

## Enough is Known for Action Series

### Supporting the Educational and Career Success of English Language Learners under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

*This technical assistance document is part of a series of resources the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education (Departments) developed to provide strategies and examples of State and local partnerships that facilitate the reengagement of out-of-school youth. Other technical assistance documents address strategies for serving out-of-school current and former foster youth and justice-involved youth. More information can be found here: [https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/01/29/22/51/Enough\\_Is\\_Known\\_for\\_Action\\_Youth\\_Webinar\\_Series](https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/01/29/22/51/Enough_Is_Known_for_Action_Youth_Webinar_Series).*

The approximately 4.4 million English Language learners (ELLs) attending school in the United States (U.S.) have certain unique academic, linguistic, and socio-emotional needs, distinct from the broader youth population.<sup>1</sup> Historically, ELLs have faced challenges in achieving academic success comparable to their non-ELL peers, scoring lower on 4<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade reading assessments compared to their non-ELL peers.<sup>2</sup> The ELL achievement gap is particularly problematic because these students have unique potential to increase linguistic diversity in today's global economy. In order to close the achievement gap and ensure ELLs have ample career opportunities, it is crucial that these youth have access to a wide variety of resources. Education and workforce development system staff can help connect ELL youth to appropriate education, training, and employment services, and set them on the path to educational and professional success, by implementing the practices similar to those outlined in this document. It is clear that the field is in need of more research on how practitioners can meet the needs of ELLs and close the achievement gap. Following are examples of how communities across the country are responding to the needs of ELLs through innovative program collaborations.<sup>3</sup>

#### **i. Cultural Competency Training for Educators and Service Providers**

Teachers and youth service providers who understand the value of bilingualism and the complex, challenging dynamic of learning a language and academic content simultaneously are vital resources for ELL students. Research shows that many successful school programs employ teachers who understand and celebrate linguistically and culturally diverse populations.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, it is important that leaders in other support programs respect and appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity so that they can better assist ELLs. These same competencies—a positive mindset about ELLs, cultural awareness, and

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<sup>1</sup> Short, D., & S. Fitzsimmons, *Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners*, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education*, 2013 [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/Indicator\\_CGF/COE\\_CGF\\_2013\\_05.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/Indicator_CGF/COE_CGF_2013_05.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> These resource materials are provided for the user's convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

<sup>4</sup> Genesee, Fred, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, William Saunders, and Donna Christian. "English language learners in US schools: An overview of research findings." *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* 10, no. 4 (2005): 363-385.

bilingualism—can also have a significant impact when developed in other service providers who work directly with ELL youth.

### **Example: Oakland, California**

In 2009, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) identified social emotional learning (SEL) as a priority for its five-year strategic plan, which was based on three pillars: a high-quality instructional core, social and emotional health and well-being, and equitable opportunities for learning. During the 2015-2016 school year (SY), OUSD selected a number of schools to participate in a culturally responsive training, which also focused on SEL and restorative justice to promote and increase student-teacher relationships. The next frontier for OUSD is a district-wide training in SY 2016-17 supported by the district's new Office of Equity.

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## **ii. Consistent Support Services for Youth**

Research suggests that ELLs typically require 4 to 7 years to reach the academic English proficiency of a native speaker.<sup>6</sup> Hence, it is important to provide continuous and consistent support throughout an ELL's learning experience. For example, a program that offers academic and counseling services to current and former ELL students may help those students feel comfortable and supported regardless of their language skills. Additionally, newcomer programs may aid recently arrived ELL students integrating into education, training, or employment by providing them with academic help, cultural orientations, and connections to other support services. For ELLs who have a diagnosed disability, instruction must account for both their specific special education needs, as well as their language development needs<sup>7</sup>. In regular classroom instruction as well as in other education and workforce development programs, ELLs need support from caring adults who understand their backgrounds to fully develop their communication skills and feel confident socially, academically, and professionally.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, Oakland Unified School District profile, <http://www.casel.org/partner-districts/oakland-unified-school-district/>.

<sup>6</sup> Hakuta, K., Butler, Y., & Witt, D. (2000). *How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency?* (Policy Report No. 2000-1). Berkeley, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. Retrieved from <http://web.stanford.edu/~hakuta/Publications/%282000%29%20-%20HOW%20LONG%20DOES%20IT%20TAKE%20ENGLISH%20LEARNERS%20TO%20ATTAIN%20PR.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> For more information regarding the language assistance and disability-related services EL students with disabilities are entitled to under Federal law, see U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and U.S. Department of Justice (January 2015) *Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents*, Ch. F, "Evaluating EL Students for Special Education Services and Providing Special Education and English Language Services," available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> For more information regarding SEAs, school districts and all public school's obligations to ensure that their EL programs and activities comply with the civil rights laws and applicable grant requirements see U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and U.S. Department of Justice (January 2015) *Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents*, , <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>, and U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition EL Tool Kit that was published as a companion to support the 2015 Dear Colleague Letter, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/eltoolkit.pdf>.

**Example: New York, New York**

Liberty High School supports newcomer students from over 50 different countries through an extensive Bilingual/English as a Second Language program, including technological and literary resources in languages that are representative of the student body. The school’s program enables non-English-speaking students to learn new academic content while transitioning into classes taught in English.

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**Example: St. Paul, Minnesota**

LEAP High School currently serves 425 new immigrant and refugee students, who often enter school as ELLs. The school provides special programs that bring students up to speed on their academic subjects while also helping them become proficient in English throughout their four years. Over 80 percent of LEAP graduates go on to attend college, which demonstrates LEAP’s success transitioning ELLs into postsecondary education.

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**Example: Columbus, Ohio**

Columbus Global Academy provides ELLs with the stability of a 6-year middle and high school program, specialized teachers, extended learning time, and bilingual aides in classrooms. Additionally, teachers work with parents to bridge gaps in communication, promoting a solid support system at home as well as at school.

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**Example: Chula Vista, California**

Chula Vista Learning Community Charter School serves a student population comprised of over 90 percent Latino students and over 50 percent ELLs. The school’s dual language immersion program focuses on the acquisition of both the Spanish language and English language with the goal of providing programming authentic to their student population. The school’s instructional model supports students to maintain their native language, as well as their cultural identity. The school’s attendance rate has been ranked number one in their district three years in a row attributing the success of their program and dedication of teachers.

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<sup>9</sup> “Overview.” Liberty High School Academy for Newcomers.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/02/M550/AboutUs/Overview/default.htm>

<sup>10</sup> “School Profile.” LEAP High School. [http://leap.spps.org/School\\_Profile](http://leap.spps.org/School_Profile)

<sup>11</sup> “Academics.” Columbus Global Academy. <http://columbusglobalacademy.ccssoh.us/Academics.aspx>; Good, Dr. J. Daniel. *Our Spirit of Success: Columbus City Schools Review 2013-2014*. Columbus, OH: 2014; Hawley, Joshua D. *Ohio’s Race to the Top Dropout Tracking Report*. 2013.

<sup>12</sup> National Charter School Resource Center, *Implementing a Dual Language Program: Learning from the Success of Chula Vista Learning Community Charter School Webinar*, <https://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinar/implementing-dual-language-program-learning-success-chula-vista-learning-community-charter-s>.

### a. **Balanced Bilingual Education Plus Workforce Opportunities**

High-quality programs for ELLs anticipate their potential and provide the supports they need to attain academic and career goals. Educators can help ELLs achieve at high levels and reach their potential by engaging them in rigorous learning and career training.<sup>13</sup> Examples of programs for ELLs include different approaches to meet the needs of newcomers enrolled in a district, such as newcomers receiving academic and social emotional supports in newcomer centers and international schools until they transition to elementary or secondary schools within a district.<sup>14</sup> Another approach to meet the needs of varied populations can be dual or bilingual language programs that enroll newcomers, children of immigrants, and English-only students.

Dual language programs are one promising instructional approach to help ELLs reach their academic potential. Research indicates that educational success for ELLs can be positively correlated with “the consistent provision of instruction in the student’s native language.”<sup>15</sup> Research also suggests that because concepts can be transferred between languages, a well-implemented dual language program can have students apply content learned in their first language to the same material in English.<sup>16</sup> Developing students’ home languages, simultaneously with English, capitalizes on inherent cultural and linguistic assets ELLs bring and acknowledges the key role that language acquisition plays as part of learning academic content.<sup>17</sup> Research demonstrates that a balance of instruction in students’ native language and English thus appears to produce the best outcomes. In addition, research shows that students enrolled in dual language programs develop academic competence, ambition, and resiliency at higher rates than students in solely English-focused ELL programs.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, ELLs need to become proficient in English in order to succeed in today’s economy. ELLs may come from a variety of educational and work backgrounds, so resources that help ELLs understand career options and access employment opportunities may benefit their future career outcomes. Pre-apprenticeship programs, for example, can prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs which, in turn, expand youths’ career pathway opportunities through industry-based training and classroom instruction.<sup>19</sup> Integrated education and training strategies can also be very effective at helping youth with low literacy, math, and English skills access instruction and gain a credential. Training in, and instruction of, English skills, which can be learned and developed contextually while working, allow ELLs to pursue jobs that interest and support them, as well as continue their education. As the Career Pathways Toolkit describes, if new immigrants do not possess the

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<sup>13</sup> Leseaux, N. K., & Harris, J. R. (2015). *Cultivating knowledge, building language: Literacy instruction for English Learners in elementary school*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

<sup>14</sup> Some schools districts use newcomer programs as a bridge to general education classrooms. Districts operating newcomer programs or schools should take particular care to avoid unnecessary segregation of ELLs. For more information regarding evaluating whether the degree of segregation is necessary in EL programs, see U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights and U.S. Department of Justice (Jan 2015) *Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents*, Ch. E, “Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation of EL Students” available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas. “The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All.” George Mason University. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2:1 Winter 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Gathercole, V.C.M., & Thomas, E.M. (2009). Bilingual first-language development: Dominant language takeover, threatened minority language take-up. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 213–237.; Hoff, E. (2013). “Interpreting the early language trajectories of children from low-SES and language minority homes: Implications for closing achievement gaps.” *Developmental psychology*, January 2013; 49(1), 4-14.

<sup>18</sup> Steel, J., Slater, R., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Lee, J., Burkheiser, S. & Bacon, M. (2015). *The Effect of Dual-Language Immersion on Student Achievement: Evidence from Lottery Data*.

<sup>19</sup> “Career Pathways Toolkit.” Department of Labor.

language skills to benefit from occupational skills training, a specialized “teaching strategy is necessary to ensure these learners have the opportunity to gain the skills necessary to compete in America’s workforce and earn a family sustaining wage.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Example: Washington State**

The Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model, from Washington State’s Board of Technical and Community Colleges, provides occupational training classes for students with basic skill levels. The program combines instruction in technical and basic skills, allowing students to learn English and advance quickly in their chosen skill sets. Analyses show that I-BEST has been effective in significantly improving students’ education and career outcomes.

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### **Example: Chicago, Illinois**

Carreras en Salud is a collaborative career pathways program established to bridge limited English-proficient individuals into Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN), and Registered Nurse (RN) positions. The Carreras En Salud provides contextualized basic skills courses that combine academic instruction with technical training for the healthcare industry. The program offers students seven levels at which they can enroll. Students enter and advance according to their capacity and test scores and each level is designed to be completed in 16 weeks. Program data shows consistently high retention rates (70 percent to 90 percent) among LPN cohorts and an average wage increase among program completers between \$10 to \$25 per hour. Additionally, 88 percent of students complete their Vocational English Language Acquisition (ELA)/Pre-CNA courses and 77 percent of students advance to the bridge portion of the program.

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### **Example: Albuquerque, New Mexico**

In addition to being ranked in the top 5 high schools in New Mexico, Albuquerque High School offers Bilingual Education, Dual Education, and ELL programs. The school offers an even number of courses taught in English and courses taught in Spanish to promote overall student achievement in both languages. Students who complete the program can apply for the Bilingual Seal, a graduation honor that encourages students to strive for a high level of bilingual fluency.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> “How I-BEST Works.” Community College Research Center. <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/how-i-best-works.html>

<sup>22</sup> “Carreras en Salud—A Chicago Bilingual Health Care Career Pathways Partnership.” National Council of La Raza. <http://ww1.insightccd.org/uploads/assets/Lopez,%20Simon/CarrerasEnSalud.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> “Bilingual Education.” Albuquerque High School. <https://ahs-aps-nm.schoolloop.com/bilingual-education>.

### iii. Special Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Youth

Between 630,000 and 720,000 refugee children and youth reside in the U.S.,<sup>24</sup> and approximately 3.4 million more are immigrants.<sup>25</sup> Of those 3.4 million, an estimated 1 million children and youth are undocumented.<sup>26</sup> While the experiences of immigrant and refugee youth are by no means homogenous, many of these youths are ELLs, and may also share many of the needs of ELLs. The practices that can benefit ELLs may also be applied and adapted to newcomer youth in the United States. The following set of additional examples of practices (assembled based on research and models in the field) specifically addresses the needs of immigrant and refugee youth.

#### a. Wraparound Support, Mentoring and Community Engagement

For immigrant and refugee youth to succeed in school and at work, their physical, mental, social, and other needs must be met. Whether they seek education or employment, these youth need an array of services to support them as they adjust to life in a new country with an unfamiliar language and culture, especially when many may be dealing with trauma, poverty, multigenerational disconnect from education, discrimination, and periods of family separation. Effective support programs provide resources that aid youth in entering school or work, address the unique emotional challenges they may encounter, and support their new bicultural experiences. These might include sessions with counselors who understand the complex difficulties that immigrant and refugee youth face and, in the case of refugee youth in particular, ways of responding to grief or trauma. High-quality mentoring can also help connect youth with caring, supportive and empathetic adults. In addition to wraparound supports and mentoring, it is also critical to provide social networks for newcomers and to connect immigrants and refugees with others in their communities who share their experiences.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Refugee 101." Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services.

<http://www.brycs.org/aboutRefugees/refugee101.cfm>

<sup>25</sup> Migration Policy Institute tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2013 American Community Survey and 1990 Census decennial data. The 1990 data were accessed from Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Passel, Jeffrey, and D. Cohn. "Unauthorized immigrants: 11.1 million in 2011." *Pew Hispanic Center, Washington DC* (2012).

<sup>27</sup> Eber, Lucille, Tuth Osuch, and Carol A. Redditt. "School-based applications of the wraparound process: Early results on service provision and student outcomes." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 83-99.

### **Example: Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne Counties, Michigan**

Lutheran Social Services Michigan (LSSM) provides English classes to adults and children as well as cultural orientations, including one-on-one meetings with parents, youth, and children. It also works with the school system to ensure that students are registered. LSSM provides professional opportunities for older youth, and hosts a Summer Learning Academy in which families learn about nutrition, American culture, English, and enjoy leisure time with other community members. LSSM has been assisting refugees since the 1950s and has helped resettle thousands of people, many of whom are unaccompanied minors or families with adolescent children.

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### **Example: Portland, Maine**

The Portland Mentoring Alliance at Portland High School brings together local business and community leaders in partnerships with high school students, particularly immigrant students who are new to the area. Mentees are recruited through English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, current and former program participants, and word of mouth, and many benefit from the involvement of a caring and successful adult in their daily lives.

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### **Example: Seattle, Washington**

Refugee Women’s Alliance (ReWA) offers a comprehensive support program for women and families entering the United States. Its youth program is a highlight, as it provides after-school activities, job readiness training, mentoring, and leadership opportunities. It also offers English classes and vocational training. Bundling this set of educational resources in one place is the distinguishing feature of this program, which has contributed to over 550 youth successfully completing its academic programs.

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## **b. Cultural and Workforce Training**

Immigrant and refugee youth enter the U.S. with mixed professional and educational backgrounds, so connecting them with the appropriate schooling, job readiness programs, English language classes, disability supports, as needed, and cultural awareness information is an important element of a successful program. Providing information on different types of work experiences, including internships, community service, paid and unpaid positions, and on-the-job training opportunities is valuable as well. Workplace readiness training can make a difference in the lives of immigrant and refugee youth by helping them attain the skills they need to be independent and productive.

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<sup>28</sup> “Refugee Services.” Lutheran Social Services of Michigan. <http://www.lssm.org/children-and-families/refugee/overview>

<sup>29</sup> “Portland Mentoring Alliance.” Volunteer Maine.

[http://volunteermaine.galaxydigital.com/volunteer/agency/display/portland-mentoring-alliance/?agency\\_id=19314](http://volunteermaine.galaxydigital.com/volunteer/agency/display/portland-mentoring-alliance/?agency_id=19314)

<sup>30</sup> “Our Impact.” ReWa. <http://www.rewa.org/our-impact>. “Youth Program.” ReWa.

<http://www.rewa.org/services/youth-program/>.

**Example: New York, New York**

NYBest College Bridge Program, run through LaGuardia Community College, is designed to improve the language and literacy skills of immigrants so that they may be able to enroll in degree or credential programs in the future. The program seeks to help immigrant and refugee youth surmount the obstacles that prevent them from achieving success in school or in the workplace. It is unique in that it provides a pathway not just for currently enrolled students but also for out-of-school youth and adults to gain the skills they need to reach higher education and/or steady work.

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**Example: Seattle, Washington**

The Seattle Human Services Department provides funding to organizations that train ELL, immigrant, and refugee students in job skills and self-sufficiency. They work with students bilingually and offer cultural events and academic support in addition to their job readiness programs. Organizations funded by the Department address different immigrant and refugee populations, focus on multiple pathways to success, and engage adults and youth alike in preparing for a career.

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*DOL and ED are working diligently to ensure that states, local areas, other grantees, and stakeholders are prepared for the implementation of WIOA. If you have questions regarding this WIOA guidance, please contact the Departments by emailing DOL at [DOL.WIOA@dol.gov](mailto:DOL.WIOA@dol.gov) and ED at [AskAEFLA@ed.gov](mailto:AskAEFLA@ed.gov).*

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<sup>31</sup> “Job Readiness Training Program for Immigrant Youth and Families.” Seattle Human Services Department. <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/youth/jobreadiness.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> “Bridge to College and Careers.” College and Career Pathways Institute. <http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/ACE/Programs/CCPI/BridgeProgram/>