FEDERAL & STATE POLICIES FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

California is home to the nation’s largest population of children learning English in addition to their home language — dual language learners (DLL) or English learners (EL). DLLs/ELs enter the education system with important assets that contribute to the rich diversity of the state. However, disparities in academic outcomes indicate that their potential is not being realized.

Within the last decade, growing research has offered powerful evidence that highlights: 1) the importance of early education in student success; 2) the role of home language development in English proficiency and overall student achievement, and 3) the cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism. This research has supported a succession of federal and state policies and initiatives that have guided the development of dual language programs.

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<th>TERMINOLOGY</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Dual Language Learner (DLL)</td>
<td>Children, birth to five, learning two+ languages simultaneously or learning a second language while developing home language.</td>
<td>English Learner (EL)</td>
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FEDERAL POLICIES

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): In 2015, ESSA updated the national K–12 education law. Significant policy changes include: a larger emphasis on the importance of preschool, and supporting alignment between the philosophies of the early care and education (ECE) and K–12 systems. ESSA makes it clear that federal education funding (e.g. Title I, II, and III) can be used to fund early learning initiatives.

Federal DLL Policy Statement: In 2016, a joint federal policy statement was released by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Education on supporting the development of DLLs in early childhood programs. This statement declares the vision that “all early childhood programs adequately and appropriately serve the diverse children and families that make up this country.”

Reauthorization of the Head Start Program Performance Standards: In 2016, the Head Start Program Performance Standards were reauthorized with multiple provisions for implementing research-based practices specific to DLLs. It stipulates that programs must recognize bilingualism as a strength and notes the need for teaching practices to continue home language development.
STATE POLICIES

**Seal of Biliteracy:** In 2012, California established the **Seal of Biliteracy**, which officially recognizes high school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in English and a second language. Following this lead, as of June 2018, Washington, DC and 33 other states have the Seal of Biliteracy. To encourage students along the path of bilingualism, “Pathway awards” in ECE and elementary schools validate a child’s home language, shape initial attitudes of young children and their families on the value of the culture and language diversity they bring to a school-community, and encourage dual language program enrollment.

**Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF):** In 2013, California’s **LCFF** made sweeping changes to the funding and governance structure of K–12 public schools. Changes include specific funding generated by the enrollment of targeted student populations (e.g. ELs), and more decision-making at the local level on how to best meet the needs of ELs and the larger school community. Long Beach Unified School District is an example that has used local flexibility for ECE-DLL programs, by applying LCFF to fund the new Educare model with a DLL approach – a public-private partnership that offers quality early childhood programs.

**First 5 California DLL Pilot:** In 2015, First 5 California announced its plans to invest $20 million in a DLL pilot. This effort will build on existing research and best practices to document and share culturally- and linguistically-effective strategies for DLLs, birth to five, in early learning settings to inform local and national approaches to meet the unique needs of DLL children.

**Proposition 58:** In 2016, 74 percent of California voters passed **Proposition 58**, recognizing the value of bilingualism and creating opportunities for all students to become bilingual. Today, any 20 parents at a grade level or 30 parents at a school site can initiate a conversation and planning process with educators to determine the best language approach for their school. Given the research on the importance of early language development, it is vital that districts include ECE in Proposition 58 implementation and prioritize DLLs/ELs, Black and low-income students in program enrollment.

**English Learner Roadmap** In 2017, the State Board of Education unanimously passed the **California English Learner Roadmap**, enacting an assets-based policy for DLLs/ELs in ECE through grade 12. The Roadmap is a comprehensive policy that is in alignment with state priorities and research, declares biliteracy as a state goal, and calls for DLL/EL education that yields 1) high levels of English proficiency; 2) mastery of grade level standards; and 3) opportunities to develop multilingual proficiency.

**Global California 2030:** In 2018, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction launched the **Global California 2030** initiative, which recognizes multilingualism as necessary for the 21st century, and calls for expanding access to world language programs and experiences, and training of preK-12 bilingual teachers. The initiative has a vision for greater student participation in bilingual programs by 2030 and the Seal of Biliteracy by 2040. Given the research on early language development, it is critical that efforts include ECE statewide.

For the full report, visit [www.advancementprojectca.org/dlls](http://www.advancementprojectca.org/dlls) or contact education@advanceproj.org.