Optimizing Conditions to Support English Language Learner Achievement: A NYKids Multiple Case Study

NYS TESOL
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Study Rationale

- The ELL population in NYS has grown over 20% in the last year
- ELLs make up over 8% of the NYS student population
- 2014: Blueprint For English Language Learner Success published, to accompany CCLS
- 2015: CR-Part 154, education mandates for ENL programming
Sample Selection

- Taking into account economic disadvantage and ELL performance on the Common Core ELA and Math 3rd-6th grade assessments in school years 2012-13 and 2013-2014 schools with at least .5 SD above predicted performance (stat significant)
- Equal distribution among urban, suburban, rural schools serving larger and smaller; and different kinds of ELL populations
- Near typical wealth ratio
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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>% Econ. Disadv.</th>
<th>% African-American</th>
<th>% Hispanic/Latino</th>
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<th>PPE*</th>
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Data Collected

- Interviews
  - teachers
  - district and school leaders
  - support staff
  - students

- focus groups
- classroom observations
- student work samples
- documents
Findings

1. CULTURE & CLIMATE
2. INSTRUCTION
3. COMMUNICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS
4. LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY
Culture and Climate

- Positive behavior & character education program
- Celebrating and accepting diversity
- Teacher commitment to diverse students (high expectations and equity)
I think the goal for them [the children] is to feel safe, to see themselves as students, to be able to problem solve, and feel that there’s always someone there to help them do their academics or take care of their emotional needs.

- Blue Creek Teacher
Instruction

- Technology for differentiation
- Grouping for differentiation
- Flexible supports in mainstream classroom
- ENL teacher expertise
This is a building that works together.

– Guilderland teacher

- Technology for differentiation
- Grouping for differentiation
- Flexible supports in mainstream classroom
- ENL teacher expertise
Communications & Collaborations

- Parent outreach
- ENL teacher coteaching/collaboration
- Community partnerships/connections
We don’t have that issue of ENL being a separate entity...It’s incorporated. We communicate.

– Van Rensselaer teacher
Leadership & Capacity

- staffing fit (to a diverse school)
- teacher judgement/autonomy
- clarity and coherence of mission and vision
- professional development/learning quality
- ENL pedagogical knowledge distributed
I need to be able to delegate and **empower** and enable people to take on those leadership roles and run with it..

– Fostertown principal
1. CULTURE & CLIMATE
- staffing fit (to a diverse school)
- teacher judgment/autonomy
- clarity and coherence of mission and vision
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2. INSTRUCTION
- technology for differentiation
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3. COMMUNICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS
- parent outreach
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4. LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY
- positive behavior/char. ed program
- celebrating and acceptance diversity
- teacher commitment to diverse students (high expectations and equity)
Implications

Attention needs to be paid to...

✓ Unit-spanning systems and mechanisms that include teaching teams and teacher specializations

“It’s not about me. It’s about We.”

“Now everyone is a teacher of ELLs. That has been the crucial shift.”

[It’s] a whole school effort.”
Attention needs to be paid to...

✓ Affective and motivational supports for children and adults

“It’s a shared vision, to provide equity, and equity does not mean equal.”

“The uniqueness of every kid is cherished.”

“a high quality, relevant, equitable education for all”
Implications

Attention needs to be paid to...

✓ Task coordination and distribution of leadership for ELL and ELL family supports

“We’re setting the bar high.”

“Your ELL teacher needs to be a super star.”

“They get to know these families inside and out and they develop a trust with them.”
Principles of the NYS Blueprint for ELL Success

- All teachers are teachers of English language learners.
- All school boards and district/school leaders are responsible for ensuring that the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional needs of ELLs are addressed.
- Districts and schools engage all ELLs in instruction that is grade-appropriate, academically rigorous, and aligned with the CCLS.
- Districts and schools recognize that bilingualism and biliteracy are assets.
- Districts and schools value all parents and families of ELLs as partners in education and effectively involve them in the education of their children.
- District and school communities leverage the expertise of ENL/bilingual teachers and support personnel while increasing their professional capacities.
- District and school communities leverage ELLs’ home languages, cultural assets, and prior knowledge.
- Districts and schools use diagnostic tools and formative assessment practices in order to measure ELLs’ content knowledge as well as new and home language development to inform instruction.
Case study examples

www.albany.edu/nykids/results_elementary_school.php

Case studies provide the full story of what is happening at the district, school, and classroom level in schools with odds-beating ELL achievement.
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Karen Gregory, Co-I

For more information about professional development opportunities related to this study, please contact Sharon Wiles, NYKids Project Coordinator swiles@albany.edu

www.albany.edu/nykids/