

# Task Force on English Learners and Bilingual Education

October 16, 2024



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## Welcome

- Introductions
- Task Force Members
  - Jerry Almendarez, Santa Ana Superintendent
  - Lewis Ferebee, Washington D.C. Chancellor
  - Jenny Lam, San Francisco, Board
  - Christina Martinez, San Antonio Board
  - Stacey Woolley, Tulsa School Board
- Council Staff



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## Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. *English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools* Update
- III. EL Project Updates
- IV. Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education Meeting—May 13-17, 2025
  - a. **School Visits:** May 13
  - b. **Challenge of Practice Work Sessions**
  - c. **Location:** Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor
- V. New Business



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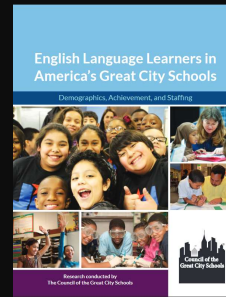


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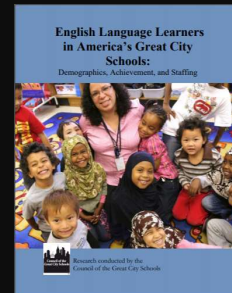
## Project Background

- 2019: Published 6-year follow-up report on English learners (ELs) enrolled in member districts
- Examined EL enrollment, top languages spoken, student performance, staffing, and professional development
- 2024 update will re-examine 2019 topics in addition to newer topics
  - Greater availability of EL-related data from the Council's Academic Key Performance Indicators project and federal data sources

2019



2013



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## REPORT UPDATE ANTICIPATED TIMELINE & PROCESS

- Focus on Existing Data Sources (KPI, NCES, etc.)
- Slimmed SurveyMonkey Survey Instrument – Forthcoming
- Follow-up Case Studies to Highlight Promising Approaches



**October:** The Council will reach out to its member districts to update contacts



**November:** The Council will remind districts of the upcoming survey as well as conduct a pilot of the survey instrument



**December:** The finalized survey will be launched



**January-April:** Responses will be tracked and constant reminders to complete the survey will be sent out



**May:** Preliminary data presented to EL program directors

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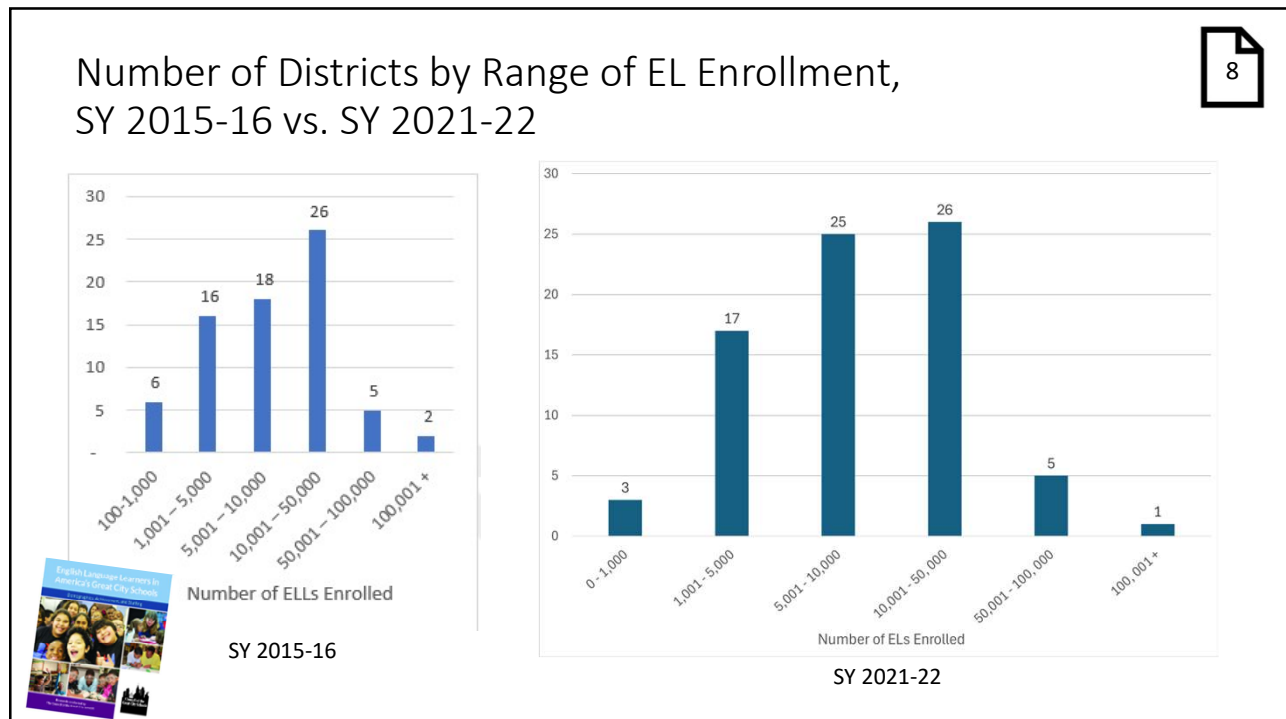
## ELs in Great Cities Report: Preview

- Preliminary analyses
- Discussion
  - Implications
  - Next Steps



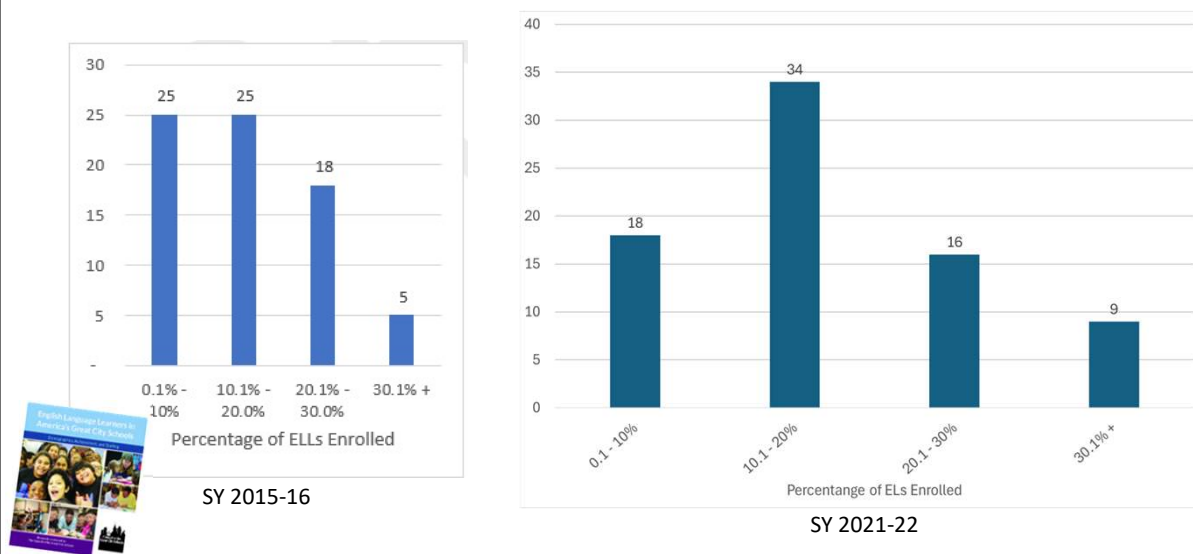



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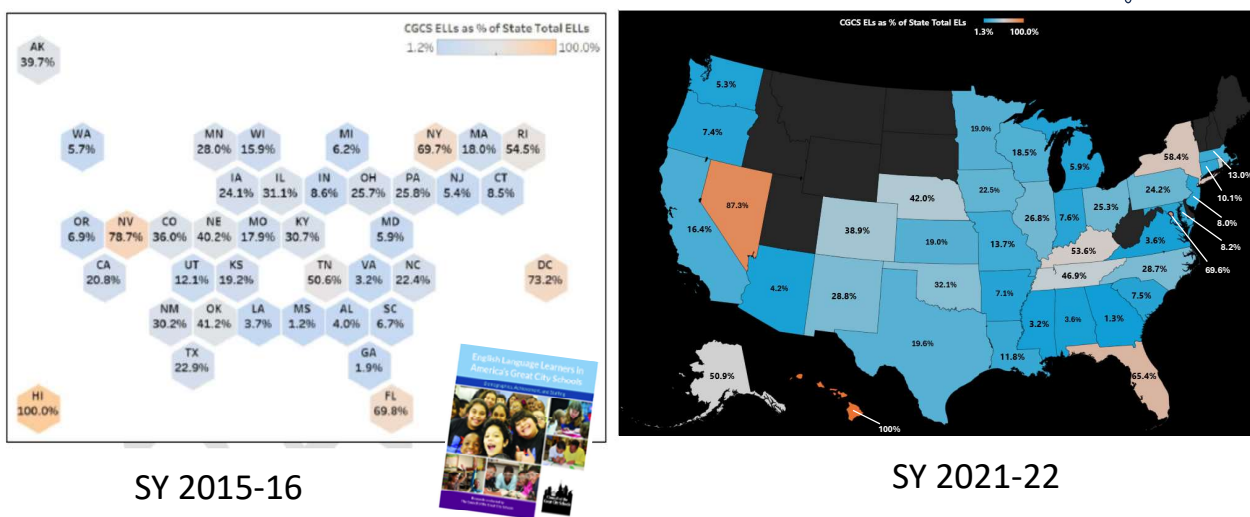
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## Number of Districts by Range of ELs as a Percentage of Total School Enrollment, SY 2015-16 vs. SY 2021-22



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## ELs in CGCS Districts as Percent of Total ELs in Respective State, SY 2015-16 vs. SY 2021-22



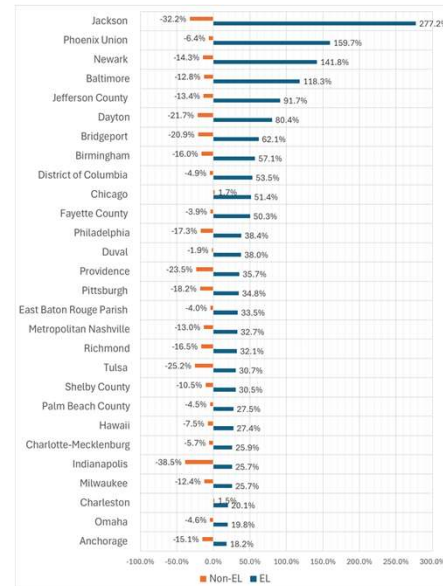
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# Turn and Talk

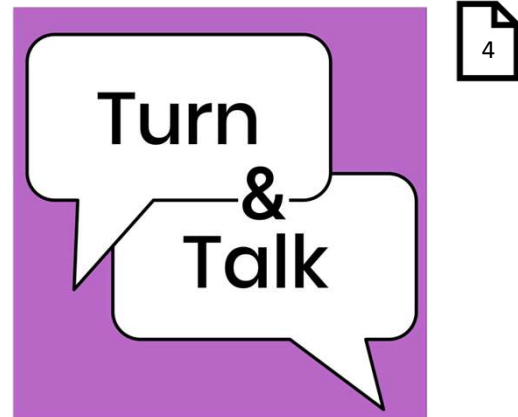
- Do the data reflect what you see on a day-to-day basis within your district?
- How does the percentage change of ELs and Non-ELs in your district compare to the trends in other districts?
  - What similarities or differences stand out?
- How has your district responded to enrollment/demographic shifts, if at all?
- What emerging needs do you foresee?  
How can CGCS support?



SY 2021-22

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[illegible]

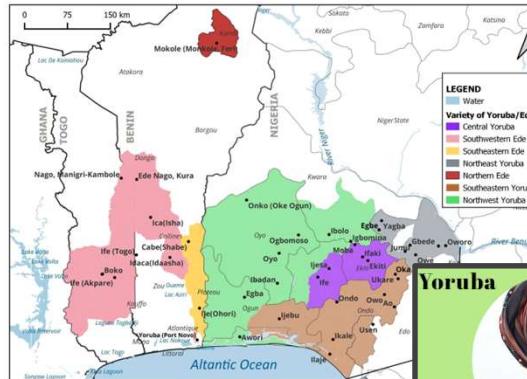
- Which districts share your top languages?
- Which districts have a language among their top 5 that is less common in your district?
- What surprised you?



## New Languages in SY 2021-22

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Yorùbá is spoken in **Togo, Benin, and Nigeria**

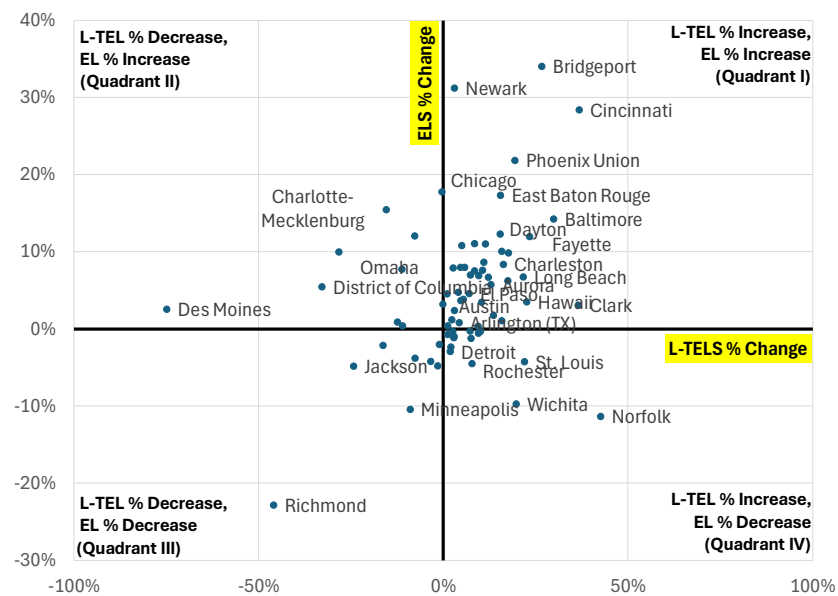


Map of Uzbek Dialects



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District  
% L-TEL vs.  
% ELs,  
SY 2021-22



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N= 77 Districts

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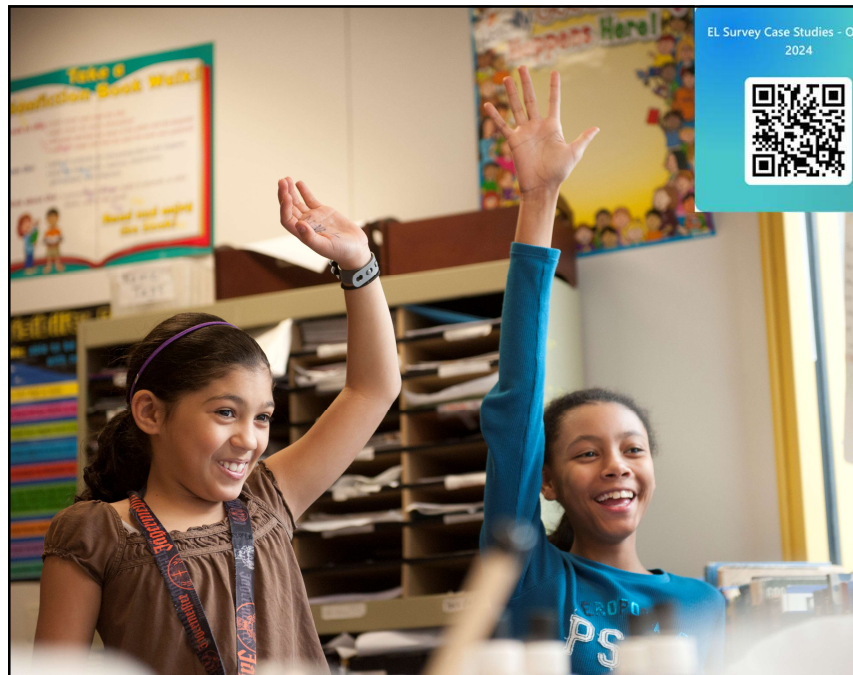


## Forthcoming Analyses

- ELs Requiring Special Education Services
- Achievement and English Proficiency
- Analysis of Selected CGCS Academic Key Performance Indicators
  - Absences
  - Course Failures and Algebra Completion
  - AP Course Taking
  - AP Course Exams (Scores 3 and Higher)
  - Graduation Rate
- Teacher Recruitment and Placement
- Professional Development



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EL Survey Case Studies - October 2024



## Contextualization: Proposed Case Studies

- What specific promising approaches should be highlighted in the follow-up case studies?
  - L-TEL reduction
  - Graduation rate increase
  - Advanced course taking/access
  - AP exam passage rate increase
- What details would be helpful?
  - Program descriptions
  - Relevant policies/procedures
  - Baseline and outcome measures

### Submit Comments:

<https://forms.office.com/r/LDErVNuCL3>

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<p><u>Data</u> <u>Challenges:</u> Reasons We Might Contact Your District</p>	<div> </div> <div> <p>Accuracy - Figures reported contain errors (or can't be triangulated)</p> </div> <div> </div> <div> <p>Availability – Districts missing in KPI and/or federal data for some years</p> </div> <div> </div> <div> <p>Inconsistency – Notable variance of data between sources</p> </div>
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## Challenging District Reality

### Ever-changing district initiatives

- Lack of alignment, understanding of purpose, etc.

### Frequent staff turnover of staff providing and receiving PD

- Lack of differentiation, especially for veteran educators

### "The telephone game" (train-the-trainer model)

- Dilution of PD content over time

### Limited follow-up and opportunities to refine implementation

- Uneven and limited impact on instruction

### Quality and Relevant Content

- Teacher buy-in

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## Professional Learning: Contextual Realities



Time and resources for professional are limited



Professional learning settings vary: dedicated time for PLCs, PD days, after-school PLCs, etc.



Professional learning must fit a district's adopted curriculum and align with its initiatives



Professional learning should **build district's staff capacity for sustainability**



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# Learning Cycle Driven by Facilitation

## Guiding Principles: Evolving Instructional Practices to Deliver Rigorous Instruction for ELs

- Provide opportunities for educators to look at student work to reflect on the implications for practice
- Teach and coach educators in the appropriate use of effective scaffolds to maintain productive cognitive engagement and advance language development
- Provide spaces and support to practice and reflect on instruction and student outcomes



### Active Facilitators...

- Set PD goals and pacing
- Guide learning and curate external resources (e.g., presenters, materials) to connect to district context
- Develop deep knowledge of PD content to train and support teachers
- Coach and support teachers



**Learn** - Challenge of practice and strategy; experiences and video; interactive facilitation



**Plan** - Collaborative planning; implementation strategy



**Apply** - Implementation; data collection



**Reflect** - Review data; further planning

LIVE District staff  
Facilitation is KEY

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## Writing Courses

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## Writing Courses – UCI/NWP

- ❖ Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's **Education Innovation and Research** Office of Innovation and Improvement, as an **expansion** grant.
- ❖ **Partnered with Council of the Great City Schools** to meet the dissemination requirement of the grant, making valuable research accessible to schools across the nation.
  - Co-developed based on Council's course design on Canvas
  - Incorporating feedback from pilot with five (5) Council member districts



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## Key Learning: The CS Approach & Language Features

- **Cognitive Strategies Approach.** Teachers learn this approach to reading and writing instruction, using a rich variety of relevant texts and writing tasks, that equips students to apply cognitive strategies independently and strategically in their own writing.
- **Key Language Features.** Teachers learn how to recognize and address key language features that persistently present challenges for ELs as they engage with a rich variety of relevant texts and writing tasks.



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## Dissemination and Sustainability

- **March 2024:** Facilitators Shared Pilot Experience at National Pathway Conference
- **May 2024 at BIRE:** Learning Opportunity Provided to Attendees
- **August 8-9, 2024:** Facilitator Training for Six Districts Held in Washington, DC

**CGCS** @GreatCitySchls · May 10  
Building on this morning's #BIRE24 PD session, @GCSchoolsNC @ellgcs shared how they incorporated the National Writing Project (NWP)/Council hybrid courses on Teaching Academic Writing to #ELLs in professional learning and guided participants through a learning activity.



**CGCS** @GreatCitySchls · Mar 26  
At the @washington National Pathway Conference, EL experts from @gcschoolsnc and @ellgcs shared their experiences in piloting new CGCS PD courses focused on teaching writing using cognitive strategies. For current course offerings, visit [gcs.org/Pathway/](https://gcs.org/Pathway/).



**CGCS** @GreatCitySchls · Aug 8  
All students can become excellent readers and writers! This morning, we kicked off a two-day training with six districts along to improve writing instruction for English learners using a cognitive strategies approach. Learn about our PD at [gcs.org/Pathway/](https://gcs.org/Pathway/).



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**PATHWAY 1: Using a Cognitive Strategies Approach to Teaching Academic Writing to English Learners**

**PATHWAY 2: The Reading, Writing, and Language Connection in the Cognitive Strategies Approach**

**PATHWAY 3: Writing an Analytical Essay About Theme in a Literary Work**

**PATHWAY 3: Writing an Analytical Essay About Theme in a Literary Work**

**Courses 5-7 on the Way!**

- Narrative Writing
- Informational Writing
- Blended Genres

2. Learn...  
3. Learn: Writing Effective Argumentative...  
4. Plan...  
5. Reflect

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# About the Writing Courses

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## Connects Reading to Writing



**Council of the Great City Schools**  
The nation's largest non-profit education organization

English Language Learners

**GREAT CITY SCHOOLS**  
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLATFORM

See evidence of high professional development offerings that acknowledge and build on educators' strengths, while ensuring ELL students perform at grade level and academically disadvantaged students at the urban center and base of the work. Professional development should help build language communication across districts by understanding and connecting these students across sites and content areas (e.g., teachers, instructional coaches, principals, and district administrators), and by providing safe learning environments that support reflection on practice outside of any formal evaluation process.

Read to learn about our new professional learning course on complex thinking and communication across content areas.



**Initial Courses: Complex Thinking and Communication Across Content Areas**

Initial courses and other resources developed through consistently higher levels of academic language, content and cognitive functioning across the curriculum steps over time. New York professional development efforts have focused on helping students and some high-need students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to meet these new international standards.

The Council of the Great City Schools, with the generous support of the Laura H. Meyer Foundation Trust, has launched a program to help students and teachers develop a set of skills focused on expanding the capacity of students to support high-level thinking and communication across content areas.



<https://www.cgcs.org/Page/667>

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## Initial Courses Update— Complex Thinking and Communication



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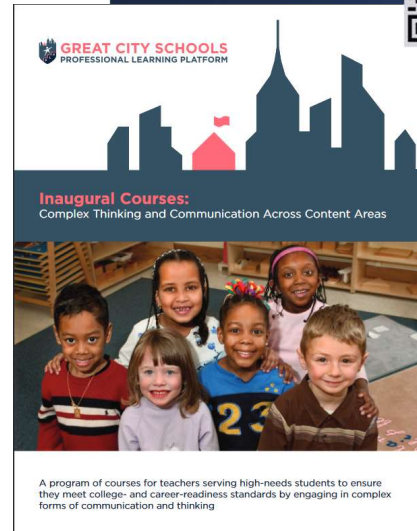
## Subscribed Districts by Year of Launch

### • Currently Subscribed

- Guilford County Public Schools (2017)
- NYC Department of Education – District 25 (2017)
- Kansas City Public School (2019)
- Tulsa Public Schools (2022)
- Newark Public Schools (2023)
- Carter G. Woodson Charter School (2024)

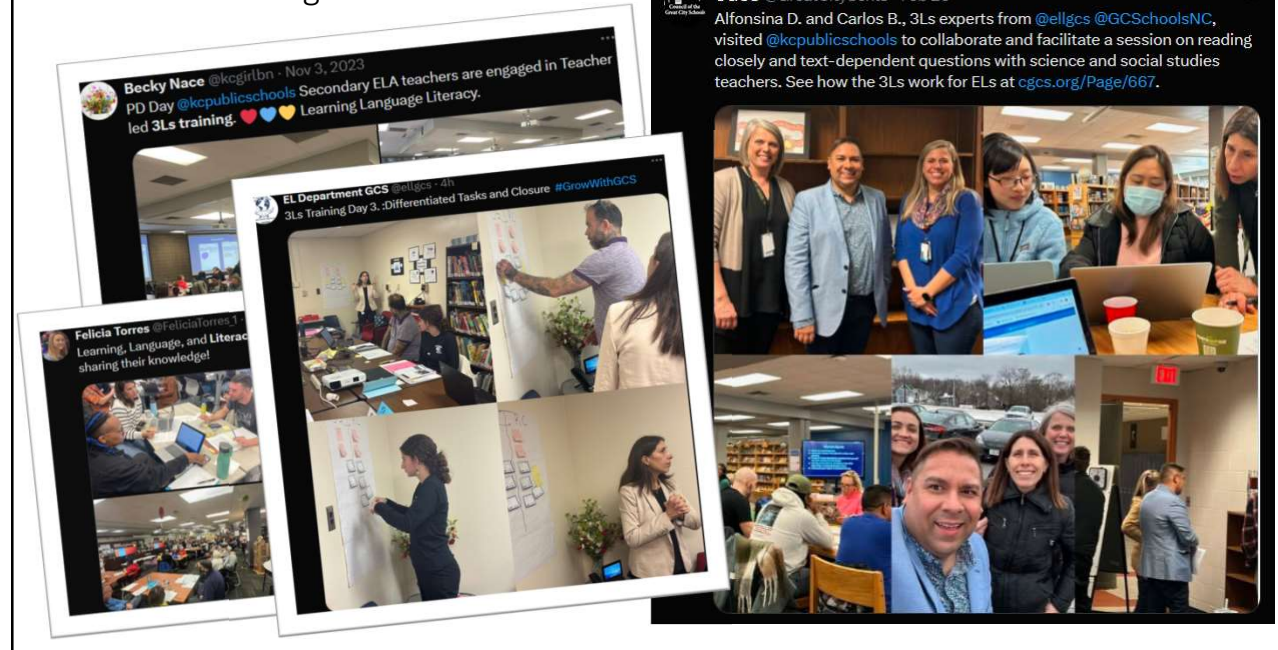
### • Formerly Subscribed (*Pilot and/or Alumni*)

- Anchorage School District
- Atlanta Public Schools
- Buffalo City Schools
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- Clark County Schools
- Clarksville-Montgomery School System (Non-CGCS)
- Columbus City Schools
- District of Columbia Public Schools
- East Baton Rouge Parish School System
- Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
- Oakland Unified School District
- Palm Beach County School District
- Pinellas County School District
- San Antonio Independent School District
- School District of Philadelphia



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## Continued Training and Collaboration



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## BY DESIGN: Online Platform + Hybrid Delivery



**Affordable, on-demand, and ongoing access** to nationally-known experts, research, and evidence-based pedagogy, along with high-leverage practices



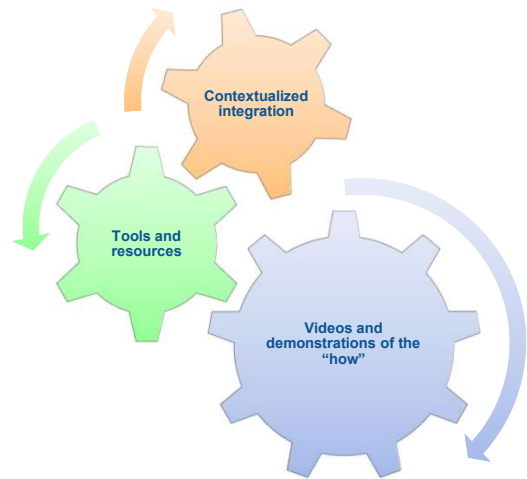
**Flexibility** to be delivered either in face-to-face sessions or in professional learning communities with live facilitation



**Adjustable pacing** to accommodate individual district professional development schedules and opportunities throughout the year



**Explicit connections** between course content and a district's own tools and resources to maximize relevance for educators



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# Newcomer Identification and Placement Guidance

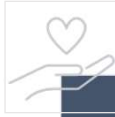
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## Council Survey: Staff perceptions of Newcomer Needs



### Academic Needs

- Low literacy level in any language
- Major gaps in content-area knowledge
- Low levels of English proficiency



### Social-Emotional Needs

- Food/housing insecurity
- Unmet social-emotional needs, impeding their ability to participate in class
- Assistance adjusting to U.S. schools



### Performance & Accountability

- Lack of motivation to stay in school
- Low standardized test performance
- Over-age, under-credited

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## Educational Background Questionnaire (EBQ)

### Components of the Draft Questionnaire Document

#### I. Introduction and Background

- a. Newcomers: Trends and Issues
- b. Purpose of Guidance

#### II. Administering the EBQ

- a. District Context
- b. Purpose of Identification
- c. Logistical Considerations
- d. Interpretation and Program/Service Considerations

#### III. Questionnaire

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Language Background
- Section 3: Experience with English
- Section 4: Educational History
- Section 5: Out-of-School Time Activities/Responsibilities
- Section 6: Technology



Help educators ascertain students' educational background for purposes of making programming and instructional decisions using an asset-based approach that accounts for the diverse range of skills, abilities, and educational experiences students bring with them to the United States



Jointly developed by CGCS and the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS) from the City University of New York (CUNY)



Council working group, composed of staff from Council-member districts, created to provide feedback and pilot the draft questionnaire



Questionnaire and related guidance will be made freely available on the websites of both respective organizations



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## Cautions: Purposes of administering an EBQ do not include...

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Determining which students to provide less rigorous content (i.e., lowering expectations)

2

Segregating students identified as SLIFE

3

Screening students as potentially needing special education services

4

Altering services/support due to concerns about graduation requirements or how enrolling SLIFE might impact accountability metrics

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## Identifying Student Needs: Home Language Literacy Assessment



- Understanding what students know and what they don't know is crucial for providing appropriate academic support.
  - But if they don't speak English, how do you know what they know?
- CUNY is developing a literacy assessment tool modeled after the existing Multilingual Literacy Screener (MLS) developed for NY State that would be available to districts beyond New York.

over  
**17,000**  
students  
tested

over  
**900**  
schools  
served

currently  
**18**  
languages  
offered

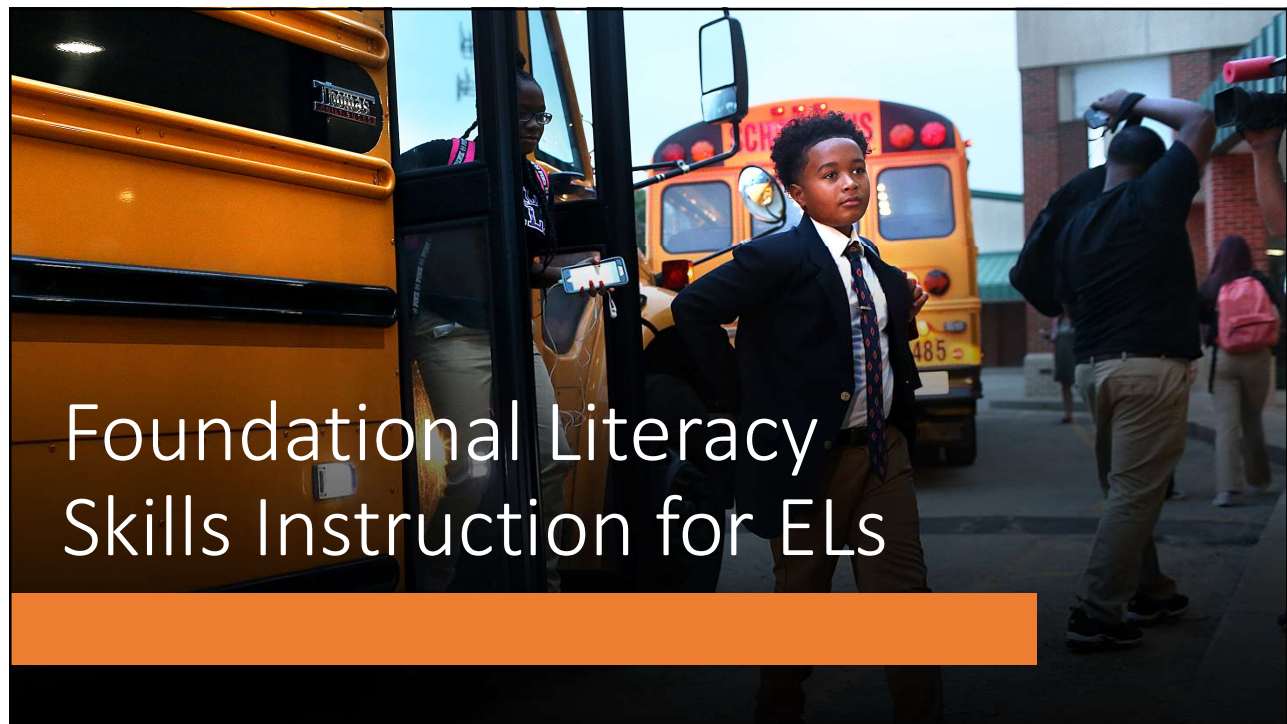
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## Working Group & Pilot

- Following conversations that began in 2020, the Council supported four districts (Austin, Chicago, Clark County, and Metro Nashville) in piloting the Spanish literacy assessment.
- A larger working group is collaborating on developing guidance around the educational background questionnaire.
- The resulting Guidance Document for Screening, Identification, and Program/Services Placement will be available by the end of 2024 or early 2025.

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EdWeek Market Brief

Analyst's View  
Sept. 28, 2023

## Districts Are Ramping Up Standards for ELL Materials. Here's How to Meet Rising Expectations

*Companies Need Materials That Weave Content With Language Learning, Says an Advocate for Major School Systems*

Michelle Caffrey  
Staff Writer

### A Framework for Re-envisioning Mathematics Instruction for English Language Learners

DECEMBER 2016


### Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for English Language Learners

### A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners

Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations  
Spring 2023

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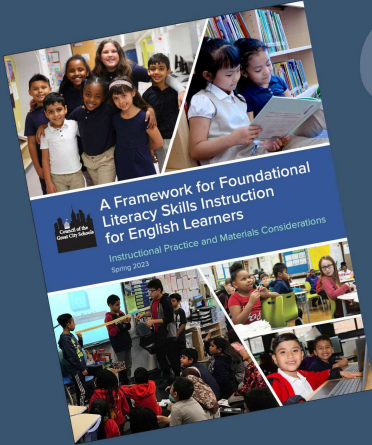
## A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners

Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations

Spring 2023

**Language-based Skills**

- Oral Language
- Comprehension and Meaning-Making
- Word Knowledge

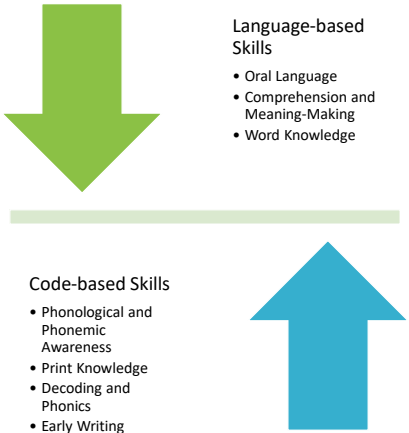



“

A comprehensive and connected approach recognizes the need for English learners to develop both broad language-based skills with related content knowledge to support meaning-making and learning the English language system and code-based skills that build phonemic awareness and decoding skills.


**Code-based Skills**

- Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Print Knowledge
- Decoding and Phonics
- Early Writing





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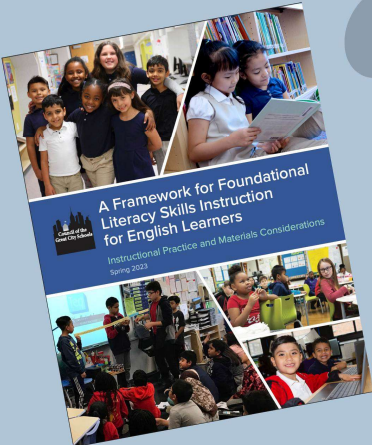


## A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners

Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations


Spring 2023

## What do students learn about language?



“

English learners (ELs) need a **comprehensive and connected approach** to foundational literacy skills development that involves grade-level instruction by knowledgeable teachers who build on the linguistic repertoire of ELs and can teach ELs how the English language system works to convey meaning.



Oral language and broad-based language skills

Understanding of the English language and how it may differ from their home language

Code-based skills to engage with texts in service of learning grade-level content successfully

How academic English works to convey meaning

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Why language-based AND code-based skills?

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## A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners

Instructional Practice and Materials Considerations

Spring 2023

The Framework presents six principles that enable a comprehensive and connected approach as a critical component of Tier I literacy instruction for English learners. The principles address English learners' unique age- and grade- level needs and honor their linguistic assets.

The linguistic repertoire of ELs and registers of English are valued and leveraged.

Grade-level content serves as the anchor for foundational literacy skills development in service of mastering spoken and written academic language.

Meaning-making and comprehension are prioritized.

Mastery of academic English expands student linguistic identities.

Language-based and code-based skills are developed simultaneously.

Comprehension of text is signaled by students' ability to read with the proper expression to convey meaning, not solely speed and accuracy.

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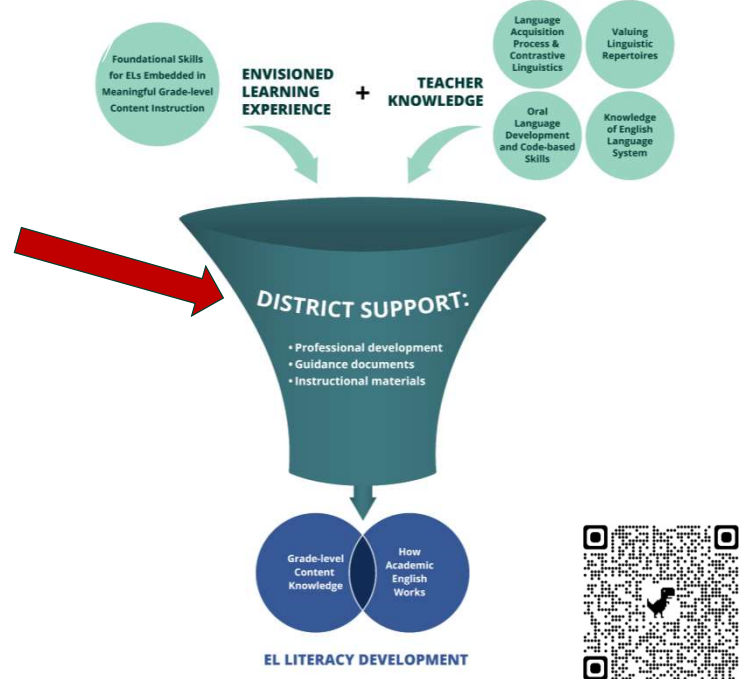


# Theory of Action

When **teachers value and leverage the linguistic repertoires** that ELs bring to school and teachers **are equipped with knowledge** about—

- (a) How the English language system works,
- (b) How ELs develop English as a new language, and
- (c) Comprehensive approaches to literacy,

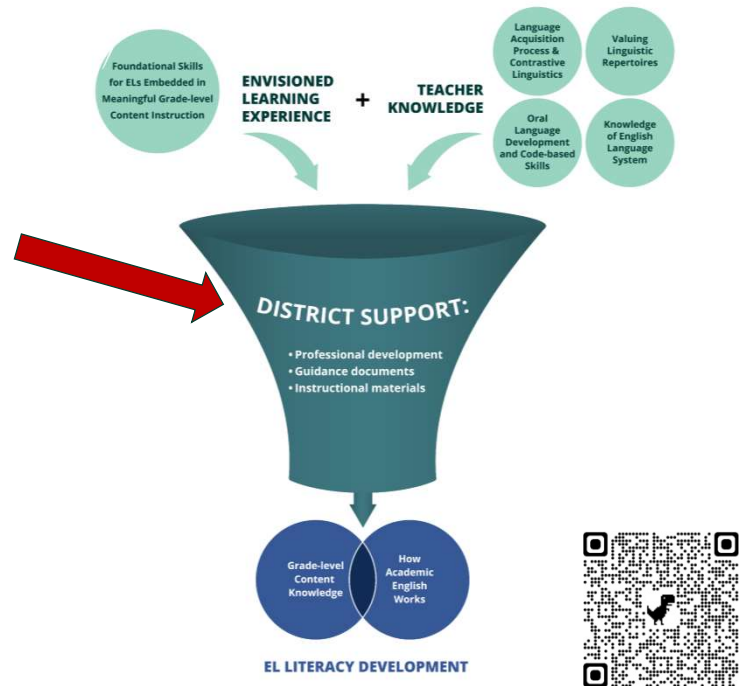
teachers can **create learning experiences** that **build content knowledge** and **foundational skills** that supports student understanding for how academic English works.



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## Finding Your Role in Foundational Skills Instruction (pp. 25-29)

In your current role, how do you ensure that foundational skills instruction for ELs addresses the needs of ELs?



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## Dissemination/Impact



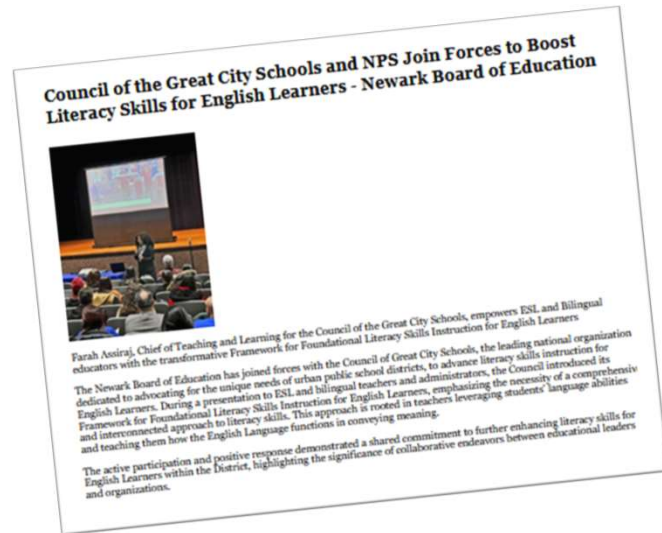
### Primary Dissemination (Presentations)

State Chiefs (CCSSO)  
CGCS Superintendents,  
Board Members, and  
Educators  
  
Education Organizations  
(Reading League and  
English Learners Success  
Forum)



### Secondary Dissemination (Citations and References)

State Education Agencies  
Support Centers  
Publications (Language  
Magazine)



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**CGCS @GreatCitySchls - Feb 27**

During the @CCSSO Winter English Learners Collaborative meeting, the Council engaged with 50+ state education officials on key considerations to provide coherent EL-relevant support for foundational skills instruction. Read about these considerations at [cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC0000...](https://cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC0000...)

**District-aligned Instructional Supports and Resources Explicitly Addressing EL Needs**

Teacher-designed and -led instruction anchored in grade-level content that dynamically responds to the evolving learning needs of ELs requires the following targeted and multi-layered district resources and supports—

- Professional learning.** Teachers need high-quality, relevant, and ongoing professional learning that continues to build their capacity around providing foundational skills instruction to students whose home language is not English, equipping them to respond to the educational needs of ELs (California State Board of Education, 2012). Professional development must also be aligned with (and/or complement in a coherent way) the district's overall professional development plan, particularly around foundational skills and literacy.
- District guidance.** Any district guidance and resources provided to teachers for developing literacy and grade-level content knowledge should also be coherently articulated or aligned to meet the needs of ELs.
- Instructional materials.** The central role that teachers play is supported by quality instructional materials that facilitate engaging learning experiences. These learning experiences build grade-level content knowledge and simultaneously develop oral language and foundational skills for ELs. District-adopted materials, approved lists of texts, or guidance for the adoption of instructional materials to support foundational skills instruction should explicitly include features that address the needs of English learners.

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## State Education Agencies, Offices, and Support Centers

### New York

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, New York State Education Department. (2024, April). Leading the instructional shift in linguistically diverse schools. *Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages Newsletter*. <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/bilingual-ed/obewl-newsletter-april-2024-a.pdf>

The article references the need for a “comprehensive and connected approach” to foundational skills development for English learners as discussed in the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction. In the reference list, a citation of the document is included.

### Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi (Region 7 Comprehensive Center)

Folsom, J., Goertzen, H., Norman-Goins, K., & Region 7 Comprehensive Center. (2024, May 1). *The science of reading for English learners (Part III)*. <https://region7comprehensivecenter.org/the-science-of-reading-for-english-learners-part-iii/>

As the third part of a blog series on the “science of reading for English learners,” this piece references and includes an image of the Council’s theory of action for implementing a “comprehensive and connected” approach to foundational skills instruction for ELs. The foundational skills framework is cited in the reference list.

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## Articles

Fierro, A. (2024, April 8). Ensuring equity in reading instruction. *Language Magazine*. <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2024/04/08/ensuring-equity-in-reading-instruction/>

The article references the role of oral language development in literacy instruction, discussed in the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction for English learners, and includes a citation for the document.

Mosquera, A. (2024, July 17). *Make a plan for oracy*. *Language Magazine*. <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2024/07/17/make-a-plan-for-oracy/>

The article explains the role of oral language development in literacy instruction, discussed in the Council’s framework for foundational skills instruction for English learners, and includes a citation for the document.

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Assiraj, F., Ilk, M., Ortiz, A., & Kester, E. S. (2024, April 27). Leadership and systems: Putting it all together to develop sustainable evidence-aligned systems. *The Reading League Summit 2024*.

Council of the Great City Schools Chief of Teaching and Learning Farah Assiraj presented the foundational skills framework during a panel discussion at the Reading League's summit.

English Learners Success Forum. (2024, February 7). *Science of reading & multilingual learners | Part 1 of 5* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBXb96UprMo&list=PLa6Gq6ljSp7xB-Dx5zHYamOwFL4Hz6K&index=1>

Council of the Great City Schools Chief of Teaching and Learning Farah Assiraj presented the foundational skills framework during a webinar hosted by the English Learners Success Forum.

## Presentations

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## Discussion

Foundational Skills - October 2024



- What questions do you have—or have heard from others—concerning foundational skills for ELs?
- What support do you need from the Council?
  - Possibility: Course for educators to digest the document.
- How will you ensure that the specific needs of English learners are addressed in your district's literacy plan/approach?

Submit Comments: <https://forms.office.com/r/KUWUJzqtzT>

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**Challenge of Practice Work Sessions**

- EL Service Models
- MTSS
- Access to Rigor
- Oral Language Development and EL Literacy
- Newcomers

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New Business



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**Save the Date**

Bilingual, Immigrant, and  
Refugee Education  
Directors Meeting

May 13-17,  
2025

Hilton Inner Harbor  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Council of the  
Great City Schools**

THE NATION'S VOICE  
FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Thank You!