL is a national coalition of advocates and organizers working to ensure all students—regardless of income or language status—have access to educational opportunities.

New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education (NMABE)

nmabe.net

NMABE ensures that every student has access to a high-quality public education. Its focus is on to do this by closing the opportunity gap rather than the achievement gap.

New York University Immigrant Rights Clinic (IRC)

law.nyu.edu/immigrantrightsclinic

The NYU Law program offers a unique set of opportunities to its students at the Immigration Rights Clinic. Students are able to represent an individual, a set of individuals, and/or a community organization in a campaign as part of their education.

PICO California

picocalifornia.org

PICO is the largest grassroots congregation-based community organization in California. This is an organization that amplifies the voices and concerns of working families, in order to improve their healthcare access, education, and youth opportunities.

Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF)

<http://latinojustice.org>

Through litigation, the founding members of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund have worked to gain more equitable treatment for Puerto Ricans and Latinos. Apart from their legal battles, PRLDEF also offers preparatory courses, mentoring, and counseling for pre-law students.

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SARAC)

searac.org

SARAC began in 1979 with the purpose of facilitating the relocation of Southeast Asian refugees into American society. Currently, SARAC takes an active role in community-based organizations through community engagement, leadership and organizational development, policy and advocacy, and research.

Teachers for Social Justice

teachersforjustice.org

Teachers for Social Justice is an organization of teachers who work independently to create a social justice environment in education. Through the organization, teachers develop projects, curriculums, and, most importantly, form and support campaigns to get the voices of educators into policy discussions.

Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)

<http://tabe.org/index.cfm>

TABE promotes equal education and academic excellence to Bilingual/ESL students through research, professional development, and public education.

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

refugees.org

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants seeks to advance fair and humane public policy for the people who are forced to or voluntarily migrate worldwide.

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics- Presidential Advisory Commission

www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/hispanic-initiative/commission.html

The Commission works on matters pertaining to Hispanic educational attainment and advises the President and the U.S. Secretary of Education. The Committee also has three committees that focus on key priorities for the Administration.

William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI)

wcvi.org

WCVI conducts research aimed at improving the level of political and economic participation in the Latino community by providing information to Latino leaders, in order to inform Latino leadership about the political opinions of Latinos.

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

wida.us/index.aspx

WIDA seeks to advance academic language development and achievement for multilingual students through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION, DUAL LANGUAGE, AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ASSOCIATIONS

Alabama-Mississippi Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (AMTESOL, Alabama & Mississippi)

amtesol.org

Serving the areas of Alabama and Mississippi, AMTESOL aims to aid ESL needs by educating and assisting program teachers, administrators, graduate students, and K-12 teachers.

Arizona Association for Bilingual Education (AABE)

<http://azbilingualed.org>

AABE acknowledges that languages are one of the most important cultural characteristics, which is why they promote bilingual education. They see bilingual education as a way to achieve success and academic achievement.

Arizona Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (AZ-TESOL)

<http://aztesol.org>

Having served since 1954, AZ-TESOL has provided over five decades of service. AZ-TESOL members continue to work to improve the education of English language learners in Arizona's public schools, colleges, and universities, as well as adult education programs.

Arkansas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Arkansas TESOL)

<http://www.arktesol.org>

Arkansas TESOL promotes the opportunity to learn and teach English as a second language.

Association of Two-Way & Dual Language Education (ATDLE)

<http://atdle.org>

ATDLE offers a wide range of training opportunities to perfect and attain language proficiency in a second and third language. Recently, ATDLE has formed a partnership with New Mexico to increase outreach.

California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)

bilingualeducation.org

CABE promotes quality, bilingual education for all California students. CABE's work focuses on increasing student achievement despite race, culture, or linguistic backgrounds.

California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL; California & Nevada)

catesol.org

CATESOL serves teachers who work with ELLs in California and Nevada. Their main focus is to promote quality working conditions for teachers in order to create a safe environment for ELL students.

Capital Area National Association for Bilingual Education (CANABE)

<http://canabe.org/index.html>

CANABE is a multilingual and multicultural organization that works to ensure quality education for English language learners.

Carolina Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (North and South Carolina)

<http://carolinesol.shuttlepod.org>

Carolina TESOL is an organization that focuses on improving the overall quality of ELLs' education, as well as promoting tolerance of other cultural communities.

Central Valley Dual Language Consortium

<http://cvdlc.wordpress.com>

In the mist of Proposition 227, the Central Valley Dual Language Consortium began developing dual language programs. The Consortium also recruits and improves the education of ELL teachers.

Colorado Bilingual Education Association (COCABE)

cocabe.org

COCABE takes pride in being the only professional organization in Colorado that is completely devoted to the needs of language minority students and bilingual education professionals.

Colorado Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CoTESOL)

cotesol.org

CoTESOL promotes the acquisition of English, while respecting all languages and cultures. It also promotes collaboration, professional development, and networking amongst its members.

Connecticut Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

conntesol.net

Connecticut Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages serves the teachers who teach English language learners. They provide a wide range of resources, such as scholarships, events, and professional conferences.

Dual Language Education of New Mexico

dlenm.org

Dual Language Education of New Mexico seeks to provide children with a world-class, multilingual education. They also provide professional conferences, program development, and advocacy for dual language families.

Florida Bilingual Schools Association (BISA)

bisausa.org/about_us.html

The Bilingual Schools Association (BISA) Inc. observes that bilingual schools and programs uphold the highest standards in order to make bilingual education an exclusionary practice. At the same time, BISA works to insure that a student's cultural heritage, customs, and cultural values are preserved.

Florida: Sunshine State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (SSTESOL)

<http://sstesol.org>

SSTESOL works to provide educators access to resources and professional development, while also assisting in language policy issues.

Georgia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Georgia TESOL)

www.gatesol.org

Georgia TESOL encourages professional development, participation, and leadership in order to improve the instruction of English language learners.

Hawai'i Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Hawai'i TESOL)

<http://hawaiitesol.wildapricot.org>

Hawai'i TESOL seeks to bring together professionals dedicated to teaching English language learners by improving professional support and interaction and increasing ESL recognition in the public and government arenas.

Houston Area Association for Bilingual Education Association (HAABE)

haabe.org/index.html

HAABE supports and serves the educational progress of culturally and linguistically diverse students by promoting professional, political, and economic growth.

Idaho Association of Teachers of Language and Culture (IATLC)

iatlc.org

The Idaho Association of Teachers of Language and Culture (IAT-CL) seeks to promote the attainment of English language through networking and culture retention.

Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education

<http://iamme.org>

The Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education was founded to aid Illinois' students in reaching English language proficiency without neglecting their culture or native tongue.

Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

itbe.org

Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages supports English attainment through bilingual education. It also serves to disperse information to other organizations.

Indiana Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Indiana TESOL)

intesol.org

Indiana TESOL seeks to strengthen teaching and learning of ELLs while respecting their language and culture. It also disseminates information and resources for better instruction, professional preparation, and employment.

Intermountain Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (I-TESOL: Utah & Idaho)

<http://itesol.org>

TESOL is an International Organization for ESL professionals, paraprofessionals, and college students who work together to increase English language attainment.

Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL)

matsol.org

MATSOL believes in creating positive change in the education of English Language Learners. This is accomplished through professionalism, educational quality, multilingualism and multiculturalism, collaboration, and diversity.

MidAmerica Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MO, IA, NE, KS)

midtesol.org

MidAmerica Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages works to strengthen effective English teaching strategies in Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri. It also works to create access to standardized English language instruction, professional preparation, and employment.

Minnesota Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MinneTESOL)

minnetesol.org

Minnesota Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages actively works to increase English language attainment through advocacy, resources, and networking.

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)

nabe.org

NABE ensures that language minority students have equal opportunities that would allow them to succeed in academics and English language acquisition.

National Dual Language Consortium

dual-language.org

The National Dual Language Consortium came about when two language researchers joined together. The Consortium conducts research, training, and services for dual language practitioners.

Nevada Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages: CATESOL (California and Nevada)

catesol.org

CATESOL serves teachers who work with ELLs in California and Nevada. Its main focus is to promote quality working conditions for teachers in order to create a safe environment for ELL students.

New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NJTESOL/New Jersey Bilingual Educators)

njtesol-njbe.org

NJTESOL/NJBE is an association of educators and administrators dedicated to the instruction of English language learners at all levels of public and private education.

New Mexico Bilingual Education Association (NMABE)

nmabe.net

NMABE believes that bilingualism should be encouraged and promoted, along with culture, heritage, and tolerance.

New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NMTESOL)

nmtesol.org

NMTESOL seeks to bring together a network of English language educators in New Mexico, in order to strengthen instruction in all levels of English language development and advocacy.

New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)

<http://nysabe.net>

NYSABE promotes the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of quality Bilingual Education programs by increasing advocacy, professional development, communications, leadership, and networking.

New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NYS-TESOL)

<http://nystesol.org>

NYS-TESOL focuses on the education of ELLs in the public and private sector of New York. Its interests range from classroom practices, research, employment, and funding to legislation.

Northern New England Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NNETESOL)

nnetesol.org

NNETESOL is a non-profit association that focuses its efforts on the education of English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and bilingual students.

Ohio Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Ohio TESOL)

ohiotesol.org

Ohio TESOL's focus is to develop professional expertise within its members and affiliates to improve the education of English language learners. Ohio TESOL also disseminates information, improves standards for high-quality instruction, and provides opportunities.

Oklahoma Association for Bilingual Education (OABE)

[facebook.com/pages/Oklahoma-Association-for-Bilingual-Education/233628270007846](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Oklahoma-Association-for-Bilingual-Education/233628270007846)

OABE is committed to bilingual education and believes bilingual ed will play an important role in the future of the United States.

Oklahoma Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (OKTESOL)

<http://www.oktesol.com>

OKTESOL is making great progress in English language instruction by respecting and establishing communication with ELLs, advocating for their students, developing new and stronger programs, and remodeling their standards.

Oregon Association for Bilingual Education (OABE)

<http://oabe.org>

OABE advocates for their students by promoting bilingual education program, pedagogy, and professional development. Overall, it works to close the opportunity gap for English language learners.

Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL)

ortesol.org

ORTESOL seeks to improve the education of English language learners by promoting scholarship, disseminating information, strengthening instruction, and improving research.

Pennsylvania Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (PennTESOL-East; Eastern Pennsylvania)

<http://www.ptes.wildapricot.org>

Pennsylvania Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages provides a wide range of educational services, such as TESOL courses and programs, college courses, online masters degree programs, and more.

Puerto Rico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (PRTESOL)

www.puertoricotesol.org

PRTESOL's purpose is to stimulate professional development and disseminate information about research, books and other materials related to the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL).

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

tesol.org

An association that seeks to advance professional expertise in English language teaching.

Tennessee Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TN TESOL)

tnatesol.org

Tennessee TESOL is a professional, non-profit association whose purpose is to strengthen at all levels instruction and research in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages or dialects.

Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)

<http://tabe.org>

TABE serves as a professional association for people interested in ESOL or Bilingual Education. Another main purpose is to analyze legislation that affects the educational needs of linguistically and culturally diverse children on both the state and national levels.

Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TxTESOL)

textesol.org

As an affiliate of TESOL, Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages seeks to develop and maintain professional expertise in English language teaching and learning for speakers of other languages worldwide.

Three Rivers Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (3-R TESOL; Three Rivers-Western Pennsylvania)

<http://3riverstesol.org>

Three River Teachers of Speakers of Other languages resides in the Central and Western areas of Pennsylvania. The purpose of this organization is to improve ESOL teaching through networking, opportunities, and professional development.

Virginia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (VATESOL)

<http://vatesol.cloverpad.org>

VATESOL promotes professional development, instruction, and research opportunities at all levels for teachers and administrators of ESL/EFL/ESOL.

Washington Association for Bilingual Education (WABE)

<http://wabewa.org>

WABE promotes bilingual education at all levels. The focus of this organization is to increase educational opportunities for children who would benefit from a bilingual education.

Washington State Affiliate of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL)

<http://waesol.org>

WAESOL seeks to strengthen TESOL instruction and research by disbursing information, networking, and scholarships.

Washington District of Columbia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (WATESOL)

<http://watesol.org>

WATESOL promotes English language teaching and learning through professional development, advocacy, and community building.

West Virginia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (WVTESOL)

<http://tesolwv.org>

WVTESOL works to strengthen ESL teaching, promote research, and provide opportunities they can share with other ESL professionals in West Virginia.

Wisconsin Association for Bilingual Education (WIABE)

<http://wiabe.org>

WIABE encourages and supports educational policies and effective bilingual programs that promote equal educational opportunities and academic success for all language minority students.

Wisconsin Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (WITESOL)

<http://witesol.com>

WITESOL promotes English language teaching and learning through professional development and other opportunities to educators of ELL and bilingual students of all levels and ages in the state of Wisconsin.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS/COALITIONS

Adelante Alliance (Brooklyn, NY)

adelantealliance.org

Adelante Alliance facilitates social change in American society by advocating for working and organizing immigrant families. It works to address the wounds of distress and exclusion faced by immigrants.

American Civil Liberties Union Immigrants' Rights Project

aclu.org/immigrants-rights

ACLU is the nation's guardian of liberty, working daily in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights that are guarantee to everyone in this country.

American Immigration Lawyer's Association (AILA)

aila.org

AILA is a nonpartisan, non-profit association of more than 13,000 attorneys who represent U.S. families seeking permanent residence for close family members. AILA promotes justice and advocacy for its clients.

Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition (Austin, Texas)

<http://austinirc.org>

The Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition (AIRC) promotes human rights and dignity, and social and economic justice, through organizing, policy advocacy, and public education.

Border Network for Human Rights (El Paso and Southeastern New Mexico)

bnhr.org

The Border Network for Human Rights' general purpose is to facilitate the education, organizing, and participation of marginalized border communities to defend and promote human and civil rights.

Causa Oregon's Immigrant Rights Organization

<http://causaoregon.org>

Causa is Oregon's statewide Latino immigrant rights organization. Its mission is to foster a society that recognizes the contributions of immigrants and upholds the values of democracy, equality, and respect.

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

coloradoimmigrant.org

The Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) is a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business and ally organizations.

Council for the Spanish Speaking (Milwaukee, WI)

centrohispanomke.org

In 1964 Centro Hispano Milwaukee became the first Latino serving non-profit community-based organization in Milwaukee. Its staff delivers educational programs and social and human services to help them overcome social, economic, linguistic and cultural barriers.

Immigrant Learning Center (Massachusetts)

ilctr.org/promoting-immigrants

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) is a year-round, not-for-profit adult education center located in Malden, Massachusetts. Its mission is to provide free English classes to immigrant and refugee adults to give them sufficient knowledge of English to lead productive lives.

Immigrant Youth Justice League (Chicago, Illinois)

iyjl.org

IYJL is a Chicago-based organization led by undocumented organizers working towards full recognition of the rights and contributions of all immigrants through education, leadership development, policy advocacy, resource gathering, and mobilization.

Mexican American Students' Alliance (New York)

<http://masany.org/new>

The mission of Masa is to promote educational attainment, committed leadership and civic engagement among underserved students living in New York City, with a particular focus on those of Mexican descent.

Michigan United

miunited.org

Michigan United is a statewide organization of community members and institutions fighting for the dignity and potential of every person. To ignite the power of our communities and shift the balance of power, we cultivate the leadership of those directly affected by injustice.

Nebraska Appleseed

<http://neappleseed.com>

Nebraska Appleseed is a nonprofit organization that fights for justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans. We take a systemic approach to complex issues—such as child welfare, immigration policy, affordable healthcare and poverty.

New York Immigration Coalition

thenyc.org/ELL

The New York Immigration Coalition aims to achieve a fairer and more just society that values the contributions of immigrants and extends opportunity to all. The NYC promotes immigrants' full civic participation, fosters their leadership, and provides a unified voice.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

nwirp.org

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project promotes justice for low-income immigrants by pursuing and defending their legal status. We focus on providing direct legal services, supported by our education and public policy work.

Padres & Jóvenes Unidos /Parents & Youth United

padresunidos.org

Padres Unidos has evolved into a multi-issue organization led by people of color who work for educational excellence, racial justice for youth, immigrant rights and quality healthcare for all.

Reform Immigration For Texas

<http://reformimmigrationfortexas.org/1>

The Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance (RITA) is a multi-sector statewide network dedicated to building support for comprehensive immigration reform.

Somos Un Pueblo Unido (New Mexico)

<http://somosunpueblounido.org>

We believe that every person should have the freedom to move in order to pursue a better life. We work to build a community that does not discriminate against people based on their national origin, that institutes humane migration policies, and that protects the human rights of everyone.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

"Child Trends and Children in Immigrant Families—The U.S. and 50 States: National Origins, Language, and Early Education"

<http://fcd-us.org/resources/children-immigrant-families-us-and-50-states-national-origins-language-and-early-education>

The Foundation for Child Development offers a statistical analysis on language, immigration, and education, as well as recommendations to amend these problems.

"Creating your Education Blueprint for Action: Mendez and Brown Community Dialogues" (IDRA)

idra.org/mendezbrown/IDRA_Guide_FINAL.pdf

IDRA has taken a strong stand in defending the rights of all children for equity and excellence in education. We take a stand for valuing families and communities, for supporting quality teaching and learning, and providing every child with access to an excellent education.

"Diverse Children: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in America's New Non-Majority Generation"

<http://fcd-us.org/node/1361>

Diverse Children: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in America's New Non-Majority Generation, examines the significant disparities in the education, economic well-being, and health of children in the U.S. based on their race-ethnicity and whether or not their parents are immigrants.

"English Language Learners Face Unique Challenges" (NEA)

[nea.org/assets/docs/HE/ELL_Policy_Brief_Fall_08_\(2\).pdf](http://nea.org/assets/docs/HE/ELL_Policy_Brief_Fall_08_(2).pdf)

NEA's "English Language Learners Face Unique Challenges" explores how ELL students are impacted by school policies, services, and programs.

"English Learners in American Classrooms: 101 Questions, 101 Answers," (James Crawford & Stephen Krashen)

amazon.com/English-Language-Learners-American-Classrooms/dp/0545005191/

This book gives insight on the challenges and opportunities ELL students pose for schools, as well as providing a guide to the challenges in the educational field.

"Fast Facts on English Language Learners" (NCES)

<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=96>

This website gives general information about ELL, tables and figures, and other resources.

"For Each and Every Child: A Strategy for Education Equity and Excellence" (US DOE Equity and Excellence Commission)

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/eec/equity-excellence-commission-report.pdf>

This report gives insight into the disparities in meaningful education opportunities that are expanding the achievement gap. The report also poses some strategies to decreasing these disparities through education policies.

"Immigration: Data Matters" (MPI)

migrationpolicy.org/pubs/2008DataGuide.pdf

This data guide explores topics such as immigrant population estimates, migration figures and trends, refugees and asylees, naturalization, education and language attainment, labor force performance and unemployment, income and poverty rates, and remittance size and flow.

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ENDNOTES

- i Staehr Fenner, 2014
- ii add endnote for Five Steps to Advocacy
- iii Blanco, 2010
- iv Graves, Gersten & Haager, 2004; Ray, 2009
- v Thomas & Collier, 2003
- vi <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/50832> that restrict home language instruction (EPE Research Center, 2009)
- vii Gándara and Hopkins, 2010
- viii Mercado, 2012
- ix Staehr Fenner & Kuhlman, 2012
- x Ballantyne, Sanderman & Levy, 2008
- xi de Jong & Harper, 2008
- xii Ballantyne et al., 2008
- xiii Pew
- xiv Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational fund and National Education Association, 2010)
- xv Henderson & Mapp, 2002, Staehr Fenner, 2014
- xvi Funds of knowledge refers to the various forms of skills, abilities, ideas, and practices that are essential to a students' culture, home, and community functioning and well-being. (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005)

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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