



The Education Trust–West

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How Five California School Districts Are Advancing English Learner Equity in Math

New Ed Trust–West Report Highlights Promising Practices and Offers Key Recommendations

OAKLAND, CA (March 27, 2018) – English learners (ELs) represent more than 1 in 5 students in California’s K-12 schools, yet math achievement rates for this group have remained considerably low. However, a new report from The Education Trust–West finds promising practices around the state that are increasing supports for these students and boosting student achievement. Second in a series exploring English learner education, the report, [*Unlocking Learning II: Math as a Lever for English Learner Equity*](#), connects research to real-world classroom examples, providing a roadmap for statewide implementation of best practices in closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

“Given our linguistic diversity, California should lead the nation in closing equity gaps for English learners,” said Ryan J. Smith, executive director of Ed Trust–West. “The educators, schools and districts profiled in this report are making equity a reality in our public schools. They provide clear examples of what it takes to close these persistent achievement gaps.”

The report outlines four key areas of practice that support improved math achievement for ELs:

- Honoring students’ backgrounds, cultures and home languages
- Providing access to rigorous courses
- Integrating English language development with math instruction
- Professional learning for teachers on how to support English learner achievement

Unlocking Learning II features schools with promising practices in Alhambra Unified, Rowland Unified, San Francisco Unified, Kerman Unified, and Westminster School District. The report also spotlights teachers such as Nicolas Nguyen, a math teacher and department chair at San Gabriel High School in Alhambra Unified, whose deliberate efforts to support English learners are yielding results.

“As a 12-year-old immigrant, I distinctly remember struggling to grasp Algebraic concepts in class because of the language barrier,” said Nguyen. “That experience still shapes every aspect of my instructional practice today. By embedding English language development and encouraging conceptual math discussions in my daily lessons, I provide my EL students with the support they need to excel.”

Based on an in-depth analysis of what has proven effective in those schools, as well as an evaluation of the challenges that all schools face, the report offers specific policy recommendations at both the district and state level for how best to integrate math education with English language development and unlock the potential of California’s English learners.

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[The Education Trust—West](#) works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-K through college. We expose opportunity and achievement gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for the strategies that will forever close those gaps.