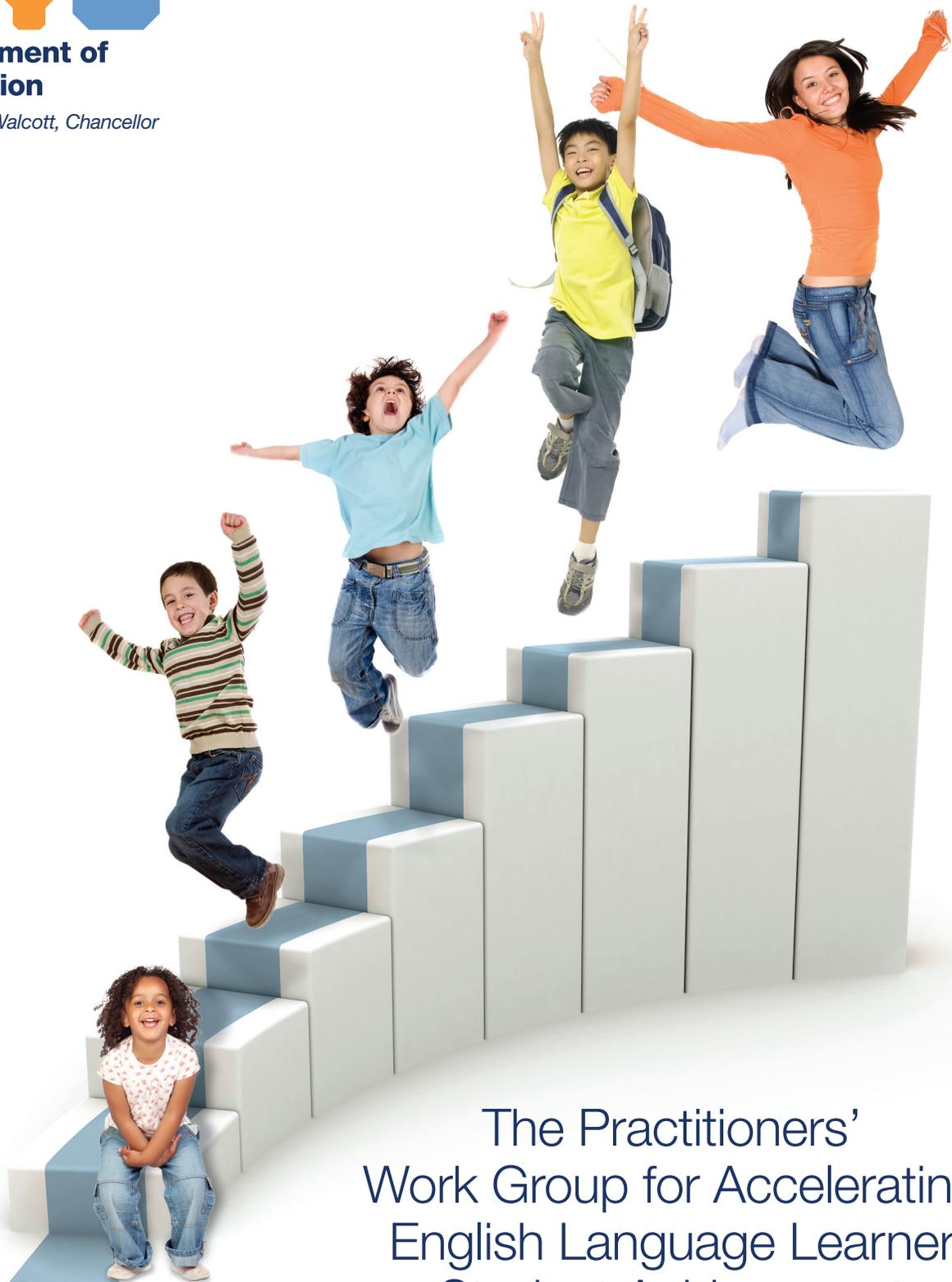




**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor



The Practitioners' Work Group for Accelerating English Language Learner Student Achievement

**Nine Common Features of
Successful Programs for ELLs**



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and English Language Learners

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The Practitioners’ Work Group for Accelerating English Language Learner Student Achievement

Nine Common Features of Successful Programs for ELLs



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Introduction and Executive Summary

In the fall of 2009, the Office of English Language Learners (ELLs) set out to learn from and validate the best practices for ELLs in all grades. The Accelerating Achievement for ELLs (AAELL) Work Group brought together more than 100 educators (principals, teachers, guidance counselors, parent coordinators, and network team members) from a wide variety of schools across all five boroughs, representing all ELL program models with both large and small student populations, as well as ELL-focused small high schools. They were joined by various community-based organizations and ELL advocates who collaboratively planned these events with the Office of ELLs.

Schools invited to participate had to meet at least two requirements:

1. Their ELLs as a subgroup made significant academic progress.
2. They exhibited sustained school-wide academic growth for at least three years.

The AAELL sessions modeled the practice of learning from each other to push participants' thinking and reflect on effective, replicable practices for all schools to accelerate ELL achievement. School leaders, teachers, counselors, parents, other school-based staff, and network team members, as well as community members and researchers, not only provided evidence-based ways to create significant gains system-wide, but also recognized and celebrated the transformative work of successful schools. Using qualitative data-gathering methods, sessions focused on identifying high-yield practices that have proven effective for ELLs, and the policy and programmatic structures that support those practices.

In reviewing all four of the AAELL sessions, it was clear that there were some common features to the success that the participants described. Through this document, we hope to share that knowledge and present some examples offered by the schools that participated, showing these principles in practical application.

School teams in the AAELL Work Group attributed their ongoing success to a series of **common features** that include:

1. School leadership has a clear school vision that includes high expectations for ELL student achievement supported by a purposeful plan of action leading to post-secondary options, including college.
2. School continuously monitors ELL student progress (e.g., student work, formal and informal assessments, test results), and systematically adjusts instructional planning based on a wide variety of evidence and data.
3. Teachers and school leadership know their ELL population and their individual needs well.
4. School organization and structure is maximized for ample collaboration and planning time among teachers, school leadership, and all stakeholders.

5. Teachers support and learn from each other in a way that recognizes the interdependency of language proficiency and content instruction.
6. School hones the capacity of staff to enrich language development and academic concepts and skills.
7. School leadership is able to make connections between the Children First concept of accountability for ELL outcomes and key initiatives.
8. Curriculum and instruction at the school are closely aligned to applicable standards.
9. School highly values parent and community involvement, and takes active steps to ensure that both are a part of the school's culture.

The nine common features described by the schools are discussed below in more detail, with specific examples of effective practices.

This project could not have been completed without the valuable collaboration of the Graduate Center at The City University of New York, Hunter College, Internationals Network for Public Schools, Advocates for Children, New York Immigration Coalition, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project, New York University, New York State Association for Bilingual Education, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, WestEd, and, of course, the participating schools, which are listed in Appendix A.

The Process

Session participants were divided into nine Work Groups, each including four to six school teams and several community members, parents, teacher educators, and researchers. Discussions were facilitated by DOE ELL specialists in partnership with members of the subcommittee planning team using the Collaborative Descriptive Protocol (CDP). CDP is a protocol that emphasizes that every participant is valued and should participate and promotes the use of language that is not judgmental or evaluative when describing school practices. Use of CDP in the AAELL Work Group Sessions ensured that all of these high-performing schools and other participants had an opportunity to explain the key elements of their programs, and how and why they worked. In addition, participants had an opportunity to inquire about the details needed to fully understand each practice and program. As a result, there was a general sense among the participants that each was a full participant and that they came away from the sessions with a working knowledge of many additional ideas for improving the academic performance of their ELLs. For additional details on the processes used at the Work Group sessions, see Appendix B. Below is a description of some of the most notable of the many high-quality examples of school work presented to the group.

Common Features of Successful ELL Programs

The overarching element present in the success of these schools is their ownership of ELL student outcomes. Based on what school principals and their teams shared at Work Group sessions, these are the common features that emerged:

1

School leadership has a clear vision that includes high expectations for ELL student achievement supported by a purposeful plan of action leading to post-secondary options, including college.

Educators in these schools envision the success of ELLs as their goal, and trace a path for all their staff members with benchmarks that spell out intermediate actions and their results. High performance expectations aligned to grade level standards and college readiness are the ultimate target of multiple strategies. These schools articulated community-held theories of action, which contain the rationale for why things are done the way they are. These theories give coherence to programs and help explain why members of the school community undertake specific actions. They also serve as a determinant for the adoption of practices (if they are congruent with the beliefs and practices that characterize the school), or rejection of those practices or curricula (if they are inconsistent). Finally, these theories help educators predict outcomes (with statements like “If we do this, then the result will be ... because ...”).

Schools shared the notion that the goal of their educational efforts was to graduate critical thinking individuals who are able to communicate effectively and who are responsible to their communities, the city, and the world. Among many indicators, this goal included the continued development of students’ bilingualism in English and their native languages. How this goal was to be accomplished depended on specific school populations. Their validation and development of students’ native language is achieved through group interactions in classes conducted in English, projects in the native language, and internships that require that students use their native language in meaningful work and community activities. Whatever the specific practice, it was guided by the vision of developing articulate, coherent, thoughtful individuals who can use both languages in valuable academic settings.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools have:

- School-wide shared expectations and beliefs about student learning
- Supportive school environments

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group schools:

- Emphasize a culture of high expectation for ELLs, teachers, and parents
- Cultivate a culture of respect for diversity and an appreciation of all home languages
- Align fiscal and human resources to ELL priorities
- Establish common school-wide practices focused on ELLs

example
1-A:

A new small school that has a small diverse ELL population, including West African, Hispanic, and Arabic students, noted that the key to its success relied on not holding different expectations for ELLs than for other students. Consequently, ELLs are expected to work at the same level as all of the other students in the school. Curriculum options are the same for ELLs and non-ELLs, and teaching makes instructional gaps between the two as small as possible. In order to assist ELLs in meeting the same standards as non-ELLs, there is a high teacher-to-student ratio in ELL classes (the principal stated she overfunds the program). In addition, the ELL staff is given time to plan with content staff to address the needs of ELLs. ELL teachers participate in planning meetings alongside content teachers and share the same curricular objectives. Teachers use the QTEL strategies that are most applicable to the curriculum being taught. Coaches help identify the strategies that are most appropriate for the concepts being taught. This school also uses data to monitor ELL performance. In particular, they monitor Regents scores to identify when ELLs have improved. Likewise, they try to figure out where the achievement jumps need to take place and identify the specific actions that can help students achieve most in these areas during class or after school.

example
1-B:

A small (475 students) early-college high school for immigrant students allows students to stay a fifth year if they choose to, in which case they have an opportunity to complete an associate's degree. The school is organized into six instructional teams, each of which works with 75 students. Their instructional approach is based on the notion that English is best acquired as part of studying all content areas. All content-area teachers are also teachers of the academic English used in their disciplines. The school emphasizes small group work in the classes with students because they believe that interaction is essential and heterogeneity is a plus. Students attend classes in mixed grades and mixed academic and language levels. Students work collaboratively in tasks that contribute to the completion of a project, with each team completing a component of the project but all of them owning the final product. Groups are formed by teachers along specific criteria to maximize the team's interactive power. Teachers have common prep time and they develop work for ELLs together based on data that is gathered from classes. Teachers also work together on student management. Students' native languages are used and are considered an asset. Everyone at the school views students as whole individuals, and the school supports students in areas other than academics.

2

School continuously monitors ELL student progress (e.g., student work, formal and informal assessments, test results), and systematically adjusts instructional planning based on a wide variety of evidence and data.

Regularly reviewing data enables schools to maintain their course, emphasize certain aspects of their plan, or to propose changes—consistent with their theory of action—that will ensure the acceleration of their students’ accomplishments.

A variety of tools and resources, such as the Language Allocation Policy, are used by schools to organize and analyze data. Performance targets and shifts in practices (classroom instruction and grouping) are strategic, timely, and responsive. Flexible grouping for academic intervention, differentiation, and integrating ELLs into heterogeneous classes is practiced based on student needs and learning targets. For instance, one school engages in a comprehensive intake process for its newcomer ELLs, administering a battery of assessments (LAB-R, ALLD, and writing samples in the native language) to determine native language and content knowledge. Based on assessments, ELLs in this school are offered native literacy development and support, as well as academic interventions, in addition to placement in an ESL program.

Once students are placed, effective programs measure student progress in ways that allow them to modify their actions to improve student performance. Diagnostic assessments (e.g., formal assessments in the native and English languages with necessary accommodations, portfolios, and formative classroom assessments) help schools ascertain the diverse language and academic strengths of ELLs. Multiple means of assessment allow appropriate instruction without “overtesting.” Finally, schools that effectively serve ELLs establish multiple measures for examining student gains and instructional improvements among all teachers. Regular quality review cycles (in some schools), where data is gathered and analyzed to track the development of students and teachers over time, allow appropriate program refinement.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools:

- Have ongoing assessments to monitor student progress
- Use assessment data to plan instruction
- Use data for teacher and school accountability

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group schools:

- Have school teams that meet regularly to examine data (ARIS, NYSESLAT, lesson video tapes, students’ self assessments, diagnostics)
- Use data for individual student profiles and to monitor curriculum alignment
- Regularly group and regroup ELLs and English-proficient students to maximize instruction and learning opportunities
- Adapt structure and systems to the specific needs of changing ELL populations
- Use rubrics that integrate ELA and ESL performance standards for writing

example
2-A:

Teachers in an elementary school look at data across ESL, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and Bilingual Special Education classes. ELLs are grouped in general education classes and are supported with push-in ESL instruction. The school cultivates a culture of respect for diversity and appreciation for all home languages. Continuous teacher learning and exchange is promoted through classroom observations and intervisitations among teachers and administrators. In order to foster a comprehensive approach to instructional planning, bilingual and ESL teachers are provided with common prep time once a week. During this and other scheduled and unscheduled opportunities, teachers look at NYSESLAT performance over time to analyze ELLs' gains in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The school uses Fountas & Pinnell as a vehicle to assess reading progress. The teachers in this school are good language models who can differentiate for ELL subpopulations and continuously work on oral language development with their students based on the individual student data they have collected. Strategies often used for ELLs include modeling, audiovisuals, semantic mapping, graphic organizers, explicit vocabulary development, activating prior knowledge, and engaging in accountable talk. ELL students participate in Title III funded after-school and Saturday classes. The students in these programs are grouped by subpopulations in order to maximize the effective use of the strategies to differentiate instruction geared to their individual needs. The school uses their subpopulation data to develop a program of targeted parent activities. The parent coordinator engages parents in ESL classes, heritage recognition, and sessions on how to support children academically and socially. Parents also receive notification of curriculum and standards so they are armed with knowledge of what their child is learning. The school also offers parents a range of workshops tied to various needs and interests.

example
2-B:

At one high school, all students are required to go through a portfolio review twice a year so that they develop strong communication skills. This portfolio system was built into the school from its inception in 2002. It consists of an hour-long presentation where students defend projects they have been working on and revised in their courses during the semester. This gives students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. For ELLs, the practice of having to present for one straight hour is a very powerful learning experience. Students do one portfolio every semester (for a total of eight by graduation). The portfolio creation process includes developing a project that connects to standards and is incorporated into lessons. The due dates for projects are scheduled so that students have enough time to prepare and to minimize conflicts among subject areas. Staff uses the Understanding By Design (UBD) framework to develop the projects. Students have half-days the last week of the semester, and they share portfolios or do tutoring in the afternoon. Students defend their projects in front of a committee of teachers, some of whom have not taught them. While it requires significant programming, the teachers and students believe it is worth it. The belief is that it is powerful professional development for teachers, and that it gives teachers the opportunity to get to see students in other subjects and at other levels. Teachers also gain good ideas from their colleagues. Even alumni have expressed the feeling that portfolios were very helpful. As a result, the practice has become institutionalized in the school.

**example
2-C:**

A middle school with about 40% ELLs and 20% students with disabilities has developed rubrics for its students that not only support learners but also help establish ways to measure interim growth. ELLs have rubrics, based on the NYSESLAT, that help the school monitor progress on a regular basis. If a unit takes six weeks, then the writing can be developed during this time using the rubric. The rubric was originally designed to create a sense of accomplishment for ELLs even though they may have not moved up a whole point on the rubric. The rubric is represented in increments of half-points instead of whole points. Another idea that guided the creation of the rubric was the understanding that the skills used on the NYSESLAT writing portion of the test (conventions, organizations, vocabulary, and complexity) need to be understood by all faculty members working with ELLs. The rubric is successfully used in all content-area classes to further promote the understanding that every teacher is a literacy teacher, and to create a coherent curriculum for all ELLs. The school has found that these scaffolds and other strategies allow their ELL students to succeed using the same curriculum as their non-ELL students.

**example
2-D:**

Another middle school uses data to overcome the challenges posed by teaching heterogeneously composed content-area classes. While students are placed according to their levels of language proficiency in their literacy and other subject classes, in mathematics they are all brought together for content regardless of their language of proficiency. Setting individual goals for students helped the math teacher overcome some of the challenges of addressing students' linguistic and content needs. A teacher described the practice of setting goals for her students which enabled her to create work stations and address students' needs through frequent small group instruction. In addition to that, a practice that she developed to help empower students with their own learning was to have students write their own goals and reevaluate them after a certain period of time. The math teacher wanted students to be more accountable for what they learn and for the outcomes of the learning process. After their initial setting of the goal, students go back and reevaluate themselves; if they find that they did not achieve their goals, new ones are set.

**example
2-E:**

The teachers at one elementary school felt that assessment was critical in the development of high-quality programs in the school building. In the classroom, the teachers would have the students work in pairs based on their language proficiency so as to set up environments supportive of continuous and ongoing assessment. The students were taught how to use different strategies to further develop the literacy skills being imparted. Having students make use of comprehension strategies, retell a story to their partners, and make connections were all carefully planned by the teachers as part of the lesson. Peer assessment was also a powerful tool used in the classroom. The reading buddies had to articulate their learning to one another in order to increase and support oral language development. Students were also taught to make connections to the story. Finally, in order to monitor progress, teachers assessed their students by conferring with them using conference sheets. The use of a tracking system in Excel with benchmarks was given to the teachers in an effort to set high goals and standards for students.

example
2-F:

Another elementary school firmly believes in the use of systemic assessments and the use of data that will support high-quality programs for ELLs. At each grade level, data specialists and coordinators are focused on tracking trends in data on an ongoing basis. Six intervention specialists and the inquiry team make use of the data to address the needs of the students, and to examine their strengths and weaknesses. NYSESLAT data is one of the reports that is analyzed to make instructional decisions. Students who pass the NYSESLAT are provided with a maintenance program for one year thereafter. Since the data is used for accountability purposes, the school leadership meets with the teachers on a monthly basis to talk about appropriate interventions and best practices. In an effort to provide teachers with a better understanding of ELLs and their needs, the content area teachers are provided with professional development opportunities four times a year. In order to observe how data, instruction, and professional development impact teacher and student performance, informal observations are scheduled bi-weekly for every classroom. Teachers are invited for a private one-on-one conversation with an administrator to discuss what was observed. This approach can be interpreted as a reflective tool that will promote a deeper understanding of effective teaching strategies. The administrators at the building ensure that everything taught is visual, skill-building, and language-based. In-house school data shows that parental involvement is essential to the future academic success of the students. Each culture is respected and celebrated, which sends the school community and the community-at-large a strong message that the school values the diversity of its student population. In order to ensure that the parents who speak other languages have real-time access to academic information through translators, the school has purchased the use of high-quality headsets recommended by the United Nations.

example
2-G:

One elementary school focuses on the use of data, technology, and the native language. In terms of the native language, there is a Dual Language program at each grade level. In order to provide professional development opportunities that target the Dual Language teachers at the school, there is a Dual Language study group that meets twice a month to look at videotaped lessons of their classes and to examine data. This focused activity only helps to further polish the instructional skills of the Dual Language teachers, which impacts future student performance. The school looks at the results of the DRA and of its Spanish equivalent, the EDL, to compare reading scores in English and Spanish. NYSESLAT data is also examined to inform instruction. SmartBoards are used in the classroom as a means of scaffolding learning. A review of all the reading and NYSESLAT data provides the school with the necessary information to structure a Title III program that is tailored to the needs of the ELL students and will enable the ELLs to make increased gains.

example
2-H:

A middle school uses technology as a means of data collection, student evaluation, and oral language development. This particular school videotapes their ELL students during their classroom presentations. Then, the class engages in a form of peer review by watching the videotape and discussing ways in which they can improve their oral presentations. Prior to presenting, students are given criteria that will be used to evaluate them: eye contact, tone of voice, use of visuals, etc. Using these criteria, students are evaluated by their peers. The teacher assumes the role of a facilitator, allowing the students to take a more active role in the development of their English around academic content. These video files are used to demonstrate growth, which leads to increased self-confidence.

3

Teachers and school leadership know their ELL population and their individual needs well.

Educators in these schools understand that good practices are responsive to specific situations and particular groups of students. They consider the educational backgrounds of their ELLs as well as their proficiency levels in English and their native languages. For example, what may be good for a school with a population of students with the same home language may not be appropriate for a school in which many different languages are represented. The educational supports for a Student with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) will be different than those for an ELL entering with grade level academic proficiency. Schools must be cognizant of the fact that language and content acquisition are interdependent, and that knowing students well means knowing their familiarity with content as well as their language skills. In addition, educators in these schools are aware of the need to support former ELLs so that they achieve their fullest linguistic and cognitive potential in all areas.

School-based programs and classes address the needs of specialized groups in terms of flexible scheduling and grouping during the school day. In some schools, this means building additional time into the schedule so ELLs stay in school beyond four years. Allowing for specialized programs, (e.g., half-day internships, targeting subgroups) keeps students engaged and addresses their academic and linguistic needs.

Leaders in these schools ask themselves critical questions, such as:

- Are course offerings designed to meet ELLs' diverse needs?
- How would ELLs benefit from being programmed first?

Because many ELLs must do double the work of English-proficient students—developing basic and academic language while also learning content—most promising programs extend the school year and/or the learning day. Making the official day longer in high school allows ELLs to accelerate or recover courses or credits needed for graduation. In addition, many schools use added time before and after school, and on weekends, to provide accelerated learning, tutoring, and test preparation.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools:

- Know the proficiency levels of their students across language and content areas, and structure their instructional program to reflect this information
- Use the students' backgrounds to create a school community in which all feel included

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group schools:

- Structure their instructional program and course offerings to meet the specific needs of their students
- Provide opportunities for teachers to share and discuss individual student performance
- Provide opportunities for teachers to learn about the cultural backgrounds of their students
- Add time to their regular school day to ensure that ELLs receive the supports they need

example
3-A:

A large high school has created a menu of professional development for teachers of ELLs, especially focusing on the development of essay writing, on-demand writing, reading, speaking, listening, and presentation skills. The school also recognizes the importance of the socio-emotional development of their ELLs, so an advisory program was created for languages less represented in the school. A teacher fluent in one of those languages can network with these students to reduce isolation and maintain a connection to their culture.

example
3-B:

A middle school described an advisory program that addresses both cultural integration and the development of personal and social needs of ELLs. During advisory, advisors employ peer mediation and address academic awareness, academic progress and growth, and students' physical development. Two days out of the week, teachers conference with students. Sometimes teachers go into other classrooms to present on specialized topics that are relevant to the students. Each student's advisor cares about the overall academic achievement of the student. Advisory teachers are liaisons to parents. For each student, the advisor is one adult to whom students can take all their challenges and accomplishments. That adult is responsible for that student's wellbeing and academic success in the school, including celebrating birthdays and rewarding achievements.

example
3-C:

An elementary school focuses on content areas to help ELLs meet the demands of middle school. Most elementary schools in their community do not have separate content classes. Teachers develop their content-area knowledge in order to provide content-specific scaffolds and content language development. After a review of the research, the school decided to implement a buddy reading program to give ELLs time with English-dominant students around literacy, which has been very successful. The practice is good for the English-dominant buddy reader as well. Along with buddy readers, there are also buddy teachers: new teachers matched up with more experienced teachers, especially in bilingual classrooms. The school also has a bilingual committee and offers native language enrichment classes. Committee members try to maintain and enrich the native language of students. They meet two times a month to look at data, and they seek ways to reduce the number of long-term ELLs. They look at patterns as to why students are not testing out after being in a bilingual classroom by doing more data analysis of native language assessments. Time is spent instructing students on aspects of middle school culture, leaving students with valuable information. Connections have been made with the feeder middle school so that the middle school staff gets to know the students at this elementary school. This has been helpful, as it provides familiarity and continuity. The school is planning for instruction beyond the bilingual classroom by providing all its teachers with strategies that are effective for ELL students.

example
3-D:

A secondary school with a 100% Spanish bilingual population notes that its goal is for students to be 100% biliterate when they graduate. The school establishes structures for students to use their first language in helping them learn the second language. This is done through a parallel curriculum in English language arts (ELA) and native language arts (NLA). NLA teachers work with ESL teachers so they are addressing particular skills at

the same time. The idea is that the students learn in their comfort zone (NLA) and outside of their comfort zone (ESL). The school notes it also has many SIFE who need to learn study skills in addition to the content, and it considers ELLs' proficiency levels to allocate language use. Most students in the school's first ninth-grade class were newcomers; therefore, there was an allocation of 75% Spanish and 25% English. The school works to build a sense of community by connecting to the cultural background of the students and instilling in them a strong sense of cultural pride. This is facilitated by an empathetic staff. In addition, students wear uniforms, since many of them have very limited financial resources. The use of uniforms creates equality and it allows students to focus more on academics and less on clothing and appearance. This school also uses Design Your Own (DYO) assessment to ensure the success of ELLs, because other assessments were only testing content and not language. DYO is used not just for ELA and math but also for NLA and each content area (math, social studies, science). Teachers have a six-week process to collect data and analyze it together to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their ELL students. In addition, teachers participate in a critical friends group to learn from each other and work together to improve their instruction. The school believes these practices were crucial in achieving an 80% graduation rate for their first graduating class.

example
3-E:

At a middle school, a mathematics teacher's main goal is to promote confidence in her ELL students. She works with newcomers who oftentimes arrive at the school feeling incapable of doing what other students do. In math class, students fill out goal sheets, which allow them to develop their own content- and language-based goals. A pre-assessment is used to help students set their own goals as well as determine what they want to focus on for that particular unit. Assessments are administered throughout the unit so students can monitor their progress toward their goals. A post-assessment is administered at the end of the unit so students can see if they met their goals. If they did not, they are encouraged to reflect on how they can modify their activities to improve their chances of reaching their goals. Also, teachers use portfolios so that students get to see their own improvement instead of comparing themselves to other students who may have arrived in the class with a higher level of proficiency.

4

School organization and structure is maximized for ample collaboration and planning time among teachers, school leadership, and all stakeholders.

Classrooms in these schools have students jointly working on academic projects through multiple collaborative venues. Similarly, their teachers form professional learning communities collaborating with each other in several configurations to reflect on, plan, and compare results of implementation. Some educators partner with educators in schools at the next academic level (elementary/middle, middle/high) to build transitions and enhance ELLs' preparation for the curriculum demands of subsequent years. Oftentimes these collaborative efforts extend beyond school to engage universities and community-based organizations for the service of students and their success.

Successful schools effectively target resources and position themselves with key constituencies to provide high-quality instruction for ELLs. This includes the development of a strong leadership team at each site that considers:

- The structures and schedules within the school for a comprehensive service model for students
- Engaging bilingual/ESL and content-area teachers in curriculum planning, implementation, and rigorous professional development
- Well-planned and ongoing parent and community involvement

Many schools reached out to engage the resources and expertise of ELL families and community-based organizations to enrich and strengthen ELL services in a practical way.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools have:

- Effective grouping of students
- Maximized use of instructional time during the regular school day
- Opportunities for extended learning time

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group schools have:

- Integrated, thematic, and project-based learning for heterogeneous groups of ELLs
- Integrated academic language development and literacy in content areas
- Fluid and flexible grouping of ELLs and some implement looping
- Extended learning through technology (e.g., Achieve 3000, Destination Math)
- Co-teaching (ESL and content-area teachers)
- Advisories as well as career and peer mentors

**example
4-A:**

A new small secondary school with an ELL population of mostly Dominican and Mexican students has established a successful newcomer program. Flexible programming allows newcomers to come to the ESL room and stay with the ESL teacher for one to two weeks before transitioning into mainstream classes. The ESL classes help the students feel safe and nurtured and help them feel welcomed. In addition, there is regular collaboration with content-area teachers once students are in those classes. The ESL teacher is continuously planning with subject-matter teachers to differentiate and align lessons to standards. Furthermore, the school uses Title III funds for a Saturday field trip program for newcomers, where students get the opportunity to explore New York City's learning resources, including museums and theater productions. These field trips have proven to be great for oral language development, and students write about their experiences, thereby improving their writing skills as well.

**example
4-B:**

A school with over 400 ELLs in a total student population of 4,000 students reported on an innovative peer-tutoring practice that has helped support ELLs, who are serviced through transitional bilingual education and freestanding ESL. One of the school's challenges was helping all ELLs in the content areas. To increase the acceleration of achievement in content areas, it established a peer-tutoring program that is implemented throughout the day. The school pays its peer tutors with grant money. It provides peer tutors for Bengali-, Hindi-, and Urdu-speaking ELLs. This has provided crucial support for ELLs and has been rewarding for the tutors as well. A retired teacher who left the school

comes in and trains the peer tutors. He uses ARIS to determine which ELL students need additional support in a particular content area, after which the peer tutor pushes into the class. It is not homework help but rather a supportive structure for the ELL. The retired teacher monitors the peer tutors and their effectiveness.

example 4-C: An elementary school exposes students to sports, arts, and cultural events. It prepares them to become citizens of the world while incorporating the culture of New York City into their education. In different parts of the city, each grade experiences a different activity: kindergarten goes swimming, first grade learns guitar, and another grade learns to play tennis. Exposure to a variety of activities is invaluable. It prepares children to be creative and independent thinkers and accelerates English language learning. Vocabulary and language learned in context is brought back to the classroom. These experiences extend beyond academic growth and thinking to socio-emotional preparedness.

example 4-D: A middle school with 500 students, 20% of whom are ELLs, was concerned for many years with how to accelerate the long-term ELLs' performance. The school decided to try something new for this particular subgroup of ELLs. It looped the long-term ELLs with the same literacy teachers for a second year. This practice showed great results. Because teachers knew their students, they were able to concentrate on the sub-skills needed to enhance their academic language. These teachers stayed with the same group of students in grades six to eight. This practice also helped the after-school program with long-term ELLs.

5

Teachers support and learn from each other in an atmosphere that recognizes the interdependency of language proficiency and content instruction.

In these schools, language is not taught separately from content but rather is considered a tool needed to understand, express, and create ideas. Consequently, every teacher is a teacher of the language of his/her discipline. A math teacher, for example, does not just teach math but also the language involved (e.g., linguistic expressions, patterns, vocabulary) in performing mathematical problems via explanation, problem formulation, reading, and writing.

Schools receive students with varied levels of content background knowledge, literacy skills, and English language development. They described effective ways to support ELLs through both language development and support for content instruction in the native language. Native language arts development accelerates the literacy gains in both the native language and English, validates the prior knowledge students bring, and bolsters self-esteem. Bilingual programs (Transitional Bilingual Education and Dual Language) provide the most native language support to transfer skills easily between languages. However, if a full bilingual program was not offered, native language libraries were used as a supplement and some schools offered native language classes that provided powerful language development gains in the target language and English.

In order to maximize instructional time, some schools focused on developing English skills and building background knowledge in content areas. Language instruction using content and theme-based instruction, especially as it relates to the experiences of ELLs, motivated students to be more engaged

and draws on what they already know. Many schools acknowledge that, while ELLs may demonstrate everyday linguistic abilities in their native language and/or English, they often lack the specialized academic language and literacy skills necessary to perform at grade level in one or both languages.

Strategies for boosting academic language included engaging ELLs in relevant topics by:

- Integrating themes across classes so that language is reinforced
- Providing small group learning to facilitate academic discussions
- Creating literacy-rich environments with age- and grade-appropriate texts

Many participants reported increasing their effectiveness in academic language instruction by learning and using strategies from the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) professional development series and other supports from the Office of English Language Learners. Rather than providing remedial programs that focus on basic skills, effective programs anchor reading and writing strategies in content areas. Teachers use strategies to strengthen the components of reading (e.g., phonological development, fluency, and comprehension) and writing (grammar, spelling, writing mechanics, and composition) within and across content areas. Successful programs focus on deep vocabulary development by using a variety of methods (e.g., visuals, graphic organizers, demonstration), and providing effective word-learning strategies (e.g., word deconstruction, cognates, contextual clues, using reference materials).

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools:

- Integrate literacy development with content instruction
- Have dedicated efforts to increase the academic language proficiency of their students

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group Schools:

- Boost the academic language proficiency of their students through engaging programs
- Create opportunities for ESL teachers and teachers of content areas to work collaboratively
- Provide professional development opportunities for their teaching staff in the development of academic language proficiency

example
5-A:

One middle school stated that it went beyond the philosophy that all students can learn; the staff asked themselves, “What is the present performance level of our ELLs and how can we accelerate learning?” The staff developed an effective teaching model/cycle: looking at data, assessing the students’ current levels, teaching the skills necessary for the students to achieve, and reflecting on improving their own teaching practices. This led to their developing interim assessments in all core subjects which increased awareness of the needs of ELLs.

The school had sessions to review the academic language demands of texts and assessments. For example, on Saturdays with math teachers, school administrators explored math statements such as “find x” and inquired what were they actually asking of ELLs. They identified ways in which to clarify the language and created multiply ways to enrich understanding (e.g., “what’s a value for x,” “x is a variable,” “define variable”).

Everyone on staff goes for professional development on differentiation strategies. The ESL teachers, literacy coach, and content teachers work together through content

groups, grade-level meetings, and inquiry groups. In their inquiry group, they look at individual students. Initially the school had rubrics for everybody in terms of content topics and writing that did not apply to ELLs. They quickly discovered that the rubrics were not meeting the needs of ELLs. As a result, they went back to the drawing board, looked at NYSESLAT, and came up with their own rubrics, which are now being used across grades.

The school firmly believes that how it programs ELLs is critical. It continuously examines students' performance and levels as well as the composition of classes. The school does not wait until January or June to reformulate classes to focus the instruction on what students need. It offers after-school programs and a morning program (a math program at 7:00 a.m.) and uses different funding sources (Title III, Fair Student Funding) to support ELLs.

**example
5-B:**

A representative from a small high school that serves only ELLs and is part of the Professional Evaluation Team (PET) consortium described the PET process as highly effective. Each new teacher has to complete a portfolio every year for three years, while tenured teachers have to do it once every three years. This portfolio includes a reflection, a peer evaluation, and work. Teachers must present this portfolio to a panel of colleagues and the principal for two hours, and the teacher is given feedback by a peer evaluator, a chair, a member of the discipline, and a person "at large." The panel chair also debriefs with the administration. During the year and after the evaluation, support mechanisms are provided for struggling teachers, including class intervisitations and mentor teachers. In the end, the PET becomes an assessment tool, as it decides if the struggling teacher should continue in the school. (The principal makes the final decision.) The open process helps teachers realize that they have to share their work with colleagues, which makes the work more focused and effective. It is a professional practice that stimulates investment by teachers and has become an institutionalized routine in all schools within the PET consortium. In addition, it is hoped that this practice continues to spread to other schools. Compared with practices seen in other schools, the PET provides a high level of professionalism.

**example
5-C:**

Three years ago, a large high school started a summer project looking at science and instruction for ELLs. Ninth graders' third period of ESL instruction was coordinated with the science class. All of the thinking, writing, and listening was aligned to what was being taught in science. Students reported learning more science in their ESL classes. Based on the results, the school wanted to expand that concept into global studies. Now, the additional ESL class for tenth graders is aligned with the global studies class. As a result, the school programmatically looked at the results and planned new classes and support.

Another component that is helping all their students is that their guidance counselors stay with the students throughout the students' tenure. The school has a ninth-grade program in which every English class is a double period, and guidance counselors co-teach with ELL and ELA teachers on a weekly basis. The school has written a different curriculum to deal with issues of adjustment, and has built advisories around themes to meet needs of particular groups. The latest area the school is working on is college readiness for ELLs—an issue that has surfaced as its ELLs do better academically.

example
5-D:

An elementary school follows an ESL Collaborative Team Teaching model (CTT) which has proven to be very effective with their ELLs. Since its implementation three years ago, the school has been removed from the SINI list and has made great improvement in overall ELL scores. The school's inquiry team is actively involved in analyzing the ELL data and providing the administration and teachers with the most recent information in order to direct instruction for ELLs. The program is based on the research of Lily Wong-Fillmore, which was supported by the staff of the school's network. This has provided the school with insights into language and literacy instruction for ELLs. In order to provide students with the information they need for success, the cognitive academic language must be put in the forefront. ESL and common-branch teachers work collaboratively in the development of academic language. Teachers have been trained in becoming "language watchers" by taking a "juicy piece of text" and exploring it with their students.

example
5-E:

One middle school in Manhattan focuses on making language and content accessible for their ELL students by using complex mathematics problems and tasks. The teacher engages and motivates students to complete their tasks, and promotes individual thinking by students in problem solving. The tasks are designed to be relevant and easy for students to relate to; no prior knowledge is required for these activities. Over time, students start to see patterns, come up with multiple solutions for the problem and understand the concept beyond the task. This is an effective method to facilitate their learning and promote higher-order thinking skills. For the teacher, the biggest challenge of this task is allowing students to guide their own thinking and not providing immediate answers.

The math teachers work with educational consultants from Massachusetts and California on a monthly basis to develop activities that promote students' mathematical thinking. The teacher assessed student learning by asking students to write down any diagrams, pictures, and graphics that can convey their reasoning and logic. In some situations, the teacher asks students to work in groups and record their thinking on chart paper, which is then presented to the whole class. This activity also allows every student to work at his/her own pace. The teacher provides support by giving students extra paper and manipulatives. Through this process, students can observe other groups. Some groups answer questions in completely different ways than others, which allows students to recognize there are multiple ways of reaching a solution.

6

School hones the capacity of staff to enrich language development and academic concepts and skills.

Educators in these schools access internal and external resources and expertise for their professional learning communities. Coaching, walkthroughs, lesson design, and planning facilitate implementation of new and effective practices. Grants, research studies, and pilot programs are secured to enrich learning.

Over and over, the schools in the group expressed the need to develop all staff members' capacity to work with ELLs. Academic language development, differentiation, and scaffolding strategies, as well as cultural sensitivity, were some of the areas for which they secured expertise, resources,

and time. Leadership was committed to providing substantial and sustained opportunities for professional development in the schools. In addition, they took advantage of professional development institutes provided and organized by central staff and other school support systems as well as school-based opportunities.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools have:

- Strong leadership with teacher participation in decision making (distributed leadership)
- Experienced and qualified staff
- Instructional support
- Teacher collaboration
- Effective professional development

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group schools:

- Engage in purposeful hiring of strong ELL specialists (bilingual and ESL) and subject-matter teachers (with backgrounds in bilingual education, literacy, and/or ESL)
- Have leaders who have developed strong background knowledge in the education of ELLs
- Use a distributed leadership model which prioritizes ELLs
- Support and sustain ELL inquiry, action research, case conferencing, and portfolio teams
- Establish professional learning communities with practices that help monitor teaching, such as walkthroughs
- Schedule time and program so that reading, ESL, and content-area teachers plan and deliver lessons in collaboration
- Build in time and structures to facilitate their own staff's continuous learning

example An elementary school established a leadership team focused on literacy for ELLs. As part of this work, it structured time for teamwork among teachers, coaches, and an assistant principal to accelerate gains for ELLs and improve the quality of instruction offered to them. Professional development sessions are offered during the day. In addition to learning and receiving modeling and coaching to implement new strategies in the classroom, the school has scheduled time to study the effectiveness of its delivery models, including self-contained, push-in, and pull-out ESL, each of which is used for strategic improvements. An inquiry team was established to examine the needs of the lowest performing ELLs and plan academic interventions. The school took advantage of the ELL Leadership Literacy Institute (ELL-L) to learn of practices that accelerate literacy development for ELLs. It used these best practices to strengthen the Readers/Writers Workshop in order to meet individual needs, which prompted the establishment of a Literacy Study Group that hones its lens on what ELLs need in order to develop strong literacy skills. The school also began to offer a Dual Language program, and integrated Spanish language development and the arts. Teachers meet regularly and hold each other accountable for learning and growing quality instruction for ELLs.

6-A:

example
6-B:

Teachers in one secondary school reported on engaging in the practice of conducting action research to accelerate achievement for ELLs. For example, one group of staff members focused on cultural differences between male and female Yemeni students. The group found that one difference between males and females resided mainly in school readiness. It also discovered that the males seemed to have a hard time with the structure of the school. For females in Yemen, going to school is a privilege. Sometimes school for males is unsupervised and students have a lot of free time. Consequently, some of the boys boxed in school since they were allowed to do so in Yemen. In an effort to reduce the isolation of these boys, group members spoke with Arabic men from the community, which led to one teacher setting up an international soccer team to promote integration and mingling among students. As teachers gained an understanding of why students behaved the way they did, their newly gained awareness wiped away cultural bias. The male-female classes study was published with Teachers Network (tnli.org). Action research at the school, which allowed the teachers to question students and their own teaching practices, provided a forum to share findings, and, most importantly, it informed their teaching and team structure.

example
6-C:

A principal from a secondary school (which focuses on ELLs) described a governance and cluster model that empowers teachers working with ELLs. He stated: "For me the most important structure at our school is the fact that teachers have a voice and teachers are allowed to make decisions and be creative, to go wherever the curriculum needs to take them. They have support from above, below, from the sides, from every angle to improve academic progress. Time is a key element for teachers. Teachers in a cluster asked me for half a day to plan. I gave them the whole day. If it's important enough for them to ask, I need to give it to them. What came out is an incredible piece of work. Now, there are other clusters asking for a day, too. Clusters of teachers who teach the same three groups of students are a key element of the school. Discipline teams from across clusters are equally critical structures. In the school all discipline-specific teachers are off during the same period. There are two meetings every month—an agenda, notes, and minutes are shared, so we can review them. They meet once a week for an hour, stretching 1.5 to 2 hours, doing case management, working on curriculum, and looking at student work. The governance structure helps us. We only have ELLs, so that's our major focus, and that helps us all have high expectations for our students and ourselves. We make the curriculum challenging ... students respond very well to that."

example
6-D:

One elementary school effectively provides support of instruction by implementing the push-in model for the ESL program. This is done in an effort to allow for continuity and alignment of instruction. Further support is given through the reduction of class size. This is viewed as an instructional strategy to provide more individualized instruction to the students. Examining the students' different learning styles is also viewed as essential to providing them with the instruction that is tailored to their needs. Flexible grouping provides the students with differentiation of instruction as they acquire new skills. Assessment is also supported by the administration. The use of item analysis and assessment in general provides the data that will enable the teachers to provide targeted assistance in the subject area in which the students are lagging.

7

School leadership is able to make connections between the Children First concept of accountability for ELL outcomes and key initiatives.

When schools spoke about successful initiatives within their schools, it was clear that those initiatives originated in Children First concepts. They highlighted practices that were studied in depth through the establishment of inquiry teams, particularly the importance of a data specialist who enabled them to pinpoint precisely how the ELLs were performing as compared with other students in their school. This practice further focused them on their desire to close the achievement gap between student groups. Many schools highlighted their engagement in rigorous professional development as a way of building expertise in the classroom so that teachers of ELLs, not just ESL teachers, could support students as they access grade-level content.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools have:

- Flexibility in use of resources
- Strong support of instruction
- Effective professional development

Accelerating Achievement for ELL Work Group schools:

- Use ARIS, progress reports, and inquiry teams to refine the work with data
- Use their Language Allocation Policy to plan and refine their ELL program
- Write grants and take advantage of materials (native language libraries) as well pilots on academic interventions for ELLs (Achieve 3000, MY Access)
- Participate in and apply learning from relevant professional development institutes (QTEL, ExC-ELL, SIOP, ELL-I)
- Provide access to experts in various disciplines and teaching of ELLs
- Work with Human Resources on recruitment and hiring of teachers who speak low-incidence languages

example 7-A:

A group of content (social studies, mathematics, and English language arts) teachers from a middle school participated in professional development with Margarita Calderon and implemented the 7-Step Method for Teaching Vocabulary. One teacher split his class into three groups to differentiate the support using the 7-Step process while students worked toward understanding the text from the same social studies document. Another teacher created stations and incorporated technology. She applied the 7-Step process and collaborated with her ESL colleague to co-teach and assess reading. The math teacher incorporated this process along with multiple scaffolds to enrich understanding and the productive use of mathematics vocabulary and discourse.

example 7-B: Many of the schools in the Accelerating Achievement for ELL Work Group mentioned using resources the NYCDOE offers, such as interim assessments, inquiry team protocols, and the Language Allocation Policy (LAP), as well as academic interventions for ELL subgroups (e.g., SIFE), such as Achieve 3000, Destination Math, and RIGOR.

At one school, the ESL consultant and data specialist have been working together for several years analyzing data and using it to inform instruction. They have been consistently monitoring their improvement efforts. They work with an inquiry team that focuses on long-term ELLs and schedule common planning for teachers. Informed by the Robert J. Marzano method, the staff teaches function and content words at all levels and regularly uses Spanish-English libraries, listening centers, and vocabulary centers. Staff members ensure that ELLs have a thorough understanding of the words that frequently appear on the ELA and content exams. They blend direct instruction with game-playing. Proficiency level of the students is one of the considerations when grouping students for small group instructional purposes. Thus, teachers can focus on group needs and strengths. They are a one-to-one laptop school and use technology-based programs to differentiate instruction, such as Achieve 3000 and Study Island. The math coach developed a pacing calendar that targets the performance indicators that are most frequently tested on math exams.

example 7-C: Most schools participating in the AAELL Work Group mentioned the use of scaffolding to support learning by their ELLs. Many of the schools had teachers who participated in the QTEL professional development and referenced the use of QTEL scaffolding techniques as one of the important practices employed to support and accelerate learning for ELLs.

example 7-D: One elementary school in the AAELL Work Group exemplifies the importance of relevant systemic supports by primarily focusing on the programming of classes. The administration strongly felt that teachers needed the time to plan on a regular basis. With this in mind, they provided the teachers with common planning time twice a month: a block of time was set aside for teachers to plan together, and to review and discuss relevant data. The school has two inquiry teams that continue examining the data to explore ways in which the students can advance. One of the inquiry teams focused on how to help newcomers from the first day they enroll in the school.

8

Curriculum and instruction at the school are closely aligned to applicable standards.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools have:

- Curriculum and instruction aligned to instructional goals and standards
- Equity of access to core curriculum
- Use of differentiated instructional strategies
- Adequate material to address needs of all students

Accelerating Achievement for ELL Work Group schools:

- Align academic language and vocabulary development to grade-level reading and writing demands
- Integrate technology (tools, websites, and software with adaptations) and arts (drama and music for oral and written language production)
- Use scaffolds and differentiation to help ELLs meet the standards
- Provide native language development and supports

example 8-A: One school incorporates color coding to help ELLs identify elements of academic writing. It helps students understand and develop the elements in short responses as well as the body of an essay. For example, red is used to identify the topic sentence/thesis, blue to teach correct citation form, green is used for details/explanation to support examples, and black for a concluding statement. The color coding is a scaffold that the school community uses to teach explicit elements of writing.

example 8-B: RACE—Restate, Answer, Cite, Explain—is a strategy that is used widely in this school, but faculty members noticed that it works especially well within social studies and ELA classes. It is always introduced through modeling, for instance, in the ELA class, most often during the shared reading time. Teachers model RACE at every step because it is essential that students see how the process moves before they actually try it out on their own. Students are asked to answer a question by first restating it—RESTATE/ANSWER. Then, they must go back to the text and look for the evidence that best supports their answer—CITE. Finally, students are asked to write their concluding sentence, which may also be their personal reflection—EXPLAIN.

example 8-C: Another elementary school has established a newspaper club to create differentiated learning opportunities for ELLs. Based on a book club model for ESL instruction, they started a club using the weekly publication “News for You.” They have small groups of ELLs for 45 to 50 minutes in self-contained lessons. Students have the opportunity to use learning strategies and become reflective learners in reading non-fiction. ELLs are provided with frequent opportunities for interaction about lesson concepts, which encourages higher-level thinking skills. They use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear and analyze their results. The newspaper club makes students feel they are part of the world. Teachers were provided staff development on book clubs for third- and fourth-grade classes.

example 8-D: One middle school in Brooklyn has established a team collaboration model between ESL and ELA teachers. The ELA teacher and ESL teacher meet weekly to discuss the lessons’ instructional foci and strategies to address ELLs’ needs. The ELA teacher assigns students independent reading tasks with differentiated texts based on their reading levels. Students are required to take notes and write responses to the text in paragraph form during and after reading in their “Reading and Writing Notebook,” which is divided into two sections. Students take notes at the front of the notebook, while the back of the notebook is for students’ personal responses to the reading. Students are free to write based on their own reactions with the text without worrying about how they will be

graded. Depending on students' English language proficiencies, students write, draw, or use other visual forms to present their work. The teacher reads each student's response and provides feedback as they go. Conference notes are used as one of the student data metrics to monitor student progress as well as identify student learning needs. The class learns skills and strategies as a whole while each student is given individual areas to focus on. The key is assessing the students by conferring with them individually about their learning strengths, weaknesses, personalities, interests, and obstacles. The students discuss their reading in carefully chosen heterogeneous groups. The reading focuses and the type and depth of responses are modified based on the needs determined in conferences. The ESL teachers focus on grammar building toward specific learning objectives that they have planned. Also, they coach students to read with emotion and feeling which further supports students' understanding.

example
8-E:

A school with an ESL program reported a classroom practice which incorporates the native language. Even though the school does not have a bilingual program, it still makes it part of its mission to work on native language development. The school has done this through the creation of heritage classes for major languages. They have hired adjuncts from a college to teach the classes and aides to provide language support and to be emissaries between the college and the high school. This has led to positive feelings on the part of children who have not read for academic purposes in their native languages since they came to the United States. The school also initiated Native Language Friday, on which students bring in a newspaper article in the native language to share with the class and analyze different perspectives of an event, comparing the coverage with the US media coverage.

example
8-F:

An elementary school (pre-K to 5) with 1,050 students, 30% of whom are ELLs, described an instructional change strategy specifically designed for vocabulary instruction. This strategy—called Literacy Stations—begins with an analysis of the school data by the ELL Inquiry Team on ELL literacy achievement and, as a result, an ELL target population is selected. The target population is pre-assessed on their vocabulary knowledge to create a baseline to measure progress. The team then develops a number of lessons and activities on specific vocabulary topics (e.g., prefixes, context clues, diagraphs) utilizing different learning strategies. Each of these activities will constitute the core of a literacy station. Stations are then set up in a large room, usually in the school cafeteria, and each station is manned by two teachers. In addition to providing specific activities for increasing the vocabulary knowledge of students, these stations are also designed to address multiple intelligences (e.g., auditory, technology-based, visual, kinesthetic). Students are brought into the station room and allowed to visit each station to engage in the various activities for 45 minutes. This station set-up usually lasts at least two weeks to permit repeated visits and student practice. At the end of the experience, students are assessed on their base vocabulary knowledge and to determine which stations have been most effective and where the student experienced the most growth. The three most successful stations are then brought into the classroom so that teachers can further evaluate them. Those stations that are deemed satisfactory are incorporated into the school's regular curriculum.

9

School highly values parent and community involvement, and takes active steps to ensure that both are a part of the school's culture.

The schools participating in the AAELL Work Group emphasized the importance of involving the families of their students in the education of the students and the need to provide the resources (translations, regular communications, meetings at different times of the day, etc.) necessary to effectively promote that involvement. They also understood the value of effective partnerships with the community and community-based organizations in providing support for and expanding the resources available to the school.

Research supports the conclusion that highly effective schools have:

- Family and community involvement
- External partnerships and integrated services

Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group schools:

- Establish strong communication structures for parents (advisory teacher liaisons with parents, regular and sometimes daily communications, translations and interpretation services)
- Have parental engagement activities aligned to school priorities and parent interests/needs (ESL, literacy, and technology classes, heritage recognitions, parents read in native language to children in the classroom, Family Math events)
- Have parent coordinators create specialized intake processes
- Support strong collaborations with community-based organizations to extend learning and support to the whole child and family

example 9-A: One elementary school has instituted on the first Friday of every month the Second Cup of Coffee, which brings 75 to 100 parents into the school. The school created a sense of urgency with parents of struggling readers by sharing student assessments with them. On the first Friday of every month, parents come into the school to read with their children. Each session is focused on a strategy that parents are taught to use with their children. Teachers model the reading strategy and coach parents as they implement it with their children. Parents practice the strategy in school on that day and are expected to continue the practice at home. The child either reads to the parent or the parent reads to the child as they practice the strategy. In addition, the school has created other activities for the parents, such as a literacy program for parents, after-school ESL classes, and technology education programs.

example 9-B: At one school, the parent coordinator ensures that all school letters are translated into the languages of the parents. Translators are always available for meetings in the school. An information sheet is provided by the school in various languages so that parents know who to reach in regard to any concern at the school. The parent coordinator holds monthly meetings with the parents of ELLs. Meetings are scheduled when parents are available; parents are provided with MetroCards to accommodate their transportation needs.

example
9-C:

An elementary school—with 1,400 students, 600 of whom are ELLs (1,000 out of the 1,400 are ELLs or former ELLs), and over 90% are Latino—makes a conscious effort to work with parents to empower them and develop partnerships with them. One way they have attempted to do this is through offering ESL classes on Saturdays for parents. They target kindergarten parents, trying to get parents into the school from the beginning of their child's first year at the school. They have discovered that many parents are reluctant to come forward and participate in school events because they have limited literacy in their own language. Therefore, they are now offering Spanish literacy classes as well. They also have a transient population which is addressed by informing parents about computer programs (e.g., Destination Math) so that when students go away, the teacher can give them assignments if Internet access is available. The administration works to ensure that all teachers are sensitive to the multicultural environment of their school. The school not only considers academic and cultural needs but physical needs as well, by connecting parents with community resources such as food pantries.

example
9-D:

A Manhattan high school has established clear and high expectations of college attendance in the school environment with students, staff, and parents. It is working toward a curriculum that also prepares students for education beyond high school by offering college and AP courses. In developing that environment, the school had to put in place a system for all its ELLs, including over-the-counter ELLs who come directly from their countries with the expectation that they cannot go to college. School staff members tell students and parents that they *can* go to college, and they emphasize the urgency of making that happen. Parents and students need to know what to expect in college, so they visit the dorms and interact with school staff who are former college professors. The school offers college-readiness seminars 40 minutes a day, and it has various activities and multiple areas of preparatory work, such as reviewing transcripts, setting short- and long-term goals, and choosing a suitable college. Roads to Success and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) are strategies/resources that it highly recommends for other schools developing this type of support structure for students. The high school has followed up with its three graduating classes by inviting them back to visit and to share their experiences in college with the current students. School staff also follow up with students in transfer schools, transition schools, and YABC programs. They organize a college fair in the school as well as numerous workshops for parents and students starting in the ninth grade. The school has two Career and Technical Education (CTE) academies, one in engineering and the other in information technology, tied to college and career readiness, in which the students earn college credits.

example 9-E: One school reported having effective relationships with community-based organizations (CBOs). Some of them are part of the school's planning team. Team members have assisted the school with parent engagement since they have very strong links to the parents. They assist with building the trust between the school and parents. The school also brings in CBOs sometimes for celebrations and to build relationships with students. One of its CBOs includes several immigration lawyers, and another offers health-related workshops. The school also works in partnership with CBOs and institutions of higher education to make college planning realistic, and to enhance the pool of choices by the time ELLs reach eleventh and twelfth grade. Tutorial support is provided for completing college and financial aid applications, and the school has made an enormous effort to identify scholarship opportunities and connect students with college representatives. The school intends to track its students more carefully through college.

Conclusion

As the next step in a dynamic process, we are sharing this document and the work of the AAELL Work Group with all New York City networks. Sharing and validating best practices is a constantly evolving process, and it requires sustained participation across a wide range of schools. It is important work that is the foundation for further growth in the educational results of our English Language Learners.

We look forward to building on the excellent efforts of the AAELL Work Group and thank everyone who participated in this enriching process.

Appendix A

Planning Committee (Fall 2009)

Maria Santos, *Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners (Co-chair)*

Ofelia Garcia, *Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY) (Co-chair)*

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Angelica Infante, *Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners*

Amy Liszt, *Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners*

Aida Walqui, *Director, Teacher Professional Development Program, WestEd*

Participating Schools

Practices described above by staff from a particular school were often supported by testimonials from other schools engaged in similar practices. Below is a list of the participating schools who contributed their best practices to at least one of the working sessions of the Accelerating Achievement for ELLs Work Group. Clusters and networks can use this information to initiate conversations among their own schools, especially if Work Group schools are included. The descriptions serve as a very brief introduction to what can only be explored through deep dialogues, study groups, and intervisitations.

Bronx

X025	P.S. 025 – Bilingual School
X030	P.S. 030 – Wilton
X033	P.S. 033 – Timothy Dwight
X050	P.S. 050 – Clara Barton
X066	P.S. 066 – School of Higher Expectations
X151	J.H.S. 151 – Lou Gehrig
X302	M.S. 302 – Luisa Dessus Cruz
X306	P.S. 306
X313	I.S. 313 – School of Leadership Development
X318	I.S. 318 – Math, Science & Technology Through Arts
X335	The Academy of the Arts
X342	International School for Liberal Arts
X403	Bronx International High School
X477	Marble Hill High School for International Studies
X550	High School of World Cultures

Queens

Q005	I.S. 5 – The Walter Crowley Intermediate School
Q012	P.S. 012 – James B. Colgate
Q016	P.S. Q016
Q019	P.S. 019 – Marino Jeantet
Q084	P.S. 084 – Steinway
Q111	P.S. 111 – Jacob Blackwell
Q112	P.S. 112 – Dutch Kills
Q234	P.S. 234
Q237	I.S. 237
Q445	William Cullen Bryant High School
Q450	Long Island City High School
Q460	Flushing High School
Q530	International High School at LaGuardia Community College
Q555	Newcomers High School
Q993	P.S. Q993

Brooklyn

K007	P.S. 007 – Abraham Lincoln
K014	J.H.S. 014 – Shell Bank
K050	J.H.S. 050 – John D. Wells
K053	P.S. K053
K089	P.S. 089 – Cypress Hills
K123	P.S. 123 – Suydam
K136	I.S. 136 – Charles O. Dewey
K217	P.S. 217 – Colonel David Marcus School
K349	I.S. 349 – The School of Math, Science and Technology
K439	Brooklyn International High School at Water’s Edge
K352	Ebbets Field Middle School
K463	Secondary School for Journalism
K495	Sheepshead Bay High School
K552	Academy of Urban Planning
K556	Bushwick Leaders High School for Academic Excellence

Staten Island

R016	P.S. 016 – John J. Driscoll
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Manhattan

M048	P.S. 048 – P.O. Michael J. Buczek
M072	The Lexington Academy
M314	Muscota New School
M326	M.S. 326 – Writers Today & Leaders Tomorrow
M328	M.S. 328 – Manhattan Middle School for Scientific Inquiry
M349	Harbor Heights
M459	Manhattan International High School
M463	High School for Media and Communications
M468	High School for Health Careers and Sciences
M492	High School for Law, Advocacy and Community Justice
M542	Manhattan Bridges High School
M552	Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics

Appendix B

Detailed Protocol of AAELL Work Group 2009–10

Sessions were recorded by graduate students from the Graduate Center at CUNY. Data from the fourth session was reported out to policymakers and schools, with specific high-yield practices cross-checked with practices from the first three sessions.

session 1 **Ideas and Strategies:** Participants in the AAELL Work Group shared ideas and strategies that resulted in greater academic achievement for their ELLs. In preparation for the day, they considered the following questions:

- What are the major practices that have contributed to accelerated achievement for ELLs?
- What beliefs are shared in the community related to all students?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of practitioners that have yielded added value for ELLs?
- What is the extent and nature of teacher involvement in inquiry and which data sets help you plan for instruction?
- What knowledge is needed to carry out deep and powerful learning for ELLs?
- Which supports and resources added value to the practice? Why?
- What has your school done to maximize family engagement?
- How does your school utilize community resources to strengthen family and ELL engagement?

session 2 **Practices:** At the second Work Group session, participants had deeper discussions and described in more detail the practices that accelerate achievement for ELLs. Participants also shared materials that showed how their practice or strategy works. Each group started with a “quick-write” to provide a focus for thinking and presenting ideas and practices. In a first round of discussion, teachers in the breakout groups discussed the following questions (provided in advance to registrants):

- What is a major classroom practice that has contributed to accelerated achievement for ELLs?
- How does the practice engage and support ELLs in learning key concepts and academic English?
- How did you assess student learning through the activity illustrated?
- How did the practice help you differentiate learning?

In a second round of discussions, principals and other participants in the breakout groups discussed the following questions (also provided in advance to registrants):

- What are key school-wide strategies and/or programmatic structures that support classroom teachers' acceleration of achievement for ELLs?
- What do you do to support classroom teachers accelerating achievement for ELLs?
- How do the systems and structures in place in your school support the classroom work?

session 3

Draft Document of Practices: At the third Work Group session, participants met with the group that they had been working with over the previous two sessions to review a draft document of practices described in those sessions and to consider ways in which they could apply them. They also discussed how they might share or use the document with network leaders and others. The group members reviewed the working document on practices that accelerate achievement for ELLs and explored the following questions:

- Which shared practices would you consider adopting or adapting?
- What can you do to introduce these practices to your school and/or network?
- How can the central team and your network help each school accelerate ELL achievement?

After the first discussion participants moved into new groups that had a mix of elementary, middle, and high schools. There, they discussed a set of questions focusing on what must be addressed to move beyond accelerated achievement for ELLs to aligning and integrating college-success reform efforts to include a strong ELL focus. In preparation, participants were asked to think about the following questions:

- What do I need to have in place to graduate ELLs who are prepared for middle school/high school/college?
- What are some of the challenges I face in preparing ELLs to be middle school/high school/college ready?
- What are some of the solutions/strategies that I need to put in place to graduate ELLs who are middle school/high school/college ready?

session 4

Family and Community Partnerships: At the fourth session, participating school teams from previous sessions were joined by parents from the participating schools, parents from the larger community, and some additional staff from the partnering community-based organizations (CBOs). Parents and community advocates shared their challenges during this session. In providing the opportunity to openly share ideas and concerns, key stakeholders learned more about specific needs each have and thus were given the ability to be more responsive to them.

Participants explored the following questions for promoting partnerships among families, schools, and communities:

- What does the ideal parent/community partnership that accelerates achievement for ELLs look like to you/your school?
- What are some of the barriers that immigrant families and families of ELLs face in being involved in schools?
- What strategies or supports have fostered strong parent and community partnerships in your school/community (especially in the schools with strong ELL performance)?
- What are some policy recommendations going forward to replicate these strategies/supports?
- What additional strategies do we need to employ for students with disabilities?

That afternoon, the groups, which included a mix of educators, parents and CBOs of the same language group, focused on questions having to do with identifying what resources and practices are needed to promote partnerships among families, schools, and communities and accelerate achievement for ELLs:

- What are some of the unique barriers that may prevent you from being involved in your child's education?
- As a parent navigating the school system, what resources and practices have you found particularly helpful (in or outside the school)?





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