The purpose of this review was twofold: to provide an external analysis of district and school-level factors both promoting and inhibiting the success English language learners in the district; and to provide research-based and practitioner-grounded recommendations for concrete, actionable, and timely next steps for the ongoing efforts to improve the success English language learners experience in this district.
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Executive Summary

In the summer of 2014, Adams 12 Five Star School District contracted Equilence, LLC to review programming and practices related to the systems of support in place for the English language learners it serves as well as their families. From January 2015 to October 2015, consultants from Equilence LLC carried out a two-phase review to identify factors promoting and inhibiting the success of English language learners in the district. The first phase consisted of focus groups and interviews with senior level district personnel while the second phase consisted of school and classroom environmental scans and visits as well as focus groups with school level educators, parents, parent liaisons, and students. Across the two phases, factors that were found to be promoting success included:

**English Language Learner Programming**
- The flexibility in English language development programming that is present in some schools promotes success when it is guided by an understanding of effective practices for English learners.

**Training and Ongoing Professional Development**
- District-provided professional development is successful in providing district level personnel with a foundation for understanding effective instruction for English learners and World-Class Instruction Design and Assessment (WIDA) English language development standards.
- The Language Acquisition Support Services (LASS) coordinators are working with coaches to build capacity, with content coordinators to add English language development supports to content area units of study, and with some school principals.
- Teachers indicated a strong desire for deep, differentiated professional development in how to provide effective instruction and a strong learning environment for English learners. They want on-the-ground professional development that gives time for trying out, discussion and reflection.

**Messaging / Communication**
- Teacher and principal professional learning is focusing on messaging around instructional shifts, what success looks like for English learners, and on the idea that English Language Development is not “just another thing,” but should be an integral part of planning and instruction.

**Relationships**
- The LASS department’s Translation Team is cohesive, works well together and members are skilled document translators and interpreters.

**Instruction and Instructional Leadership**
- Secondary English language students recognize and can name many practices that, when planned and executed in instruction in their classes, promote understanding and success for English learners.
In classroom visits, some elements of six of the SIOP components (see body of report for details) were present in a majority of classes.

Family Engagement

- The district’s Parent Engagement Coordinator and parent liaisons have begun the important work of engaging, informing and providing resources to parents and families of English learners.

Culture/Environment

- Classroom and school environments were, in general, found to be safe, clean and welcoming environments for students.

Across the two phases, there were also factors found to be inhibiting success of English language learners. These factors included, but are not limited to:

English Language Learner Programming

- Logistics in schools, lack of flexibility—including a “one size fits all” mindset—at the district and school level, and educators’ beliefs about what is best for students are significantly affecting the implementation of English learner programming, particularly Model 1.
- Scheduling to meet English language programming Model 1 or 2 requirements is unwieldy, dictates how all schedules are created, and can result in excessive time out of classrooms (pull-out), especially for dual-identified students.
- Model 3, the secondary school model, often results in English learners missing language arts and/or electives instruction.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development

- The professional development offered by the district on effective practices for English learners (including SIOP) and a common understanding of English learners is not consistently supported (ie. by coaches, administrators, collaborative professional development) in schools and in content classrooms. Other professional development is not consistently supported with an English learner lens.
- The English learner lens (ie. how to make content comprehensible for English learners, how to include effective practices for English learners in all instruction, what being culturally responsive entails, and a belief that English learners are not in need of “remedial” education) is lacking or peripheral to much of the district’s professional development, including PD on standards.

Messaging / Communication

- LASS and Executive Directors are not seen in schools together, providing a consistent, strong message about the importance of English learners and that English language development is integral to students’ education, not an “extra.”
- There is no strong, ever-present, consistently supported (by administrators, coaches and district level personnel) message about English learners in schools.
- English learners and their families are characterized as problems for schools, reflecting underlying deficit thinking about English learners and lack of experience with or understanding of cultural differences.

Instruction and Instructional Leadership
• LASS coordinators are not able to consistently support content coordinators, administrators, coaches and professional and materials development.
• There is confusion about what distinguishes and how to implement language arts and English language development across the system. This impacts instruction and professional development. WIDA English language development standards are not understood as pathways to content standards.
• In classroom visits, some critical elements of SIOP components were found to be missing or only somewhat present in a majority of classrooms (see body of report for details).

Resources
• A small number of fulltime, trained/skilled interpreters/translators are working mostly at their desks translating a heavy workload of documents rather than interpreting in schools.
• Lack of bilingual school and district resources results in parent liaisons spending much of their workdays translating documents and interpreting in parent meetings instead of developing programs that benefit families at schools.

Family Engagement
• Parents need more support in knowing what their children are doing, how well they are doing and what their options are for placement, translation and interpretations.

Culture/Environment
• In classroom visits and in school environmental scans, consideration of the cultural diversity of students was strongly found to be missing. Most classroom teachers provided instruction and support for students exclusively in English and from a strictly school culture perspective.

In light of the factors described above, promising practices found in the professional literature, and the consultants’ many years of experience with English language learners, their educators, and the systems that support them, Equilence, LLC is making the following recommendations:

English Language Learner Programming:
• Consider reorganizing central office coordination to better serve all special populations.
• Provide programmatic flexibility at the school level that is directly informed by a common understanding of effective environments and instruction for English language learners.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development
• Continue to provide (and strengthen) senior level professional development on WIDA English language development standards and CCSS that is appropriately designed for their roles and responsibilities.
• Begin providing senior level and school-level leadership with systematic and applied professional development on instructional expectations based on effective instructional practices for English learners, such as Sheltered Instruction and English Language Development (and the differences between them).
• Begin offering school-level educators with a choice to attend professional development on instructional expectations based on effective instructional practices for English learners, such as Sheltered Instruction and English Language Development (and the differences between them). Intensify and deepen this PD as senior district-level and school-level leadership capacity increases.
• Build capacity in schools by providing school-embedded collaborative inquiry on effective instructional practices for English learners, such as Sheltered Instruction and English Language Development (and the differences between them), led by qualified coaches and teachers trained in how to facilitate collaborative inquiry.

Messaging/Communication

• Embed (and strengthen) the message that English language learning is everyone’s responsibility in all communications and professional development.
• LASS and Executive Directors need to be visible together in the schools, during visits, to provide a consistent message about instruction for English learners.
• Give equal time and attention to LASS Coordinators (as other coordinators) in district coaching meetings for the purposes of: messaging, updating, communication, and professional development.
• Content and LASS Coordinators need to be visible together in the schools, providing a consistent message about instruction for English learners. The messages given to schools and support personnel (principals, coaches, English language development teachers, classroom teachers) from content and LASS coordinators should align.

Relationships

• Continue providing and systematically strengthen space and time for collaboration between LASS coordinators and Content Coordinators so they can continue improving the English language development supports in the units of study and designing/implementing professional development for content teachers.

Instruction and Instructional Leadership

• Begin clarifying and precisely articulating a common understanding of effective environments and instruction for English language learners by using (and revising in the process) key district documents such as section 3 of the Adams 12 guidebook. These documents need to be working documents that are actively used and referenced, not just a measure of compliance.
• Initiate a system-wide conversation about what authentic, current and accurate multicultural and multilingual worldviews are and how they can be reflected in the physical aspects of buildings and classrooms as well as educator perspectives and curriculum.
• Establish on-going professional support (ie. collaborative cohorts for workshops, inquiry and coaching) for principals, assistant principals and coaches to lead the work in schools to improve programming for English learners.
• Clarify, at the district and school level, the meaning of English Language Development (ELD), Sheltered Instruction and their relationships to content instruction.
• Develop a district-wide description of the difference between ELD and Language Arts and how ELD can be embedded into content instruction (and vice versa).

Resources

• Continue providing funding for the translation team and parent engagement coordinator.
• Begin transitioning document translation to an outsourced model and begin utilizing district translators for school-level interpretation services. Or, expand the team and their responsibilities.

Family Engagement
Prioritize parent liaisons’ job responsibilities as cultural ambassadors for their schools, providing opportunities for joint collaboration of teachers, students, families and community.

Train parent liaisons to see school administrators, teachers and support staff as resources to aid them in building common understanding and trust between parents and the school staff.

Culture/Environment

Initiate a conversation about what authentic, current and accurate multicultural and multilingual worldviews are and how they can be reflected at the district level.

Section 1: Introduction

Adams 12 Five Star Schools (Adams 12) is located just north of Denver. The district serves all or part of the Broomfield, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster communities. As a school district, it is guided by the vision that all the students it serves will obtain the skills, knowledge and expertise to thrive in our world. In light of this vision, Adams 12’s mission is to engage and inspire all students to innovate, achieve, and succeed in a safe environment by ensuring high quality instruction in every classroom, every day.

Beginning in the summer/fall of 2013, the district articulated and began working towards three high priority outcomes which it believed would bring it closer to realizing both its vision and mission. These outcomes included: increasing graduation rates; increasing median growth percentiles (50th or above); and meeting or exceeding Colorado state proficiency targets in reading, writing, math, and science. To achieve these outcomes, the district also identified three focal commitments and three high impact strategies. These commitments included student learning, professional practice, and collective responsibility while the district’s three strategies included creating multiple pathways for student learning, striking a ‘just-right’ balance between empowerment and accountability, and building strong community relationships.

As a result of these commitments and strategies, Adams 12 has seen important gains in relation to some of their high priority outcomes including an increase in the overall four-year graduation rate from 61.7% (in 2010) to 73.7% (in 2014) and a decrease in overall dropout rate from 6.4% (in 2010) to 2.5% (in 2014). In addition to gains related to its overall population, the district has also made important progress in relation to its programming for English language learners. More specifically, the district met all three of the annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) set by the Colorado Department of Education for the first time in 2014 and in 2015. These AMAO’s included: percentage of students making adequate progress in learning English; percentage of students attaining English proficiency; and English learners meeting TCAP growth objectives as well as graduation and participation rates. In addition to these accomplishments, the consent decree regarding English learner programming between the district and the Department of Justice (DOJ) was “sunsetted” in the summer/fall of 2015.

Still, the district found indications that there were areas worthy of closer examination, particularly for English language learners. While the DOJ consent decree was sunsetted and AMAOs were met, English learners were still not experiencing the same success as the overall population in relation to the district’s three major outcomes (four year graduation rates, median growth percentiles, and proficiency targets):
● **Graduation rates**: Even though the district was at 67.2% in 2013, the four year graduation rate for these learners continued to remain below the state’s 80% expectation in 2013;

● **MGP Overall**: Even though the district was at or above the 50th percentile, the MGPs for these learners has remained relatively flat from 2011-2014;

● **MGP Reading**: Even though the district was at (or above) the overall state MGP for the first time in three years, the gap between English learners and the overall population in reading has continued to increase from 2011-2014;

● **MGP Writing and Math**: Even though the district was above the state average, the MGP in writing and math for this population has remained below the state average of 50 from 2011-2014; and

● **MGP Math**: The gap in math between English learners and the overall population has remained negative from 2009-2014.

Ongoing trends in district-wide data, such as those above, led the district to take a deeper look at the systems of support being provided to English language learners.
Section 2: Purpose

In an effort to better understand the systems of support in place for English language learners and their families, Adams 12 Five Star School District contracted Equilence, LLC. From February 2015 to November 2015, the Equilence team reviewed programming and practices related to this system of support to make short and long-term recommendations. The overarching goals of the review, as defined by the district, were twofold. The first of these was to create an objective understanding of:

- Factors contributing to the success of English language learners as defined by student achievement and growth in both language acquisition and content standards;
- Factors inhibiting the success of English language learners as defined by student achievement and growth in both language acquisition and content standards; and
- Program stakeholders’ perspectives in relation to the system of support for English language learners in the district.

The second of these goals was to develop:

- Research-based and practitioner-grounded recommendations for adjustments and revisions to the system of supports; as well as
- Concrete, actionable, and timely next steps for the implementation of the recommendations identified and described.

The report provided below was written by Equilence, LLC. It provides a transparent account of the processes used, the trends that emerged, and possible next steps. In the next section, background information about the demographic composition of this special population within the district, the organizational distribution of this composition within the district, and a brief history of the Department of Justice’s role within the district regarding this population can be found. Following this, the methods and tools used to collect data, and the participants are briefly described. Trends that emerged from the data and a framework for understanding them are then presented. Finally, the last two sections outline the ongoing need for attention to this population and recommendations for next steps that the district can take to improve the systems of support in place for English language learners and their families.
Section 3: Background

This section gives an overview of Adams 12’s demographic composition, organizational distribution and the DOJ agreement.

Demographic Composition

Since the 2010-2011 school year, the population of students who require specific support acquiring English for social and academic purposes has, on average, increased 1%, or approximately 375 students, each year. Currently, 5,742 of the district’s 37,665 students are designated English language learners and are served by the district’s LASS department. Within this population, 78 different first languages are represented, with the following languages being the most common: Spanish (4,855 learners); Vietnamese (155 learners); Hmong (152 learners); Russian (111 learners); and Mandarin (68 learners). The remaining 73 languages are spoken by less than 1% of the student population.

Organizational Distribution of Learning Population

The district’s English learners are concentrated primarily in the southern part of the district and are distributed unevenly across schools as demonstrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools with lowest percentages of English language learners</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Schools with highest percentages of English language learners</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hulstrom K-8</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Federal Heights Elementary</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect Ridge Academy</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Coronado Hills Elementary</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Top Middle School</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>North Star Elementary</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote Ridge Elementary</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Rocky Mountain Elementary</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizon High</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>McElwain Elementary</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2011, Adams 12 Five Star Schools and the US Department of Justice signed an agreement to address issues raised by the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, regarding the District’s legal obligations under the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. This agreement’s objective was to ensure that the district would provide language services to all English learners in the district. It specified that all English learners would receive appropriate language acquisition services (i.e., ESL or ELD) and sheltered content instruction on a daily basis. More specifically, the agreement stated: “The District will provide language acquisition services to ELLs through one of three program models and will train its instructional staff through an intensive training program designed to ensure that all ELLs receive meaningful language acquisition services.” The agreement, or ‘legal consent decree,’ was signed in April of 2011 and continued until it was “sunsetted” in the summer/fall of 2015.

Under the agreement, Adams 12 developed 3 “models” of English language programming which are currently in place in Adams 12 schools. These models include:

- **Model 1:** Intended for elementary schools with large numbers of English learners, this model stipulates 45 minutes of English language development instruction as part of the classroom literacy block, with students in like-language groups.

- **Model 2:** Intended for elementary schools with smaller numbers of English learners, this model stipulates a 45-minute pull out English language development class during the literacy block over the course of the school day. Students transition back into diverse language groups for sheltered language arts instruction.

- **Model 3:** Intended for secondary schools, all English learners are scheduled into one English language development period instead of language arts, and receive sheltered instruction in all subjects.

These models, and the broader DOJ agreement, have helped the district make extensive changes to its English learner programming by bringing the needs of English learners and gaps in its support services to the fore. However, the agreement has also had some unintended consequences, something common to change, particularly when it is mandated within short periods of time. Such mandates can feel oppressive, especially to those on the ground level of implementation, due to a perceived lack of support, resources, clarity, inclusion in the change processes, and/or alignment with other initiatives and services. Any or all of these perceptions can lead to tension, degradation of relationships, and a lack of true transparency. Unfortunately, if unnoticed and unaddressed, they can lead to a change in
behavior that circumvents the needs highlighted by a mandate, such as the legal consent decree, rather than a change in behavior that serves the needs highlighted.

Currently, there is evidence that the DOJ agreement has resulted in both a ‘culture of commitment’ as well as a ‘culture of compliance’ within Adams 12, which has led to mixed results for English language learners. While some educators are thinking critically about how to improve classroom, school, and district level systems of support, others are checking items off lists of requirements. This mixed culture has created tensions and strained relationships both vertically and horizontally among district personnel. It has also led to an environment of competition among special populations instead of one of collaboration.

With the DOJ now sunsetting, Adams 12 has an opportunity to move from a mixed culture of commitment and compliance to a ‘just right balance’ between empowerment and accountability which honors the rights of English language learners and other special populations as well as the needs of educators and systems as they change. In order to achieve such a balance, the continued work of the district must be characterized by a critical yet collaborative and inclusive commitment to ongoing improvement both vertically and horizontally across all levels of the district.

The next two sections describe, in concrete terms, what the mixed culture of compliance and commitment looked like across the district from February 2015 to November 2015. Following this, recommendations are made, ones which Equilence LLC believe have the greatest potential to move the district towards a ‘just right balance.’ These sections should be understood as providing snapshots of the English language learners support services, including their families, within the timeframe of the study. They are also meant to be understood as identifying significant and consistent programmatic trends rather than comprehensive, detailed programmatic pictures. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a point of reference for educators in Adams 12, one that is often not visible in the field because of the ways in which specific organizational roles constrain what can be seen both horizontally and vertically across the system.
Section 4: Methods

Equilence, LLC used a qualitative case study approach to identify supports, barriers, variables, and perspectives related to the implementation of district programming for English language learners. The case study consisted of a two-phase, emergent inquiry process, each of which is described below. For additional information regarding the questions and tools used, please refer to the appendices.

Phase 1: Central Office Educators

The first phase of the review lasted from February 2015 to July 2015 and consisted of seven district-level focus groups and nine district-level interviews. These included:

- **Focus Groups:** Curriculum and Instruction Content Coaches; Curriculum and Instruction Content Coordinators; Executive Directors of Schools; LASS Coordinators; Professional Learning Specialists; and Translation Services.

- **Interviews:** Chief Academic Officer; Curriculum and Instruction Executive Director; LASS Assistant Director; LASS Coordinator (focused on PD); LASS Director; Student Support Services Assistant Director; Superintendent; Teacher and Principal Professional Learning Director; and District Parent Engagement Coordinator.

An ongoing constant comparative content analysis was used and identified salient trends in relation to: ELL programming; professional development; messaging / communication; relationships; instruction and instructional leadership; resources; and family engagement.

Phase 2: Schools and School-level Educators, Parents, and Students

The second phase of the program review process lasted from September 2015 to November 2015 and consisted of school-level focus groups, environmental scans and classrooms visits. Once completed, the information which was collected was analyzed using the same constant comparative content analysis used in phase one of the review. During this analysis, salient trends were identified in relation to: ELL programming; professional development; relationships; instruction and instructional leadership; resources; and family engagement.
Focus Groups
A total of 12 focus groups were held. These focus groups were comprised of the following participants:

- **Roles**: English language development coaches; Elementary School Principals/Assistant Principals; Secondary School Principals/Assistant Principals; Parent Liaisons; Parents; Students; Teachers; and DTEA representatives.

- **Schools**:
  - *Elementary*: Arapahoe Ridge; Centennial; Cherry Drive; Coronado Hills; Eagleview; Federal Heights; Glacier Peak; Hillcrest; Leroy Drive; Malley Drive; McElwain; Meridian; Mountain View; North Mor; Prairie Hills; Riverdale; Rocky Mountain; Silver Creek; Skyview; Stellar; Stukey; Thornton Elem; Westview; STEM Lab; STEM Launch;
  - *Middle Schools*: Century; Northglenn Middle; Rocky Top; Shadow Ridge; Silver Hills; The International School; Westlake
  - *High Schools*: Bollman; Horizon Legacy; Mountain Range; Northglenn High Pathways; Thornton High; and Vantage Point.

For additional information regarding the protocol and the questions asked in each focus group, please refer to the appendices.

Environmental Scans and Classroom Visits
A total of 26 environmental scans and 26 classroom visits were held. These included the following:

- **Schools**: Arapahoe Ridge; Centennial; Coronado Hills; Cotton Creek; Coyote Ridge; Eagleview; Federal Heights; Hillcrest; Hulstrom K-8; Leroy Drive; Malley Drive; Mountain Range High; Northglenn Middle; Northglenn STEM K-8; Shadow Ridge Middle; Silver Creek; Silver Hills Middle; Stukey; Tarver; The International School (middle); The Studio School (elementary); and Woodglen.

- **Content**: English language arts; English language development; Math; Science; Social Studies; Art and Speech Language Intervention

- **Program Models**: Model 1 (3 of 7 schools); Model 2 (18 of 26 schools); and Model 3 (5 of 21 schools).

*Note-catcher Tool for School and Classroom Visits*
During each visit, a consultant from Equilence LLC used a note-catcher to collect information about the environment, background of the lesson, and instructional expectations. This note-catcher asked: what supports do you and don’t you see in the building, lobby/front office, and classroom using an English language learner lens; what background information was provided by the teacher before or after the lesson regarding that lesson; what instructional expectations specific to English learners are and are not being met by the lesson; and what factors promoted or inhibited the success of English language learners in the class. For more detailed information about this note-catcher, please refer to the appendices.

*Instructional Expectations Survey Tool for Classroom Visits*
During each school visit, the consultant from Equilence, LLC completed an Instructional Expectations Survey. The purpose was not to rigorously sample a statistically significant number of classrooms but rather to provide another point of reference for the trends which emerge from school-level
environmental scans and focus groups. The items on this survey were defined based on the English language learner Look For’s found in Section 3: First Best Instruction (Adams 12 Guidebook, 2014, p.20). The foundations for these Look For’s are part of Echeverría, Short and Vogt’s (1999) SIOP Observation checklist. The following components comprise the survey: cultural diversity; preparation; building background; comprehensible input; strategies; interaction; practice/application; lesson delivery; review/assessment; and language. Each component had from one to four elements and was rated by an Equilence consultant as: present; not present; somewhat present; or didn’t attend to this during the visit.

Section 5: Factors Found to Be Promoting Success

During Phase 1 (district-level) and Phase 2 (school-level) of data collection and analysis, the Equilence team identified factors in Adams 12 Five Star schools that promote success for English learners. It is believed that these factors provide a strong foundation for continued improvement in programming for English learners in the district. The following sections summarize these findings.

Phase 1: District-level Focus Groups and Interviews (May-August 2015)

During district-level focus groups and interviews, the Equilence team found that the following factors were promoting success for English learners:

English Language Learner Programming
- The flexibility in English language development programming that is present in some schools promotes success when it is guided by an understanding of effective practices for English learners.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development
- Professional development for district level personnel has been helpful in improving understanding of WIDA English language development and CCSS standards.
- Online courses and modules for all levels of employees, including those working at the district level, offer a foundation for understanding effective instruction for English learners.
- Content coaches believe and are working to help content teachers understand that they are all responsible for the English language development of their students.

Messaging / Communication
- Teacher and principal professional learning is focusing on messaging around instructional shifts, what success looks like for English learners, and on the idea that English language development is not “just another thing,” but should be an integral part of planning and instruction.

Relationships
- The LASS coordinators are working with coaches to build capacity, content coordinators to add English Language Development supports to content area units of study, and some school principals.
• When LASS coordinators participate with content coordinators in planning teacher professional development and participate in teacher professional development, they provide the support needed for participants to take and use a “language lens” during these activities.
• The translation team is cohesive, works well together, and members are also skilled interpreters. (Note: Here, the term “translation” is used to mean document translation from one language to another while the term “interpreter” is used to mean oral language interpretation.)

Resources: Translation Team
• Fulltime translators for Spanish-language document translation are available through the LASS department’s Translation Team. (Note: Here, the term “translation” is used to mean document translation from one language to another while the term “interpreter” is used to mean oral language interpretation.)

Family Engagement
• The importance of engaging, informing and providing resources to parents and families is a primary concern of the district’s Parent Engagement Coordinator. She works with parent liaisons in several schools. Additionally, two high schools have added parent liaisons.

Phase 2A: School-level Focus Groups (October-November 2015)
In focus groups of teachers, students, principals, parent liaisons and parents, findings indicate the following factors were promoting success for English learners:

English Language Learner Programming
• Teachers voiced a preference for flexibility around the district’s English language development models, particularly exhibiting an interest in push-in and co-teaching models of English language development instruction.

NOTE: These are not current practices in the district. Rather, teachers are aware of the need for, are interested in and are ready for more flexibility. This indicates that key personnel in the district (ie teachers) are asking to move from policies and programs structured for legal compliance to policies and programs structured for commitment, for meeting the needs of English language learners long-term.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development
• Teachers have a strong desire for deep, differentiated professional development in how to provide effective instruction and a strong learning environment for English learners.
• Teachers voiced a desire to engage in systematic collaboration with grade level teams, content area teams and learning specialists. They want on-the-ground professional development that gives them time for discussing, trying out, and reflecting on promising practices for English language learners.

NOTE: These are also not current practices in the district. Rather, teachers are aware of the need for, are interested in and are ready for collaborative, differentiated, school-embedded development of their professional practices. This indicates that key personnel in the district (ie teachers) are asking to move from informational type professional development to transformative type professional development, something
critical for meeting the needs of English language learners long-term. Current research on professional development in schools strongly supports transformative professional development as resulting in lasting change in teacher practices.

### Instruction and Instructional Leadership

- In answer to questions about what teachers do that benefits them most in class, secondary students consistently cited many of the effective practices that are articulated in the district’s instructional practice expectations for English learners. More specifically, students cited:
  - modeling;
  - using body language and gestures;
  - using realia, hands-on activities and multisensory inputs;
  - previewing and reviewing lessons;
  - connecting lessons to previous work;
  - connecting ELD lessons to content;
  - providing wait time and sufficient time for task completion;
  - planning and facilitating interactions with native-English-speaking and L1-speaking peers; and
  - recognizing students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

### Family Engagement

- Parent Liaisons are important, trusted and committed; they provide bridges between schools and families.
- Parents feel welcomed and supported by the district and ELD Teachers and trust the schools to do their best.

### Culture/Environment:

- Classroom and school environments are safe, clean and welcoming environments for students.

### Phase 2B: School and Classroom Visits (October-November 2015)

During school visits, Equilence consultants looked for evidence of sheltered instruction (SIOP) and other effective practices for English learners in 26 content and English language development classrooms, engaged in environmental scans, talked with teachers, and interviewed principals or other administrators when possible.

### SIOP Components and Elements

The following findings are the aggregate results of observed SIOP practices. Sheltered Instruction is an expectation in all classrooms in Adams 12 in which there are English learners. A note of caution: these visits were “snapshots” of one class period or block of time. Multiple visits of the same teachers over time did not occur. Therefore, the results indicate general trends, not specific, in-depth information on teacher practices in place in schools. In addition, the point at which observers joined the lesson had an impact on which elements of the SIOP components were recorded in notes. (See the appendices for
bar graphs which quantitatively represent the data.) In general, findings indicate the following SIOP elements were in place in most classrooms that were observed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Specific Aspect of Component</th>
<th>Observed in Classrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Content objectives are clearly written for students.</td>
<td>17/18 --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content concepts are appropriate for age and educational background level of students.</td>
<td>14/22 7/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A variety of supplementary materials are used to make the lesson clear and meaningful.</td>
<td>19/26 --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Background</td>
<td>There is a direct link between past learning and new concepts.</td>
<td>16/19 3/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key vocabulary is emphasized. Several key terms are introduced, highlighted, written or posted with simple definitions (3-7 words), and repeated.</td>
<td>15/23 8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensible Input</td>
<td>Comprehensible input: Academic tasks are clearly explained.</td>
<td>17/26 6/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice / Application</td>
<td>Activities provide students with practice in integrating all language.</td>
<td>5/25 19/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Delivery</td>
<td>Students are engaged approximately 90-100% of the period (most students taking part and on task throughout the lesson).</td>
<td>15/20 4/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review / Assessment</td>
<td>There is a comprehensive review of key vocabulary.</td>
<td>14/22 4/22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classroom Visits**

In a majority of classrooms visited the consultants found calm, organized rooms where rhythms, routines, transitions and expectations are clearly established.

**School Environmental Scans**

The majority of schools provided safe, clean, calm environments for learning. School culture was strongly represented in many schools by posting student work and displays of student accomplishments. Most schools had two posters displayed somewhere near the entrance to the school, one in several languages informing parents of the availability of interpreters and one in Spanish providing parents with health information.
Section 6: Factors Found to Be Inhibiting Success

During Phase 1 (district-level) and Phase 2 (school-level) of data collection and analysis, the Equilence team identified factors in Adams 12 Five Star schools that inhibit the success of English learners. These are factors that the district should investigate further, and around which many of our recommendations for improvement are focused.

Phase 1: District-level Focus Groups and Interviews (May-August 2015)

There was a strong indication at the district level that the following factors are inhibiting the success of English learners in Adams 12 Five Star School District.

English Language Learner Programming

- Logistics in schools, lack of flexibility--including a “one size fits all” mindset--at the district and school level, and educators’ beliefs about what is best for students are significantly affecting the implementation of English learner programming, particularly Model 1.
- Model 3, the secondary school model, often results in English learners missing language arts and/or electives instruction.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development

- The English learner lens (ie. how to make content comprehensible for English learners, how to include effective practices for English learners in all instruction, what being culturally responsive entails, and a belief that English learners are not in need of “remedial” education) is lacking or peripheral to much of the district’s professional development, including PD on standards.
- Most teachers know little about transitioning English learners out of English language development and working with beginner English learners.
- The professional development offered by the district on effective practices for English learners (including SIOP) and a common understanding of English learners is not consistently supported (ie. by coaches, administrators, collaborative professional development) in schools or in content classrooms.
- Professional development around language development is disconnected from practice and seems theoretical rather than practical. Models (or examples) of good English language development instruction are not available in the district.

Messaging / Communication

- There is no consistent, coherent message across the district about English language development and/or English learners.
- There is no consistent, coherent message across the district about programming and roles and responsibilities of district support personnel, such as LASS coordinators.
Instruction and Instructional Leadership

**English Language Development**
- LASS coordinators are not able to consistently support content coordinators, administrators, coaches and professional and materials development.
- There is system-wide confusion, which impacts instruction and professional development, about what distinguishes language arts and English language development (ELD).
- WIDA English language development standards are not understood as pathways to content standards.
- Supporting English learners’ language development is generally seen as an “add-on” in content classes.
- There is a perception in schools that English language development teachers are “fixers,” reinforcing the idea that English learners need remedial education.

**Principal’s instructional leadership**
- There is no consistent understanding of English language development (ie. effective practices and using a “language lens” in planning and instruction) and the structures that classroom teachers need to have in place to support English learners.
- There is no consistent understanding between principals and LASS Coordinators about the most effective structures to support English learners.
- Decisions about the use of English language development expertise sometimes undermine the success of teachers and students: Many teachers receive students based on their own deficits (what he/she needs to work on) rather than on their strengths.

**Relationships**
- LASS and content coordinators do not spend significant time together in classrooms. Content coordinators want the support of LASS coordinators’ expertise, and to promote the same message about English language development at the same time.
- LASS coordinators don’t get enough time to collaborate as a team and their roles are not clearly defined.
- Messages being promoted in schools are sometimes determined by the relationship between executive directors and principals.
- Assurance visits are not useful; principals make an effort to sign off on every item in the assurance document because this is the perceived expectation instead of identifying and committing to the most important items for their school.
- LASS coordinators are not comfortable in some schools. On the part of the school, there is fear of not being in compliance and on the LASS coordinators’ part there is a feeling that there may be dishonesty by the school about what’s really happening.
- LASS Directors are not visible in schools; in particular they are not seen in schools alongside Executive Directors and are not providing the message that English language development is integral to students’ education rather than an “extra.”
- Collaboration between English language development teachers and content area teachers is not supported by district and school-level systems.

**Resources**
- Translation and Interpretation Team
  - A small number of fulltime, trained/skilled interpreters/translators are working mostly at their desks translating documents rather than interpreting in schools.
Interpreters are being brought in from outside the district to interpret in schools instead of using the district interpreters in the schools.

- School staff are generally not aware of the processes and procedures involved in getting paper translations completed; parent liaisons often take on the role of document translators and interpreters.

- Other
  - There is a lack of bilingual administrators, teachers and office staff in schools.
  - The district is not using systems – such as the weekly newsletter, principal newsletter, and applied PD – to sustain messages about and support for English language learners.
  - Time (planning and instructional) to do what is expected around language is not available to teachers or students.

- Units of Study
  - The scope of the units is too broad and attempts to accomplish too much in too little time.
  - Some teachers are not using the units to guide their lessons and are relying on the Colorado Academic Standards and CCSS for guidance instead. Teachers do not recognize these standards in the units themselves.
  - Math coordinators do not recognize how English language development work integrates with and complements Math instruction.
  - Content coordinators do not have sufficient time and opportunities to work with LASS coordinators on the ongoing development of the units of study.

Phase 2A: School-level Focus Groups (October-November 2015)

In focus groups of teachers, students, principals, parent liaisons and parents, findings indicate the following factors that are inhibiting success for English learners:

English Language Learner Programming

- There is a high workload and stress and no opportunity for strategic compensation in schools with high numbers of English learners, which results in high teacher turnover (many teachers leave these schools or the district).
- Scheduling to meet Model 1 or 2 requirements is unwieldy and dictates how all schedules are created.
  - There is no time to make up for lost content for English learners resulting from pull outs, resulting in a ‘something has to give’ rationale.
  - Grouping and pull outs encourage segregation and tracking.
  - Despite district efforts to provide guidance about what to do with native English speakers during English language development time (Zero hour, etc), questions and concerns remain.
  - Model 3, the secondary school model, often results in English learners missing language arts and/or electives instruction.
● There is a lack of clarity around WIDA English language development standards and learning targets; principals and assistant principals are especially concerned about this in English language development versus English language arts.

● The English language programming models often leave out content instruction and there is much confusion about the difference between English language development and English language arts.

● School personnel feel unable to make instructional choices based on students’ actual abilities and needs; they feel hampered by program schedules and test results.

● Students are sometimes unable to test out of English language development due to testing barriers and parents and students lack knowledge of English learners’ rights.

● There is not an effective system for transitioning newcomers into schools or an effective system for moving newcomers out of beginner status.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development

● Professional development is not directly linked to practical classroom instruction.

● Teachers want support for capacity building, they want to become resources for each other.

● Teachers and coaches want time to collaborate on planning and instruction with cross grade level teams.

● Teachers would like instructional coaches who have linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and who intentionally and explicitly support planning and instruction for the English learners they have.

● Coaches’ linguistically and culturally diverse education backgrounds are not recognized or supported. They would like time and space to use their current expertise or to obtain certifications.

Messaging/Communication

● There is no strong, ever-present, consistently supported (by administrators, coaches and district level personnel) message about English learners in schools.

● Coaching roles and responsibilities are unclear. Many coaches are treated as coordinators.

Instruction and Instructional Leadership

● English learners and their families are referred to by some school-level personnel as problems for schools. This reflects an underlying deficit thinking about English learners and lack of experience with or understanding of cultural differences. (This also is related to Messaging/Communication and Relationships.)

● Teachers are not prepared to support many English proficiency levels together in one class at same time.

● English learners experience the following shortcomings in their classes: inadequate support in speaking and presentation skills; lack of clarity about expectations and assignments; lack of guidance and protocols for peer sharing and group work; lack of English learner and native-English-speaker interactions; excessive teacher talk.

Relationships

● School staff (principals, teachers) want LASS directors to be visible at all levels.

● Schools want a message about English language development that is strong and ever-present.

● Schools and teachers need more support for English learners both in content (especially secondary) and when students are dual identified with special education or gifted and talented.
Resources
- Teachers want more support, resources, flexibility and a voice in the creation of the units of study.
- *On Our Way to English* is not adequate for current curriculum needs.

Family Engagement
- Lack of bilingual school and district resources results in parent liaisons spending much of their workdays translating documents and interpreting in parent meetings instead of developing programs that benefit families in schools.
- Meetings with parents of English learners seem to be mostly focused on reprimands and punishments for English learners, not how to support families and students.
- Many administrators and school staff are unaware of or do not understand families living in poverty.
- Parents of English learners need: homework support; regular, frequent updates from English language development teachers about children’s progress; and documents translated into the appropriate language, not just Spanish.

Culture/Environment
- In classroom visits and in school environmental scans, consideration of the cultural diversity of students was strongly found to be missing. Most classroom teachers provided instruction and support for students exclusively in English. They also almost exclusively accessed and used their own experiences and backgrounds during lessons rather than building on the experiences of their students.

Phase 2B: School and Classroom Visits (October-November 2015)
During school visits, Equilence consultants looked for evidence of sheltered instruction (SIOP) and other effective practices for English learners in 26 content and English language development classrooms, engaged in environmental scans, talked with teachers, and interviewed principals or other administrators when possible.

SIOP Components and Elements
The following findings are the aggregate results of observed SIOP practices. A note of caution: these visits were “snapshots” of one class period or block of time. Multiple visits of the same teachers over time did not occur. Therefore, the results indicate general trends, not specific, in-depth information on teacher practices in place in schools. In addition, the point at which observers joined the lesson had an impact on which elements of the SIOP components were recorded in notes. The observers also noted that some other effective practices, which are not specifically identified in the SIOP elements, were lacking in a majority of classrooms. These are identified below in the SIOP component to which they most closely relate and are not quantified. (See the appendices for bar graphs which quantitatively represent the data.)

In general, findings indicate the following SIOP elements, with the addition of diversity, were not in place in a substantial number of classrooms that were observed (the absence of these elements can critically hinder the success of English learners).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>The cultural diversity of the students has not been considered, as evidenced by the classroom environment and instruction.</th>
<th>25/26</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher provides instruction and support exclusively in English.</td>
<td>23/26</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Connections between lesson objectives and lessons, and warm-up and lesson content, were unclear.</td>
<td>Observed but not counted – see paragraphs above for explanation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Background</td>
<td>Concepts were not explicitly linked to students’ backgrounds and experiences, both personal and cultural. (There was consistently inadequate explanation of US cultural references in content instruction.)</td>
<td>21/24</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensible Input</td>
<td>Varied techniques are not used to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language).</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate checks for understanding were not consistently used. Not all staff, including support staff, is prepared to accommodate English learners.</td>
<td>Observed but not counted – see paragraphs above for explanation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>There were not ample opportunities for students to use strategies (e.g., problem solving, predicting, organizing, summarizing, categorizing, evaluating).</td>
<td>7/23</td>
<td>9/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scaffolding techniques were not used consistently (providing the right amount of support to move students from one level of understanding to a higher level) throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>7/24</td>
<td>15/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questioning types did not include those that promote higher-order thinking skills.</td>
<td>12/23</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>There were not frequent opportunities for interactions and discussion between teacher/student and among students that encouraged elaborated responses. (There was a lack of guidance and preparation for student-to-student interaction.)</td>
<td>5/23</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students did not have ample opportunities to clarify key concepts in their native languages (L1) as needed with aide, peer, or text in L1.</td>
<td>18/25</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice / Application</td>
<td>There were not hands-on materials and/or manipulatives for students to practice using content knowledge.</td>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>5/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students did not apply content and language knowledge through classroom activities that made learning relevant and meaningful.</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>13/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities did not provide students with practice in integrating all language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking). (There was a lack of protocols and models for peer share and reviews.)</td>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>19/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classroom Visits**  
Although most classrooms were welcoming spaces for learners, a major factor inhibiting the success of English learners is the monolingual and mono-cultural classroom culture that was seen in almost every classroom. No examples of classroom environments that exhibited rich cultural connections (through abundant multi-cultural literature, materials in students’ first languages, cross-cultural interactions, etc.) to the backgrounds of the students present were found during the review.
School Environmental Scans

Schools also lacked evidence that they were welcoming places for families and students of all cultural backgrounds. Signs and information for families were almost entirely in English, and displays of student work, accomplishments and information about school activities were only in English. In general, acknowledgement and celebration of the diverse nature of student bodies was not observed. In addition, few schools had bilingual support staff in the offices to greet visitors.

Section 7: Ongoing Need for Attention

The call for this review was initially put out in the summer of 2014 and district concerns were based on data trends up until that time. Since the call for this review, the selection of the consulting team, the review itself, and the drafting of the report, a year and a half has passed. However, it is important to note that during the past year and a half, district-wide indicators for this population have not dramatically improved. There remains an ongoing need to attend to the nature and quality of the
services provided to this population as the following early 2014-2015 data for English language learners demonstrates:

- **6.1%** of NEP/LEP students, in contrast to **33.45%** of their fluent English speaking peers, met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC assessment in math. (NEP = non-English proficient and LEP = limited English proficient)

- **6.25%** of NEP/LEP students, in contrast to **40.47%** of their fluent English speaking peers, met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC assessment for English language arts.

However, to see the ongoing need for attention more clearly, Adams 12 will need to regularly compile and create a readily accessible, ongoing dashboard of indicators which:

- Tracks Adams 12 Five Star Schools’ English language learners’ progress on high priority outcomes over time and compares this progress to the progress of ‘exited’ and native English speaking peers within the district; and

- Tracks comparison districts’ English language learners’ progress on high priority outcomes over time and compares this progress to the progress of ‘exited’ and native English speaking peers in those districts.

To be of maximum value, it is suggested that Adams 12 look at comparison districts which not only have similar numbers of students overall, minority students, and students qualifying for free and reduced lunch but also have similar percentages of English language learners and rates of growth in this population to determine appropriate comparison districts. St.Vrain and Brighton school districts are two districts which are similar to Adams 12 across all of the aforementioned criteria and could be appropriate comparison districts.

**Section 8: Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 data collection and the consultants’ expertise and background in the field of education for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse students. They are organized according to the themes that emerged from the analysis of data collected during focus groups, conversations, and visits. None of these recommendations are intended
to be short-term adjustments. Almost all the recommendations will require time and resources to plan, develop and implement, and will require change efforts across the system. Following the recommendations is a proposed timeline for implementation.

**English Language Learner Programming**

- Consider reorganizing central office coordination to better serve all special populations.

- Implement ELL programming policy that reflects the specific needs of the schools (number of English learners, Socio-economic status, Title 1 schools and others); not a “one size fits all” policy, rather policy that includes flexibility along with accountability. More specifically,
  - Rethink the 45 minutes of ELD instruction for students:
    - What is the impact on students who are pulled out of class?
    - Can ELD be provided through content (e.g. science, social studies) instead of only through language arts in elementary and only ELD in middle and high schools?
    - What do individual schools need in order to provide the highest quality ELD for their students without sacrificing instruction in other areas?
  - Consider:
    - Piloting push-ins with co-teaching;
    - Collaboration among ELD and content classroom teachers;
    - How schools/district can support ELD teachers and content teachers working together instead of in isolation.

- Investigate restructuring English language development programming in secondary schools so that students get language arts and electives as well as English language development instruction.

- Examine the system of ELD support documents that establish the common ground on which educators work on English language programming. One small but significant example can be found in the district guidebook. Here, clarify that the use of students’ native languages (L1) is not prohibited, but rather strategic use of L1 is encouraged to support English learner understanding.

- Establish on-going professional support (ie. collaborative cohorts for workshops, inquiry and coaching) for principals, assistant principals and coaches to lead the work in schools to improve programming for English learners.

- Increase awareness among district level personnel regarding the impact of continual pull-out on English learners and English learner/Special Education students.

- Regularly compile and make readily accessible an ongoing dashboard of indicators which tracks the district’s English language learners on high priority outcomes over time and compares this progress to the progress of ‘exited’ and native English speaking peers within the district.

- Regularly compile and make readily accessible an ongoing dashboard of indicators which tracks comparison districts’ English language learners’ progress on high priority
outcomes over time and compares this progress to the progress of ‘exited’ and native English speaking peers in those districts. St. Vrain and Brighton are two highly recommended districts due to similarities in their number of students, percentage of minority students, percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Perhaps most importantly, these districts have similar percentages of English language learners.

Training and Ongoing Professional Development

- Continue to provide (and strengthen) senior level professional development on WIDA English language development standards and CCSS that is appropriately designed for their roles and responsibilities.

- Begin providing senior level and school-level leadership (including coaches) with systematic and applied professional development on instructional expectations based on effective instructional practices for English learners, such as Sheltered Instruction and English Language Development (and the differences between them).

- Develop and sustain an ongoing collaborative relationship with a university (grants, research, researchers).

- Rework 45 hours of English language development training so that it:
  - Is relevant to actual school situations;
  - Includes site-based training;
  - Includes team-based training;
  - Is inquiry based (e.g., ask participants to study WIDA English language development standards as pathways to content standards);
  - Includes expert and peer coaching (long term coaching cycles); and
  - Leverages digital technology to close the distance between participants and trainers/mentors (especially technologies that support authentic interaction).

- Give educators choices, time, and resources for professional development.

- Create cohorts or small teams of ELD teachers across similar groups to work collaboratively and nurture a buddy system for classroom teachers: thought partners, mentoring, support, and brainstorming opportunities.

- Place qualified, experienced ELD teachers in Title 1 schools.

- Rethink coaching to support implementation of PD. To better utilize resources and promote collaboration:
  - Consider expanding from 1:1 coaching to triads or teams;
  - Consider long term Learning Lab/Collaborative Inquiry models; and/or
  - Create pairs or small teams of peer coaches.

- Assign students to teachers based on the teachers’ expertise in language development; the students who need the most support get the teachers with the most experience.
• Build capacity of all system personnel including administration, teachers, coaches and support staff.
  o Build capacity in ELD coaches so that they are able to train classroom teachers and administrators.
  o Build capacity by supporting multi-certification for English language development coaches (ie. linguistically and culturally diverse education, reading teacher or specialist, special education - university partnerships can help with this).

• Train and/or identify model teachers (already working in the district) as exemplars of co-teaching (English Language Development and classroom/content area teachers).

Messaging

• The messages given to schools and support personnel (principals, coaches, English language development teachers, classroom teachers) from Executive Directors and LASS Directors should align (many coaches and teachers report that these messages conflict with each other). The directors should not only be visible in the schools, but visible together providing a consistent message about instruction for English learners.

• The messages given to schools and support personnel (principals, coaches, English language development teachers, classroom teachers) from content and LASS coordinators should align (many coaches and teachers report that these messages conflict with each other). The coordinators should not only be visible in the schools, but visible together providing a consistent message about instruction for English learners.

Relationships

• Continue providing and systematically strengthen space and time for collaboration between LASS coordinators and Content Coordinators so they can continue improving the English language development supports in the units of study and designing/implementing professional development for content teachers.

Planning and Instruction

• Allocate time and resources to training and facilitating teachers as they learn to collaborate and co-teach. (This means making hard decisions about financial resources and priorities.)

• Provide opportunities for teachers to plan together (beyond grade levels): English language development, special education, classroom teachers, etc.
- Clarify English language development versus language arts and how to embed content into English language development (or vice versa) at both elementary and secondary levels.

- Give equal space, time, and consideration to LASS representatives, as is given to content representatives, in district-level meetings.

- Clarify, at the district and school level, the meaning of English Language Development (ELD), Sheltered Instruction and their relationships to content instruction.

Resources

- Continue providing funding for the translation team and parent engagement coordinator.

- Begin transitioning document translation to an outsourced model and begin utilizing district translators for school-level interpretation services. Or, expand the team and their responsibilities.

Family and Student Engagement

- Prioritize parent liaisons’ job responsibilities as cultural ambassadors for their schools, providing opportunities for joint collaboration of teachers, students, families and communities.

- Train parent liaisons to see school staff (administrators, teachers, support staff) as resources and aid staff in building common understanding and trust between parents and school staff.

- Provide regular collaboration opportunities for parent liaisons embedded in their work schedules.

- Bring parents into the conversations more often, making sure they are well informed about the system and their children’s progress.

- Provide timely translations.

- Provide interpreters who are part of and have deep knowledge of the school system (not from outside agencies).

- Research and address the serious issue of students staying in English language development classes indefinitely. This includes:
  - Proficient students who aren’t able to test out; and
  - Non proficient students who don’t seem to improve over time.

- Ask about and act on the linguistic and cultural needs expressed by English language learners themselves, particularly at the secondary level.
Culture

- Initiate a system-wide conversation about what authentic, current and accurate multicultural and multilingual worldviews are and how they can be reflected in the physical aspects of buildings and classrooms as well as educator perspectives and curriculum.
  - Work to ensure that cultures in schools reflect inclusion and pluralism.
  - Connect content to students’ lives and backgrounds in authentic ways.
- Provide a multicultural/multilingual lens on authentic resources that will enhance school environments and curriculum (perhaps a resource person at the district level). Encourage collaboration between the Parent Engagement Coordinator, the Instructional Services and Library Department and LASS Coordinators.

Recommended Points of Reference

Below is a list of books, articles, reports, and chapters which the consultants recommend as important points of reference for educators in Adams 12 as they continue to work on improving the services provided to English language learners and their families.

Teacher Preparation

- Biliteracy from the start: Literacy squared in action (Escamilla, Hopewell & Butvilofsky, 2013)
- Critical pedagogy and teacher education: Radicalizing prospective teachers (Bartolomé, 2004)
- Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, practice and research (Gay, 2000)
- Democratizing bilingualism: The role of critical teacher education (Bartolomé, 2000)
- Effective bilingual education: From theory to academic achievement in a two-way bilingual program (De Jong, 2002)
- Essential linguistics: What you need to know to teach (Freeman & Freeman, 2004)
- Helping educators grow: Chapter 1 Feeling “Held” – Constructive-developmental theory and adult growth (Drago-Severson, 2012)
- Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992)
- Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy (Cochran-Smith, Davis & Fries, 2004)
- Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy (Ladson-Billings, 1995)
- Preparing mainstream teachers for English-language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? (De Jong & Harper, 2005)
- Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008)
- Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework (Walqui, 2007)
• Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms: A resource for teacher educators (Lucas, 2011)
• Teacher-pupil interaction in second language development (Ellis, 1985)
• Teaching bilingual learners (Wong Fillmore & Valdez, 1986)
• What should teachers do? Ebonics and culturally responsive instruction (Delpit, 2006)
• What teachers need to know about language (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000)

**Tools for Classroom Teachers**

• Lesson plan checklist for the sheltered instruction observation protocol – SIOP (Echevarria, Vogt, Short & Montone, 1999)
• Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model (Echevarria, Vogt, Short & Montone, 2004)

**Relevant Reports**

• Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California’s long term English learners (Olson, 2010)
• English language acquisition exemplary schools case study – Denver Public Schools and University of Colorado Denver (Nocon et al, 2011)

**Leadership, Systems Change & Education Policy**

• Change leadership – Part 1: Improving instruction by creating a vision of success and committing ourselves to the challenge (Wagner et al, 2006)
• Distributed leadership according to the evidence (Leithwood, Mascall, & Strauss, 2009)
• Educational change: Easier said than done (Fink & Stoll, 2005)
• Immunity to change - Part 1: Uncovering a hidden dynamic in the challenge of change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009)
• Learning labs: Collaborations for transformative teacher learning (Brancard & QuinnWilliams, 2012)
• Policy and change: Getting beyond bureaucracy (Darling-Hammond, 2005)
• Pushing the boundaries of educational change (Hargreaves, 2005)
• Restructuring schools for linguistic diversity: Linking decision making to effective programs (Miramontes, Nadeau & Commins, 2011)
• The micropolitics of educational change (Blase, 2005)
• When special education trumps ESL: An investigation of service delivery for ELLs with disabilities (Kangas, 2014)

**Section 9: Timeline for Implementation**

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Although it may seem at first that changes need to begin in the classrooms where English learners are receiving instruction, it is our belief that long-term, sustainable change should begin at the district level. More clarity and consistency at the district level will result in clearer and more consistent messaging and support for coaches, which in turn will result in clearer and more consistent messaging and support for English language development, classroom teachers, and other school personnel. With this in mind, the following timeline begins with efforts at the district level and works its way towards classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Level District Management; Senior level district org</th>
<th>Reorganize the district senior level in support of schools; Reorganize the district senior level to support special populations: English language learners, SpEd, GT</th>
<th>Spring/Summer 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior level district org</td>
<td>Relationship reparation and building among senior district leaders and personnel in the field</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior level district org</td>
<td>Initiate a conversation about what authentic, current and accurate multicultural and multilingual worldviews are and how they can be reflected at the district level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>Ensure that board approved resources and curriculum materials which are adopted are multi-cultural and bring in students’ relevant life experiences.</td>
<td>Spring/Summer/Fall 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and Principal Professional Learning; Language Acquisition Support Services</td>
<td>Redesign professional learning in regard to promising and effective practices for English language learners.</td>
<td>Fall/Winter/Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior level district org; Curriculum/Specials org; Principals; Coaches; Teachers, etc.</td>
<td>Initiate a conversation about what authentic, current and accurate multicultural and multilingual worldviews are and how they can be reflected at the district level and in the physical aspects of buildings and classrooms as well as educator</td>
<td>Fall 2016/Spring 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Activity Description</td>
<td>Time Frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/Specials org; Coaches; Teachers</td>
<td>Reflects the diverse nature of the district (not just an individual school), Recognizes and values the languages and cultures present in the school and, Expands adults and students’ awareness and acceptance of diverse language and cultural backgrounds.</td>
<td>Spring/Summer/Fall 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior level district org; Curriculum/Specials org; Principals; Coaches; Teachers, etc.</td>
<td>Think critically about how to make content relevant to students by mutually bringing their lives into the curriculum and the curriculum into their lives.</td>
<td>Spring/Summer/Fall 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/Specials org; Coaches, Teachers</td>
<td>Rethink and implement English language learners programming policy that reflects the specific needs of the schools (number of English learners, Socio-economic status, Title 1 schools and others); not a “one size fits all” policy, rather policy that includes flexibility along with accountability and better serves the needs of special populations.</td>
<td>Summer/Fall 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/Specials org; Coaches, Teachers</td>
<td>Distinguish between the needs of English language learners in English language development and English language arts. Consider how to teach ELD through content Consider how to support content through ELD</td>
<td>Summer/Fall 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Olson, L. (2010). Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California’s long term English learners. URL: https://www.californianstoggether.org/reports-research-2/


Appendix A: Detailed Explanation of Methods

This section describes the details of data collection at the various levels.

Phase 1: District-level Focus Groups and Interviews

Script for Facilitators

Facilitator To Do:
- Set Timer and start recorder and backups.
- Hard copy of questions.
- Be courteous.
- Don’t talk, don’t prompt, don’t summarize.

Script:
- Welcome and thank you for participating in the focus group/interview.
- The focus group/interview will run for 60-90 minutes.
- We will ask you a set of questions and try to get through as many as we can.
- It will be a whip around protocol with open discussion if time allows, please hold your follow-up comments till the end.
- We will de-identify all information regarding name, role, designation, affiliated office, school, etc. Report will include only aggregated or generalized information.
- If you do not want to participate you are free to leave at any time during the discussion.
- If you have any concerns please email Julie Dutch or Erica Ramsthaler.
- If needed, we may contact you for follow-up questions or clarifications.
- Start with Question 1

Close
- Thank you for your participation and patience. If needed, we hope we may contact you for follow-up questions or clarifications.

Core Set of Questions

The following set of questions acted as the basis for all focus groups and interviews at the district level. Additional questions were asked based on organizational role in addition to those that follow:

- What is your role?
- What do you know about how English learners are served in the district?
- How prepared do you feel to work with English learners or those who serve English learners?
- What is LASS doing that is working? What should LASS improve upon?
- If you were a parent of an English learner, what would you want for your child?

**Phase 2: School-level Data Collection Tools**

**Environmental Scans and Classroom Visit Note-catcher**

During each school and classroom visit, a consultant from Equilence LLC used the following note-catcher to collect information about the environment, background of the lesson, and programmatic expectations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observer:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>Class/Model/Content:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Environmental Scans: Describe what you see, and what you don’t see, in the following spaces with a lens on ELL students |
| Building: |
| Lobby/Front Office: |
| Classroom: |

| Background Information: Describe the following items based on information received from Teacher before or after visit |
| Context of lesson: (whether it is part of a weekly or quarterly theme, if ss have been working on it for a while, connection to CCSS/WIDA English language development standards/Units of study) |

| Inquiry Questions: Answer keeping the following in mind—Language supports by T and peers, materials, resources, interactions with native EN ss and other ELLs, activation of prior knowledge |
| What programmatic expectations are being met by the lesson: |
What programmatic expectations are not being met by the lesson:

What factors promoted success for ELLs

What factors inhibit success for ELLs (language use; teacher requirements; interactions; etc):

**School-level Focus Group Script for Facilitators**

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**Start with Question 1**

**Close**
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**Core Set of Questions**

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- What is LASS doing that is working? What should LASS improve upon?
- If you were a parent of an English learner, what would you want for your child?
Appendix B: Instructional Expectations Survey Results

During each school visit, the consultant from Equilence, LLC completed an Instructional Expectations Survey. The purpose was not to randomly sample a statistically significant number of classrooms but rather to have another point of reference for the trends which emerge from other school-level environmental scans and school-level focus groups. The items on this survey were defined based on the English Language Learner Look For’s which are found in Section 3: First Best Instruction (Adams 12 Guidebook, 2014, p.20). The foundations for these Look For’s are part of Echeverria, Short and Vogt’s (1999) SIOP Observation checklist. The following categories comprise the survey: cultural diversity; preparation; building background; comprehensible input; strategies; interaction; practice/application; lesson delivery; review/assessment; and language. Each category has from one to four items and was rated by an Equilence consultant as: present; not present; or somewhat present.

Visual representations of these results, in the form of bar graphs are presented below. There is one section for the aggregate results of all elementary, middle, and high schools visited. In addition, there is a section for just elementary schools, just middle schools, and just high schools. Please note that although few middle schools and few high schools were visited, the ones visited reflected important trends also seen in elementary schools. For more on these, see findings, phase two of the review above.

Aggregate Graphs

- Diversity – aggregate
- Preparation – aggregate
- Comprehensible Input – aggregate
Building Background – aggregate

Strategies – aggregate

Interaction – aggregate

Practice/Application – aggregate

Lesson Delivery – aggregate

Vocabulary – aggregate
Elementary School Graphs

Diversity – ES

Preparation – ES

Building Background – ES

Comprehensible Input – ES
**Middle School Graphs**

NOTE: This sample size is too small, however, there are some elements seen as trends in K-8 that should be noted. Overall, there seems to be cause for concern and the best recommendation would be more systematic visits to middle school classrooms.

---

**Diversity – MS**

**Preparation – MS**

**Building Background – MS**

**Comprehensible Input – MS**
High School Graphs

NOTE: This sample size is too small, however, there are some elements seen as trends in K-12 that should be noted. Overall, there seems to be cause for concern and the best recommendation would be more systematic visits of high school classrooms.

Diversity – HS

Preparation – HS