RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

RHODE ISLAND'S STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNER SUCCESS:

A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE *BLUEPRINT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNER SUCCESS*

2020

Commissioner's Statement

It is with great excitement that I announce the completion of Rhode Island's *Blueprint for Multilingual Learner (MLL) Success*—a foundational document that unequivocally affirms the cultural and linguistic assets of MLLs and sets priorities for continuous improvement in serving these students across the state.

MLLs represent the fastest-growing student population in Rhode Island, with the state seeing more than 40 percent increase in the last six years alone. Rhode Island is in a pivotal position to promote multilingualism as a strength that benefits all who live in our state. Students' home languages and cultures are more than assets that educators can leverage in the classroom; they are a proven commodity for competing and winning in our increasingly global economy.

Driven by this conviction, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) convened a series of workgroups to develop the *Blueprint for MLL Success*. These workgroups gathered teachers, district leaders, and representatives of student groups, advocacy organizations, and institutes of higher education, as well as staff from RIDE and the Providence Public School District (PPSD). The effort benefited from first-rate facilitation by the Region 2 Comprehensive Center, which allowed RIDE staff to participate alongside key stakeholders.

We felt strongly that it was important to model the shift in practice we hope to see in the state as we developed the *Blueprint for MLL Success*, namely shared ownership over MLL education across partnerships and at all levels of the educational system.

As part of the process, the *Blueprint for MLL Success* workgroups took an unprecedented look at MLL demographic and performance data. One story that the data repeatedly illuminated was that MLLs in Rhode Island experience stark opportunity gaps. On our five statewide assessments for science, ELA and math, fewer than 14 percent of current and former MLLs met or exceeded expectations in 2018–2019, compared to 39 percent of non-MLLs. Such figures only heighten the sense of urgency we all share about providing equitable access to high-quality instruction.

We also heard loudly and clearly from stakeholders that the community needs a concrete outline from RIDE as to how it will implement the *Blueprint for MLL Success.* From these urgent calls for action, Rhode Island's *Strategic Plan for MLL Success* was born. I am proud of the commitment that Rhode Islanders have shown to this effort, even as we navigate a global pandemic. Our work together has only just begun, but this plan is a foundation we can count on for the long haul.

Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green

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INTRO-
DUCTION

Rhode Island's _Blueprint for MLL Success_ articulates a vision and research-based principles that lay out what must be in place at all levels of the educational system for MLLs to thrive. Together, the vision and the principles set the foundational structure for systemic improvement of MLL instruction in Rhode Island. With the _Blueprint,_ Rhode Island affirms the shared responsibility required to develop MLLs' academic and linguistic skills in environments that respect and sustain their languages and cultures.

RIDE is committed to implementing the _Blueprint for MLL Success_. That is where the _Strategic Plan for MLL Success_ comes into play. The _Strategic Plan_ outlines how RIDE will make the vision and principles from the _Blueprint_ a reality.

Vision

All multilingual learners in the state of Rhode Island are empowered with high-quality instructional opportunities, including multilingual education, that leverage their cultural and linguistic assets, promote college and career readiness, and prepare them to thrive socially, politically, and economically, both in our state and globally.

RHODE ISLAND'S PRINCIPLES FOR MLL SUCCESS

Principles for MLL Success

An asset-oriented system

A coherent and nimble system

A high-quality instructional system

A research- and data-informed system

A family- and community-centered system

Principle 1:

An asset-oriented system embraces expectations and approaches to value, respect, and sustain MLL languages and cultures.

Principle 2:

A high-quality instructional system (including curriculum, instruction, materials, assessments, and professional learning) provides access to rigorous standards-aligned learning opportunities and empowers students.

Principle 3:

A family- and community-centered system maximizes the assets of families, communities, and schools so MLLs reach their full potential.

Principle 4:

A research- and data-informed system holds all educators responsible for continuously strengthening MLL education.

Principle 5:

A coherent and nimble system aligns policies, resources, and practices to increase MLL achievement.

Goal 5: Increase school capacity to effectively engage families and caregivers as partners in MLL academic success, advocacy, decision-making, and use of resources

High-Leverage Strategies			
5.1. Enhance statewide family engagement to meet the needs of MLLs	**5.2.** Leverage the languages, knowledge, and cultural assets of families to increase the effectiveness of MLL services	**5.3.** Develop a multipronged approach to communicating with parents in at least the top five top five representative languages in Rhode Island[3]	**5.4.** Make family engagement an integral part of the continuous improvement efforts of the state, districts, and schools

Action Steps			
5.1.A. Establish a network of educators, parents, and community members to co-construct meaningful communications and resources for families about the diverse roles (advocate, supporter, decision-maker, resource broker, etc.) that parents and educators carry out in partnership to support student success	**5.2.A.** Establish opportunities to listen to parents' and students' hopes, talents, needs, and concerns related to education, and design ways to amplify those voices (through surveys, videos, podcasts, panels, etc.).	**5.3.A.** Use and test the effectiveness of multiple approaches (newsletters, handbooks, website, podcasts, webinars, phone, etc.) to reach parents with information	**5.4.A.** Promote MLL Advisory Councils, at the state, district, and school levels, with representation from educators, community groups, IHEs, parents, and students, and promote structures that allow parents and students to represent the majority of the membership.
5.1.B. Develop family modules and learning opportunities on topics such as child development, supporting learning, and planning for college and careers	**5.2.B.** Offer examples of the incorporation of cultural and language assets into the curriculum and activities	**5.3.B.** Research and design multiple approaches (podcasts, webinars, institutes, Parent University, libraries, community-based organizations, etc.) to engage parents in activities to support student academics	**5.4.B.** Design district and school planning that co-constructs — with families and educators — clear family engagement goals, high-leverage strategies, action steps, and implementation outcomes in district and school plans

[3] Parents have the right to access meaningful information from their child's school in a language they choose and understand. All parents also have the right to request qualified interpreters and translations from the district for critical interactions with the school.

Action Steps

5.1.C. Evaluate available resources in support for innovations in family engagement	**5.2.C.** Recruit parents and students from diverse communities to staff projects, develop resources, and deliver learning sessions, and create incentives (stipends, awards, etc.) to acknowledge their work	**5.3.C.** Translate information into the top five languages in RI, and make translation in representative languages a requirement for schools and districts	**5.4.C.** Use and test multiple approaches and structures to engage parents in decision-making
5.1.D. Create a parent leadership network to strengthen family engagement (through mentoring, parent-led workshops, etc.)	**5.2.D.** Co-construct a set of modules to increase parent knowledge of rights and responsibilities, educational resources, understanding of MLL data, effective advocacy practices, and decision-making structures		**5.4.D.** Create parent- and research-informed models or expand on existing models to enhance support for MLL families at the district and school levels
5.1.E. Align resources and/or secure philanthropic and community support for innovations in family engagement			**5.4.E.** Create tools and processes to assess the level of family engagement in schools

Goal 6: Expand opportunities for MLLs to participate in high-quality bilingual/bicultural programs and develop literacies in multiple languages

High-Leverage Strategies						
6.1. Develop criteria and guidance for high-quality biliteracy and bicultural instruction and program models	**6.2.** Develop the criteria and guidance for high-quality programs in secondary schools, aligned to the Seal of Biliteracy[4]	**6.3.** Expand bilingual services and dual language programs pre-K–12 in districts	**6.4.** Adopt and/or adapt standards-aligned instructional materials (text and digital) and libraries in Rhode Island's top five languages for MLLs	**6.5.** Develop and/or adopt standards-aligned assessments in Rhode Island's top five languages for MLLs striving to meet the Seal of Biliteracy	**6.6.** Recruit, hire, and retain bilingual teachers and strengthen their competencies	**6.7.** Communicate the evidence related to the advantages of the advantages of biliteracy, multi-lingualism, and multiculturalism and the value added of diverse models for enhancing the biliteracies of MLLs

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[4] The Seal of Biliteracy certifies and celebrates students who have demonstrated multilingual competence in the English language and one or more other world languages.

Action Steps

6.1.A. Research the components of HQI that develop high levels of biliteracy	**6.2.A.** Research the components of high-quality secondary biliteracy program models, such as dual language (two-way, one-way), developmental bilingual education programs, heritage language, and secondary/home language development pathways for careers	**6.3.A.** Secure incentives to promote the creation and enhancement of biliteracy models at elementary and secondary schools in targeted districts	**6.4.A.** Create a website with instructional resources (text and digital) aligned to the adopted materials for grade-level standards content/courses in mathematics, science, history/social studies, and literature in the top five languages for MLLs, and post them for districts, schools, students, and families	**6.5.A.** Create criteria to guide the adoption of pre-K–12, standards-aligned assessments for MLLs and other students striving to meet the Seal of Biliteracy, in concert with Seal of Biliteracy guidance for grades 9–12	**6.6.A.** Partner with EPPs to create innovative certification programs for bilingual teacher candidates (e.g., a training pathway for students graduating with Seal of Biliteracy), and secure resources to incentivize partnerships around pathways	**6.7.A.** Create a parent toolkit with information drawn from research and job market surveys in the top five languages for schools to use to inform parents of the value of effective bilingual education that leads to the Seal of Biliteracy
6.1.B. Research the components of high-quality biliteracy program models such as dual language (two-way, one-way) and developmental bilingual education programs	**6.2.B.** Incorporate research-informed practices in the handbook for the development of secondary biliteracy development models aligned to RI's *High-Quality Instructional Framework for MLLs to Thrive*	**6.3.B.** Develop support, monitoring, and accountability structures (e.g., planning guide, networks, coaches, walkthroughs, surveys) to grow programs	**6.4.B.** Identify high-quality books and digital materials for classroom and school libraries/media centers for the languages in RI, and post them for districts, schools, students, and families	**6.5.B.** Secure pre-K–12 standards-aligned assessments for MLLs and other students striving to meet the Seal of Biliteracy that expand what is in place for grades 9–12	**6.6.B.** Partner with foundations, districts, and unions to develop cross-disciplinary professional learning networks for teachers who are bilingual to increase their confidence and competence to engage MLLs in disciplinary discourse in Spanish and other high-incidence languages	**6.7.B.** Post the toolkit resources on RIDE's website and other communication channels

Action Steps						
6.1.C. Create an evidence-based guidance handbook for the development of biliteracy models, including a bilingual instructional framework aligned to RI's *High-Quality Instructional Framework for MLLs to Thrive*		**6.3.C.** Provide incentives to districts/schools that include high percentages of MLLs in biliteracy models	**6.4.C.** Create a system to monitor the allocation of resources for home-language materials (walk-throughs, fiscal audits, surveys)		**6.6.C.** Partner with foundations, districts, and unions to develop cross-discipline professional learning networks for teachers who are bilingual, to increase their confidence and competence to engage MLLs in disciplinary discourse in Spanish and other high-incidence languages	**6.7.C.** Create videos using parent, student, and community voices to promote biliteracy education
6.1.D. Develop a research-informed program quality assessment toolkit for biliteracy models, including processes, protocols, and rubrics for use by schools		**6.3.D.** Develop partnerships to expand bilingual instructional opportunities in low-incidence districts				

Promising Futures

Rhode Island's *Strategic Plan for MLL Success* is designed to significantly improve the quality of instruction for MLLs by addressing the essential elements within a school system that influence MLLs' access to high-quality education in our state. Each of the goals and high-leverage strategies require steady and deliberate attention in the coming years. For Rhode Island to realize its ambitious vision, the goals and high-leverage strategies must be implemented throughout the state. As the goals and high-leverage strategies are implemented, Rhode Island will:

- Increase the graduation rates of both Current and Former MLLs (i.e., decrease dropout rates);

- Increase the percentage of MLLs who meet or exceed state academic standards expectations on state assessments;

- Increase the percentage of MLLs who achieve their annual English language proficiency growth targets;

- Increase MLL enrollment and attainment in college preparatory, dual enrollment, CTE, and AP courses;

- Increase the numbers of Current and Former MLLs graduating with the Seal of Biliteracy and pathway endorsements;[5]

- Increase the number of Long-Term MLLs receiving individualized language instruction to reach proficiency; and

- Increase daily participation rates for Current and Former MLLs (i.e., decrease chronic absenteeism).

Call to Action

- Read both documents.

- Provide feedback on the documents through surveys, virtual sessions, and/or face-to-face meetings (if possible).

- Engage with RIDE and offer input on the implementation of specific strategies.

- Partner with local school and community programs as they align programs and services to the *Blueprint for MLL Success*.

- Volunteer to mentor MLLs, establish internships for MLLs, and identify additional strategies to engage MLLs.

- Support the development of public policies and initiatives that align to the *Strategic Plan*.

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[5] Pathway endorsements are awarded by districts. Students can earn endorsements in six areas: 1) The Arts, 2) Business and Industry, 3) Humanities and World Languages, 4) Public Service, 5) Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics, and 6) Teaching.