PROMISE INITIATIVE

PURSUING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTORING, INNOVATION, AND SUCCESS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

THE PROMISE CORE PRINCIPLES AND
THE WORK OF THE PROMISE INITIATIVE PILOT SITES

Participating Counties:

Los Angeles • Orange • Riverside • San Bernardino • San Diego • Ventura

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INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the PROMISE Initiative was launched as a three-year pilot of a school reform model focused on improving outcomes for English Learners, preschool through twelfth grade, in 15 schools across six California counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura). The PROMISE pilot study was conducted from January 2006 through June 2009. A set of research studies documented the changes that occurred in the pilot sites through their involvement with PROMISE, and analyzed impacts on student achievement. The full findings and conclusions of those studies are contained in the PROMISE Research Monograph. This companion volume draws upon documentation of the work of the pilot sites in implementing the PROMISE model, and specifically illustrates how schools (preschool through high school) enacted the core principles that served as the basic frame for the PROMISE model.

THE PROMISE MODEL

The PROMISE model was designed to address widespread underachievement of English Learners by providing an approach to school improvement that specifically speaks to the needs of English Learners and the challenges facing schools in building strong programs to meet those needs. The model has four foundational components.

Component #1: *Vision*
PROMISE articulated a broad, research-derived and values-based **vision** of student success that is the core of the PROMISE outcome-based reform:

> *The vision of PROMISE is to ensure that English Learners achieve and sustain high levels of proficiency, including literacy, in English and the primary language, high levels of academic achievement, sophisticated sociocultural and multicultural competency.*

Component #2: *Core Principles Framework*
A set of eight inter-related core principles frame the work of schools to improve outcomes for English Learners. The PROMISE core principles establish a framework for selecting and implementing new practices and programs with coherence. The PROMISE principles were drawn from research, theory and practice in the areas of first and second language acquisition, cognitive development, sociocultural development, critical pedagogy, school improvement, and organizational and systems theory. The core principles are:

- *An Enriched and Affirming Learning Environment*
- *Empowering pedagogy*
- *Challenging and relevant curriculum*
- *Powerful parent and community engagement*

- *High quality instructional resources*
- *High quality professional development*
- *Valid and reliable assessment systems*
- *Advocacy oriented leadership*

Together, the eight PROMISE principles touch on all aspects of schooling – knitting a systemic and comprehensive approach: curriculum, pedagogy, materials, assessment, staffing, climate. The principles engage all levels of the system as well (e.g., classroom, site, district, county) and all stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, parents, administrators). They are deeply inter-related. The impact of any one is limited; it is the implementation and realization of all eight principles moving in the same direction and reinforcing each other across the system that builds the transformational educational experience PROMISE sought to deliver.

Component #3: *Co-design and Reflective practice*
A process of co-design and facilitated reflective practice lead schools through the development and continuous refinement of customized Plans for strengthening their programs, practices, school culture and policies for English Learner success. Dialogue, reflection, the development of shared meaning and the evolution of shared leadership were built into the PROMISE model through this component.

Component #4: *An infrastructure of support*
The PROMISE model includes an infrastructure of leadership and support for schools engaged in implementing the school reform effort. The PROMISE Initiative assembled a multi-layered system of expertise (technical assistance, professional development and coaching) and staff to coordinate the reform effort. The elements of this system included:

- *A collaborative of six county offices of education provided overall leadership through the superintendents, an Advisory Group of directors and associate superintendents, and a cross-county Working Group comprised of one or more staff people from each county office*
- *A PROMISE Design Center responsible for coordinating the PROMISE Initiative across all six county offices*
- *District level leadership and support*
- *Leadership in the fifteen pilot sites which included site administrators, a specifically convened PROMISE Lead Team of formal and informal site leadership (including teachers and, in some cases, parent liaisons)*
- *PROMISE Partners and researchers*
- *A network of PROMISE pilot sites established to share best practices, learn together, and support each others' efforts*

Through these four components, the PROMISE Initiative supported schools in charting a roadmap for school change, and led them through the steps of understanding of PROMISE Model and principles, designing and refining customized PROMISE Plans based upon the selection of a few core principles, and then actually implementing changes at their sites.

DOCUMENTING THE WORK OF THE PILOT SITES IN IMPLEMENTING THE MODEL

Over the three years of the PROMISE pilot, qualitative, ethnographic research methods were used to document how the 15 pilot sites engaged with the PROMISE model and used their participation in PROMISE to diagnose needed improvements in their English Learner programs, to select strategies to strengthen those programs, and to build the leadership and capacity needed to implement change. The study utilized observation, documentation of events, interviews with participating educators, collection of materials, facilitated dialogues, and activities engaging PROMISE site and district leaders in reflecting upon work accomplished and lessons learned at eight critical points throughout the three year initiative.

The story of this work at the PROMISE sites over the three years of the pilot provide lessons for the field, a deeper understanding of the PROMISE model in action, an illustration of the processes and dynamics of change, and offers exemplars of what it looks like to enact the core principles framework for English Learner success. This volume selects from work that occurred across the PROMISE sites, and does not attempt to describe all of the work that was accomplished.

Although the volume is organized into sections by individual core principles, in reality the principles are inter-related. As PROMISE schools developed deeper understandings of the core principles they had selected for initial focus, they were led to a focus on the other principles. For this reason, each of the stories herein actually illustrates the relationship of one principle to others. For example, work to create an affirming environment led one school to recognize the need to strengthen the engagement of parents and community. It also led to recognition that an affirming environment requires relevant curriculum, and a challenging and rigorous program that honors high expectations for all students. This is what is meant by a comprehensive and systemic approach to education. The core principles, taken together, engage all stakeholders and all levels of the system, reaching into all arenas of the school – transformational schooling.

CORE PRINCIPLE #1: ENRICHED AND AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENT

An Enriched and Affirming Learning Environment:
Create a safe, affirming and enriched learning environment.

Enriched and Affirming Learning Environment Defined:

An affirming and enriched environment is the foundation for learning. English Learners are often isolated and face language and cultural barriers to full participation in schools. We know when students feel they do not belong, when they feel unsafe, and when proactive efforts are not made in a school to include them and build an inclusive environment, learning is made more difficult. The relationships between students, the messages students absorb from the adults on campus, and the school atmosphere of accepted and acceptable social attitudes and behaviors create a "hidden curriculum" that powerfully informs a student whether or not they "belong" and whether or not they "matter".

The work of creating an enriched and affirming learning environment is in many ways, about relationship building – respectful relationships between peers, knowledgeable and respectful relationships across cultures, respectful and affirming relationships between adults on campus and students.

Creating a safe, affirming, enriched environment involves intentional strategies for supporting students and staff to understand and respect differences, actively impacting the value of diversity, creating a faculty body that reflects the community of students, an emphasis on cooperative learning and instructional strategies that have students working together with peers and across ages, creation of mechanisms and activities that bring students together across differences, care that English Learners are not marginalized on campus or in activities, and enforced policies that ensure a safe campus for all where their languages, cultures, identities and lived experiences are seen as assets.

Enriched and Affirming Environment: The Work of the PROMISE Sites

Five PROMISE schools selected "An enriched and affirming learning environment" as an initial focus: one elementary school, two middle schools and two high schools. They were driven by concerns about tensions on campus between racial/ethnic/cultural groups, and a recognition that English Learners were not full participants in the life of the school. They were motivated to work on their school climate because they recognized that their students had little sense of what their future could be or how schooling relates to their futures.

The strategies PROMISE schools engaged in while working on Affirming Learning Environment ranged from creating student videos to enable faculty to hear students talking about the student experience at the school, creating clubs and social activities that honored and gave visibility to the cultures on campus, supporting activities that brought students together across differences, initiating courses and clubs through which students study and learn about their own and others' cultures and experiences, and mechanisms to build student leadership on campus in ways that incorporated English

Learners. A few schools worked on the physical environment of the school as well, understanding that it is a reflection to students of how valued they and their education are.

The Dual Language programs by definition are intended to build cross-cultural relationships and competencies in the way that English dominant and language minority children are combined in classrooms where the program itself honors the minority language and culture. The PROMISE preschool, elementary and middle school sites with dual language programs embrace this core principle, but actually did not elect to focus upon it as part of the PROMISE work.

As the PROMISE schools deepened their work on Affirming and Enriched Learning Environments, the relationships to Empowering Pedagogy and to Challenging and Relevant Curriculum became clearer. An affirming environment goes hand in hand with having a curriculum that incorporates topics that are relevant and meaningful to the lives, cultures and heritage of students. An affirming environment engages students in seeing themselves as participants in creating knowledge and in acting upon what they are learning. High quality instruction for English Learners incorporates cooperative learning strategies that engage students together in learning. The work to create an Affirming Environment led to creating new curriculum and pedagogy – and the work on the core principle High Quality Professional Development engaged teachers in instructional strategies that affirm participation and relationship-building among students.

Enriched and Affirming Environment: Case Study Exemplars

Examples of the work at two PROMISE schools are provided as illustrations of work to create an affirming and enriched school environment: Multicultural Clubs and Celebrating Diversity at Arrowview Middle School in San Bernardino, and Celebration of Reclassification at Holland Middle School.

* *Multicultural Clubs and an all-out focus on Celebrating Diversity at Arrowview Middle School in San Bernardino*

Arrowview Middle School in San Bernardino City Unified School District is a large year-round, multi-track school serving 2,300 students. Almost 2/3 of Arrowview's students are Hispanic, and most of those are English Learners.

Arwyn Wild arrived as Arrowview's Principal just as the district was looking for schools that might be a good match for PROMISE. Arrowview had been selected as a site for a new middle school Dual Language program in the district, and PROMISE seemed to be an opportunity to support the new principal and the school in preparing to launch that program. Wild described Arrowview at the time as an inner city school challenged by high suspension rates, attendance problems, and a pervasive climate that accepted that *"these kids can't learn"*, and a pervasive acceptance among students that school had little to offer them. Wild was on a mission to change this culture, and it was no surprise that he and the Arrowview PROMISE Lead Team selected "An enriched and Affirming Learning Environment" as one of the first principles to enact in their PROMISE journey.

The work at Arrowview began with the physical environment of the school. Lead Team members described in their reflections: A school with trash on the ground, trash on lunch tables reflected a sense that *"this place doesn't matter – the kids don't matter – and no one really "owns" it or takes responsibility for it."*   Wild explained:

> *"Hispanics are a majority in this school and in this community and will be in this state soon, yet they are treated like second class citizens in so many ways and in so many places. We wanted this school, their school to reflect that they deserve what people in other communities get."*

The school walls were painted, maintenance was emphasized, a campaign was launched with students to clean up the campus. Personal conversations with students encouraged them to join in the effort. The staff and students alike cleaned up after lunch, leaving their lunch tables trash-free. As the physical environment became more pleasant, it had two effects: students liked how it felt to be on a clean campus, felt they mattered and that they deserved a clean campus, and everyone started to see that they could change what was going on at the school.

The work on the physical environment was backdrop for other work on the school climate. The school experienced tensions between races, and, as Wild put it, *"a lack of understanding about how we ought to treat each others as human beings."*   Pushing, shoving, insulting, putting each other down, bad language and overall disrespect were widespread and uncontested behaviors. Raquel Tucker, a counselor at Arrowview described entrenched cliques on campus with Hispanics clustering together, African Americans clustering separately in their own spaces on campus, and the few Caucasian students barely visible.

The PROMISE Lead Team set to work focusing on these dynamics. Numerous activities were put into place in the first year, all designed to provide a positive visibility and awareness of cultural diversity in the school. A Lead Team member looked back at that first year and recalled:

> *"We wanted them to know their own culture and others at a deeper level than a superficial one. We wanted them to feel pride about who they are, and to feel respect for others."*

Multicultural music was played over the school broadcast system along with announcements every Friday. A Ballet Folklorico dance group was started at the school.

Arrowview started "Mix It Up", a day each trimester in which students are encouraged to come to the lunchroom to sit with people they don't know and who are different from them. When they arrive in the cafeteria, student leadership provides "prompts" and facilitation for lively sharing among students about each others lives and experiences, cultures and heritage. The Youth to Youth leaders in the school make flyers, and see their roles as getting other kids involved. The Mix-it-up days have themes, "friendship", "college", "Hawaii." Student leaders move throughout the school hyping the Mix-it-up days, actively inviting and recruiting students to come. And students do come, more and more each time. They come because they have been personally invited, because it provides a vehicle to cross over

divides and a way to break the ice and talk to people from other groups. And, they come because it is fun.

Over the course of their PROMISE years, Arrowview's intentionality and planning for celebrating cultures and creating a more inclusive environment at the school evolved. A social calendar is created each year designating school activities, when they will occur, and who will be in charge. Hispanic Celebrations, Asian Pacific Heritage day, African American History Month, multicultural music assemblies, Mix-It-Up days and many other activities fill the calendar. The leadership, faculty, and the PROMISE Lead Team are able to look it over and see where there are gaps, and what might be added. Teachers are able to plan their own classroom activities that reinforce the theme or events.

Raquel Tucker, the counselor charged with maintaining the social calendar, feels it is deeply important as a mechanism for changing the school climate to be more affirming and inclusive. She reported:

> *"As a counselor, I work with a lot of kids on behavior issues. School – maybe particularly middle school – isn't just about academics. It's about socially interacting with each other in appropriate ways. It's about coming into your own and seeing who you are in relationship to others. The more our students understand and are familiar with each others' cultures, the healthier the environment. The calendar keeps up conscious about doing this work."*

School leaders, the administrators, and individual teachers seek ways to add to the effort to focus on an affirming and inclusive environment. One year into the PROMISE pilot, the principal asked a school counselor and classroom teacher if they might be interested in starting an Afro-Latin Club at the school. Meeting once a week after school, the club is an opportunity for students to talk about and learn about their own cultures and each other, to seek the commonalities between the Latino and African American experience, to learn some history and context about the relationships between the groups. Twenty-five to thirty students show up each week where they watch DVDs and videos about the Latino and African American experience. Counselor Kimberly Telphy actively recruited the students. She says:

> *"If you can get them there the first time, they keep coming. It's fun, it's exciting, it's a place to go after school. Most of all, it's meaningful. These are real and compelling issues for them. The club is a place where those issues are right on the table. It's a safe place to talk about issues that aren't talked about in other places.   I love doing it, even though it's extra work. But to see the kids learning, stretching, connecting, sharing – across races. They come because it's meaningful to them. And you know what? It's meaningful to me, also."*

By the end of the first year of PROMISE, the Arrowview PROMISE Lead Team felt they had made a difference already in building a heightened awareness of cultural diversity to the school. By the third year, the impact was evident. The students who were in 6th grade, just starting at Arrowview when PROMISE began, were completing 8th grade when the PROMISE pilot ended. It was a cohort who experienced from the start to finish the focus on celebrating diversity and creating an affirming

environment. There is a difference in student behaviors in the school. There are few racial conflicts. Students treat each other with more respect. There is a set of norms infused into the life of the campus that are called upon regularly to remind, refresh students and teachers alike. The older students in the school serve as models for new students to learn the culture of how people relate to each other at Arrowview. There is a sense of comfort and belonging in the school climate now.

The work on the climate has not just been focused on bridging differences. It has simultaneously focused on high expectations. The emphasis on the physical environment and the social environment were matched with an emphasis on the classroom environment – an environment where students get the resources that are needed to succeed, where teachers are supported to learn the best teaching strategies. The staff set out to "open the world to our students", giving them experiences outside of their city so they see a wider world. One group traveled to Spain, another to France. Field trips are taken to colleges. Wild reflects on how different the climate is now from four years ago when he started at the school:

> *"Our kids have a vision for their futures no. They talk about going to college, and they see what they have to do to attain that."*

While it has been the Principal's commitment and the PROMISE Lead Team's vision to make this happen, it has taken everyone on campus to actually do it. Arrowview has a dedicated, hard working staff. People who haven't shared this vision of what a middle school should be have left the school. New hires who have come to Arrowview in the last few years, have come with their eyes open about what will be expected and what the vision of the school is about. This faculty understands that middle school students need this kind of intentional guidance, and that their students need at least one meaningful connection to an adult in the school. They take it upon themselves to forge those connections. In hiring, there has been a priority on hiring bilingual teachers who can communicate with the Hispanic students and their families. Now, fully a third of the teachers in the school are bilingual.

It's not easy to maintain the kind of intentional focus on school climate that Arrowview has created. There is more and more pressure not to let anything interrupt classes and not to schedule things that take the energy and focus away from academics. Teachers have their hands full with increasing pressures to ramp up the instruction. Taking on sponsoring student activities and building personal relationships and connections with students gets harder and harder.

And yet, Arrowview is convinced that this is an essential part of providing a good education to their students. A teacher on the PROMISE Lead Team spoke about it thusly:

> *"Accepting and being able to get along and build relationships across differences may not be a standard, and it certainly isn't tested or a way that we are measured in this day and age – but for the world our kids live in, they really need it."*

And Wild added,

> *"We're measured these days by our test scores, and that's okay, but there are additional ways we need to be measuring our success, and that's what Arrowview is about – this wider vision of our role and of what schooling should be."*

In fact, at Arrowview, they go hand in hand – the creation of an affirming and safe learning environment supported a culture/climate change at the school in which academics could be ramped up. The test scores at Arrowview have improved dramatically over the past several years. The biggest gains in both API and AYP have been for the African American students, English Learners, Hispanics.

* *Celebration of Reclassification at Holland Middle School in Baldwin Park*

Holland Middle School serves a predominantly Hispanic community in Baldwin Park. The schools enrolls 670 students, 94% of them Hispanic, and almost half (45%) are English Learners. These are not primarily recent immigrants, however. Most were born in the United States or in U.S. schools since kindergarten. When the school entered PROMISE, they were already designated a Program Improvement school under NCLB, and were seeking ways to improve student achievement. The Holland PROMISE Lead Team selected three principles as their initial PROMISE focus: High Quality Professional Development, Challenging and Relevant Curriculum and Powerful Family Engagement.

In reflections and dialogue at the end of the first year, the Lead Team described their school prior to PROMISE. The faculty, they reflected, had a lot of passion for the community, but as a school, faced significant challenges in meeting the needs of EL students – including, an inability to mobilize around improving achievement. Many teachers left responsibility for ELs to the English Language Development (ELD) teachers. Overall, the Lead Team expressed a sense of low expectations about what the EL students could or would achieve.

In October of the first year of the PROMISE pilot, a leadership team attended (as did most PROMISE secondary schools) the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series presented through the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The first unit of that series focused on "Knowing Your English Learners" and required each school to dig into their student information data to determine how many were newcomer English Learners, how many were long-term English Learners, and to look at the various factors impacting EL participation and achievement in school. Mike Rust, Principal at Holland Middle School, looking back, identified this as a starting point for the PROMISE work:

> *"It was eye-opening for us all to really look deeper at the data on who our students are. If you understand your students, the path becomes clearer. We looked and saw how many of our English Learners were born in the United States and still weren't reclassified when they came to us in 6th grade. We started to ask ourselves why they were still in ELD. We started to ask our students about their lives. That started a whole ball rolling for us, and over the past four years, we have gone through a transformation."*

The story of Holland's focus on reclassification, and the creation of a school-wide campaign to get students reclassified and to celebrate their successes, is a window into Holland's transformation.

Rosa Perez, the ELD teacher and a member of the PROMISE Lead Team, recalls this focus in the first year, delving deeper into understanding the EL students at Holland:

> *"You have to really know who your students are – some have strong academic backgrounds, some don't; some are barely holding on to their Spanish out of shame, others can read and write in Spanish and are proud of their skills; We have to know who they are, their family, where they live, do they work, where they come from. Because all of that influences their relationship to school and learning. English Learners have it hard. And they are sometimes defensive and afraid. If they know you care about them, if they know the teachers in a school are on their side, they will respond and rise to high expectations."*

Looking at her own students, Perez noticed large numbers of long-term Level III students who lacked motivation and tended to have behavior problems. She sat down with a spreadsheet of all English Learners in the school, with information on how long they had been in US schools, their CELDT scores, their CST scores and their course grades. She saw patterns that made her question why so many students were still not reclassified. In her overcrowded ELD classes, Ms. Perez shared a PowerPoint about the CELDT and reclassification, and engaged her students in a discussion:

> *"Do you know why you're in ELD?"*
> *"No"*
> *"Do you know that you're an English Learner?"*
> *"Kind of… but what does that mean?"*

Students didn't understand they had to meet certain criteria in order to stop being an English Learner. She set out to explain redesignation and to ensure that every English Learner knew the reclassification process and criteria. Ms. Perez explained:

> *"If we wanted to see positive results, we had to get the students to take it   seriously – to realize this was affecting their lives and their opportunities."*

At Holland, as with many middle schools, English Learners take their ELD classes during the one elective period of the day. This means they are not able to participate in AVID, sports, band, music, computers, or photography. English Learners did not understand that in order to be able to take elective courses at Holland, they would need to be reclassified from English Learner status. And they certainly didn't know what you had to do to become reclassified.

Perez met individually with every one of the 225 students on the list, explaining to them where they were in the continuum of progress towards reclassification, and what they needed to accomplish to become reclassified.

Gloria Marquez was one of those students. As an entering 6th grader, she recalls.

> *"I didn't really know that I was an English Learner or what that means. I mean, I knew I didn't know English, but I didn't know that I was getting special classes for that. Then they told me I was an English Learner and that I'd be learning things like writing English and nouns and adjectives and parts of speech. And they told me that I would learn English and would be reclassified and how important that was. I really wanted to take band and AVID, but mostly I really wanted to know English. They told me how I could do that. To read, read, read. And so I did."*

Once each student saw where they needed to focus, how close or how far they were from their goals, they worked harder and smarter. Gloria explained,

> "*Now I knew how important it was that I do well on the test. So I was nervous. But I worked really hard.*"

Another EL student was incredulous:

> *"You mean we'll never have to take CELDT again once we get reclassified? You mean we can take more electives?"*

The Holland community discovered just how powerful motivation can be. The students began working harder. When Rosa Perez was done with meetings with students, she moved on to meeting with parents – similarly, discussing what reclassified means, how a student qualifies, and where their own students were along the journey towards reclassification. After all, Powerful Family Engagement was one of the PROMISE core principles the school had chosen. They knew that parents had an important role to play in helping students reach the goal of reclassification.

All stakeholders became involved. The message to students was clearly:

> *"You know what you have to do and what your goals are, and we're here to help you get there."*

The entire school *was* there for them. All teachers were trained in understanding the CELDT, the continuum of second language development, and what English Learners need to be able to do in order to be reclassified. The PROMISE Lead Team continued to bring back what they were learning in the Secondary School Leadership series - sharing it during common meeting times. English Learners became a focus for the entire school site. Photos of all English Learners were plastered on the Teachers Lounge walls. Teachers knew every English Learner in their classes by name and where in progress towards reclassification the student was. Principal Mike Rust recalled in an interview near the end of the PROMISE pilot:

"It turned out that no one had really understood what it meant to be designated an English Learner – not students, nor parents, nor most of our teachers. Once they understood, it changed everything. It was magical. A real whole-site effort. Everyone rallied around the cause."

The school developed Advisory Periods for all students, and each Advisory teacher took on the role of talking to their English Learners, checking in with them about their progress in English and in their courses, reminding them of which specific skills and milestones they needed to reach to become redesignated.

To help the students get to reclassification, teachers worked on strengthening their instruction. Once they understood what being a CELDT III means in terms of comprehending and using English, teachers saw that they needed to modify their instruction. All of the English teachers were trained in implementing the WRITE Institute's units and strategies for strengthening writing and productive language skills. Holland's commitment to the PROMISE Core principle of professional development came into focus.

Now, every January, Ms. Perez reviews a list of possible reclassification candidates. She prepares packets to give to teachers for their input. By the end of January, the final list for the year is confirmed. In March, the school holds a Redesignation Celebration. The event is held in the school cafeteria. All families are sent formal invitations and are asked to RSVP. Whole families come to see their children awarded the certificate attesting to their English language proficiency. They bring dishes to share and balloons to festoon the halls. Throughout the day leading up to the reclassification ceremony, announcements are made on the school intercom system congratulating the students by name who have reached this milestone. Perez explained:

"It's really a big accomplishment for our students. It's a difficult bar to reach. SO they deserve a really big celebration for their hard work, they deserve to get public recognition."

After the ceremony, Gloria Marquez read her certificate out loud with great pride:

"This certificate of reclassification is awarded to Gloria Marquez for understanding that the English language is a thing of beauty, and for having learned and mastered proficiency in English."

Mike Rust sees the focus on reclassification as just one part of the work to be done at Holland. Putting it into context, he explained in an interview:

"Creating an affirming learning environment for our students has been a goal throughout PROMISE, and to me that is about how extremely important it is that students feel they have a place, a genuine place, and a reason to be in school. They need to understand goals and their own purposes for being there. And then, they have to have everything lined up letting them know that we're there to support them in reaching their goals. But if they don't have that sense of purpose, it gets harder and harder for them to be engaged. By going directly to our students

with the information they need in order to set their goals, by going directly to our students and putting the power in their hands to decide to "go for it", we're giving them the power to set their own purposes and goals."

All of this has paid off. The reclassification rate has increased tremendously. From less than a quarter of their students being reclassified to over a half. Holland's reclassification rate is now higher than the state overall. The school reclassified the largest number of English Learners in the entire district.

CORE PRINCIPLE #2: EMPOWERING PEDAGOGY

Empowering pedagogy:
Use culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy that maximizes learning,
actively accesses student voice, and provides opportunities for leadership.

Empowering Pedagogy Defined:

All students learn through making connections between what they already know and the new experiences, perspectives and information they encounter. Making connections to students' lives is a major component of effective instruction – and it requires culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. Pedagogy that encourages and supports students to bring their experiences, their culture, their heritage and language into the classroom maximizes learning by allowing students to build upon the full foundation of their prior knowledge. Teachers need skills for how to build upon the familiar, scaffold the unfamiliar through explicit activities, and elicit and respond to what students have to say. Where students and teachers are not from the same cultural background, it becomes particularly important that a school find ways to elicit and listen to student and parent voice as a source of information and the foundation for building a relationship between school and home – to literally give them a voice.

Empowering pedagogy is participatory by design. It brings into the classroom the topics that matter to students, and uses strategies that engage students in critical thinking, asking questions and making meaningful choices. And, it goes beyond the classroom. Empowering pedagogy in a school incorporates explicit leadership development components that help young people develop as responsible members, cultural brokers and bridges of their communities.

Empowering Pedagogy: The Work of the PROMISE Pilot Sites

Four schools selected Empowering Pedagogy as an initial focus of their PROMISE work. Eleven schools eventually incorporated a focus on this principle into their PROMISE work. It was among the most difficult of the core principles for participants to define and create their own meaning. Yet issues of engagement and motivation repeatedly arose for the secondary schools in PROMISE, leading them to incorporate empowering pedagogy strategies into their work on instruction and curriculum. The need for more interactive and participatory instruction in elementary schools became more and more evident to teachers as they recognized the inadequate attention to oral language development. The need for more cooperative learning strategies and ways to engage students in talking about what they were learning, feeling, thinking led to empowering pedagogy.

Empowering Pedagogy: Case Study Exemplars

Two examples of the work of the PROMISE schools are provided here, illustrating the richness and reach of the work on empowering pedagogy: Bridging Multiple Worlds across the Escondido high schools, and the Mar Vista Elementary School focus on bilingual futures and careers.

- *Bridging Multiple Worlds at the Escondido High Schools in Escondido*

In the Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD), near the United States-Mexican border, 43% of the students speak a language other than English at home – almost all of these, Spanish. Over the past decade, Escondido has seen a rapid change in demographics, with increasing Hispanic population, more and more of them English Learners. As part of the district's dedication to providing schooling that serves all of their students, two of the comprehensive high schools joined PROMISE. Proud of the solid work they had already accomplished to serve English Learners, they sought to share their effective practices with other schools, and hoped to learn about new research-based practices.

Escondido High School (EHS) is a large comprehensive high school, serving 2,750 students, half of them Hispanic and one-fifth English Learners. A strong focus on academic mastery, and a tradition of professional dedication to best practices resulted in solid pay-off evidenced by meeting their API growth target for years in a row, and increasing the number of students taking and passing AP tests. And yet, the school was experiencing an increasing achievement gap between the growing Latino population at the school and the White population. Their involvement in PROMISE occurred on the heels of a WASC Review which had identified the need to address and strengthen the education of their language-minority students. EHS set specific goals: student demographics need to be represented in all classes, including AP and elective courses; student demographics need to be represented in all clubs and extracurricular activities; and EHS would need to increase student motivation and address the "apathy" of underachieving Hispanic students.

In Orange Glen High School (OGHS), the second of the EUHSD PROMISE schools, two-thirds of the 2,380 students are Hispanic and 61% have a home language other than English. The OGHS team entered into PROMISE concerned about the underachievement and disengagement from school among the Latino students, and sought in PROMISE new ideas for how to motivate and connect their students to education. Their WASC review led to a determination that they needed to work towards a school wide culture of care, respect and concern for all students.

Upon entering PROMISE, both high schools selected Affirming/Enriched Learning Environments and Challenging and Relevant Curriculum as their initial PROMISE core principles. And for both schools, these two principles were always deeply interrelated. In the initial PROMISE Plan, the following goals were listed: improve campus climate, make our English Learner and Hispanic students feel welcome, create a college-going climate, and institute a culturally relevant curriculum that reflects who the students are.

In the first six months of PROMISE, OGHS and EHS sent their PROMISE Lead Teams to the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series offered through the San Diego County Office of Education. There, the teams delved into their concerns about the tensions on campus between groups, the ways in which the Latino students seemed disinvested in their education and disconnected to the school, the segregation on campus, and discrimination. And, through the series, they learned about the Bridging Multiple Worlds program developed by California Tomorrow and piloted in a high school in Oakland.

Bridging Multiple Worlds grew out of a set of questions that resonated with the Escondido teams: What would a school look like where young people's cultures were honored and acknowledged as an asset? How can schools foster healthy cultural and linguistic identities for young people? How can a school bring together students across differences in race, language and culture? Bridging Multiple Worlds centers around a set of core competencies that young people need for healthy development in a diverse society. These competencies include:

* *Strong cultural identity*
Young people need knowledge, pride and self esteem about who they are and where they come from, hand-in-hand with the ability to reject racist and prejudicial messages from mainstream society about their ethnicities and cultures and those of others.

* *Leadership skills to act for change*
Young people need the tools, knowledge, and confidence to speak out and intervene against acts of injustice aimed at themselves or others. With such leadership skills and motivation, they can develop into positive forces for their families, communities, and society, working with others to create change.

* *Critical thinking skills*
Youth must develop critical thinking perspectives and analysis for looking at issues facing their communities and the world. In an interconnected global society, they need to be able to critique inequalities and understand the dynamics of power and privilege in relation to their own lives. Critical thinking gives young people an awareness of multiple perspectives and helps them analyze divergent views in current and historical events. It helps them recognize and name prejudice and stereotypes in their own behavior and in the behavior of others. Critical thinking allows youth to become fully engaged citizens in society.

* *Cross-cultural skills*
Young people need to understand the concept of culture, and to be sensitive and adaptive to interacting with people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds than their own. This involves learning how people's perspectives and ways (including their own) are shaped by their lived experiences, as well as the social, political, and economic contexts in which they live. As young people develop awareness of and respect for their own identity group and others, the next step is better communication. In neighborhoods struggling with tense intergroup relations, cross-cultural skills are fundamental and can help young people mediate conflicts when they arise.

* *Bilingual skills*
For youth whose families speak a language other than English, bilingual skills are a core way to honor who they are. Being bilingual enables them to communicate with and participate fully in their own families and communities, as well as in the mainstream dominant society. Monolingual English-speaking youth, too, must be supported to learn other languages. For all young people, mastery of two or more languages is not only in high demand throughout the labor market, it is one of the most crucial leadership tools for working to unite people to create positive change in the world.

*   *Knowledge of history and social justice movements*

Young people need truth and inspiration about the long history of people and movements that have brought communities together across differences. Immigrants and young people of color especially need to know about the leaders from their own communities who have stood up against injustices through the generations. Learning about global dynamics, key events and specific examples of leadership and activism through history can inspire youth about their own potential to make change in their communities and the world.

*   *Understanding of one's community*

Young people need to know how and why their communities have evolved over time. Over the past decades, many neighborhoods have undergone demographic and economic changes that impact human relationships as well as cultural and political dynamics. It is important that young people not only be aware of these changes, but understand their implications for their daily lives. Learning about the history and experiences of the different cultural groups among their neighbors can help contextualize the changes youth see taking place in their communities.

Something "clicked" for the Escondido teams. Bridging Multiple Worlds spoke to their desire for a positive, asset-based frame, and a vision that embraced both the need for affirming environments and challenging/relevant curriculum. For the PROMISE schools that had committed to working on affirming environments and on challenging and relevant curriculum, Bridging Multiple Worlds seemed a perfect fit.

Shane Morey, a social studies teacher on the PROMISE Lead Team at Escondido High School, remembers thinking,

> *"This could be something that might increase the unity among students, and give them a way to take leadership and be involved in making the campus a better place for them to go to school."*
> *He said "It wasn't just about students acting differently, it was about education really playing a role in changing the segregation and discrimination we see on campus – we can teach students to understand those dynamics, we can help them learn about each other and their own cultures."*

Morey was inspired to play a role in bringing Bridging Multiple Worlds to his campus, and infusing it into the curriculum. Others on the team saw ways to connect it to student leadership. Working with the Bridging Multiple Worlds team from California Tomorrow (a non-profit organization partnering in PROMISE), Escondido's Bridging Multiple Worlds efforts developed into the following three components:

The Bridging Multiple Worlds (BMW) After School Leadership Club and Retreats

Seeking a way to build student leadership across the groups on campus, the Bridging Multiple Worlds model established a Club and a five-day leadership series of retreats. It began with staff nominating and recruiting students to participate. Their goal was to recruit students from across the different groups on campus. The students were each interviewed by the teachers, and then invited to be

part of the BMW Leadership group. A five-day series was held, off-campus, run by two California Tomorrow staff members who had designed and piloted the original BMW curriculum. The "curriculum" for the leadership retreat covered issues of race and racism, ethnicity and identity, cultural attitudes and values, gender, community social justice concerns. All of it focused on helping students deepen their own sense of identity, make connections across groups, and find ways to be more inclusive and involved in making a positive climate on campus.

Teacher, Andrea Espinose, describes the first day of the BMW Student Leadership retreat:

"It was amazing to see the power of students being able to tell their stories and hear each others voices. At the beginning of the day, the students were still in their groups, still in their cliques, still hanging out with people "like" them. But by midday, already there were strong bonds and a sense of commonalities. It happened through the sharing of their stories. It started off with 32 individual students, and by the end of the day, there was a connected group! I think they saw the human side of each other."

In between the five days of the leadership series, the group met biweekly to stay connected and to continue to talk about the issues raised in the retreats. There, they worked on projects to bring more awareness and connection across the campus. They continued to explore the concepts of identity building, social justice issues, and cross-cultural awareness.

Erick Carreon, a student who participated in the Leadership series, remembers when they were asked to draw a "social map" of the school.

"We'd never talked about this before, people just never SAID what they were seeing. But then when we started to work on the map we realized, everybody KNOWS where their place is on campus – and we realized we actually knew the names of those places: Asian Tree, Mexican Table, Black Alley. We knew where each group's place is. Once we drew it on a map, once we actually said it to out loud to each other, we realized, whoa, this is a segregated school and there's silence about it."

Bridget Santos, another of the students who participated in the retreat, echoes Erick's experience.

"I'd never looked at our school from that perspective before. But it was so clear when we sat down to draw it. We didn't even have to think about it very hard. We all knew it, but had never said it. It was really a big deal to see it there on paper. That's when it hit us, maybe if we interacted more on campus, the tensions would subside."

And so, the BMW Leadership group decided to sit together at lunch one day on campus. To show it could be done. And then they started seeing more possibilities." Lucy Cardona, another participant in the leadership group, spoke about this effort:

"A lot of those issues are scary. It's scary that they exist. It's scary to talk about them. BMW helped us talk about it. It helped us be comfortable talking about it to each other – and approaching other people with it as well."

The BMW Club and Student Leadership component validated for the PROMISE Lead Teams and the school staff how interested students become, and how engaged they are when they have opportunities to focus on real issues that are so core to their lives.

The Bridging Multiple Worlds (BMW) Sociology Course

Seeking ways to infuse BMW into the curriculum, Shane Morey realized there was an existing sociology course, but that it lacked a multicultural component – it lacked exactly the kind of focus that BMW offered.

"A lot of people when they hear about a course like BMW assume it's a distraction of some kind, not really academic. But the course is infused with sociology theory – why is there intolerance in society, what is conflict theory. It is an academically university approved class, and students receive A-G credit for it. And they should. Our society is made up of different cultures, the world our students live in is multicultural – how could we offer a sociology course and NOT deal with those dynamics?"

And so, Morey, working with the PROMISE Lead Team and other teachers, approached the district about redesigning the sociology curriculum. The course, piloted by Morey at Escondido High School, is now being taught at the other high schools in the district.

The year-long sociology course immerses students in academic study, dialogue, reflection and experiences core to the Bridging Multiple Worlds leadership competencies. The curriculum focuses on exploring social dynamics and sociological theories around discrimination and exclusion, reflecting on personal cultural identity and developing awareness of others' cultures and languages; learning about historical and contemporary examples of activism and movements for cultural rights, civil rights and social justice not taught in most history or social studies courses; developing cross-cultural skills and applying those skills in the school and community; and developing a critical lens to examine the conditions in the students' community and society as a whole along with strategies to create change.

A Bridging Multiple Worlds (BMW) Success Skills Curriculum

All 9th grade students in the Escondido high schools attend a 40-minute Success Skills class. They learn note-taking, and how to be successful in high school. And now, BMW activities are also woven into that curriculum – focusing on culture, language, family history, identity, stereotypes and demographics. Activities in the curriculum include defining what culture and identity are comprised of, exploring and understanding the demographics of Escondido, and understanding the harms of using stereotypes. One activity, for example is that each student creates a piece of writing and a poster depicting their individual background. These are shared with the entire class. One of the explicit aims

is to provide students with a common vocabulary to use to articulate dynamics around identity and diversity in their lives and on campus. A teacher of one of these classes explained:

> *"It makes it possible for them to name it, to talk about it… and once you can talk about, things start to change."*

As one of the high school principals said:

> *"We put cultural literacy competencies right up front, along with the other skills you need to be successful in this diverse high school and in our society. As the demographics have changed in our school, there's been a strained atmosphere, tensions between groups. Bridging Multiple Worlds provides an opportunity to bridge the groups and communities on a level that we've never done before."*

At the reflection retreat at the end of the second year of the pilot, PROMISE Lead Teams reflected on the work they had done on Bridging Multiple Worlds. Some of the comments offer a glimpse of the power they witnessed in the approach:

> *"All together, Bridging Multiple Worlds is a way of taking the different worlds we have on our campus and establishing connections, commonalities, understanding."*

> *"It's not about forcing kids to mix, but helping them think critically and analyze why they are separate, and helping them to appreciate what each other brings to the school campus".*

> *"Students take what they learn from the sociology course, from the leadership retreats and club and go forth to their own friends and social groups – person to person – and raise awareness about these issues throughout the campus".*

> *"Students really are more involved with other across groups now. Clubs are doing things together – so there is a kind of formal aspect of this. And mostly, you really see and feel that more students feel they belong, that they have a place on this campus."*

> *"It's so amazing. We see different groups emerging now. There is a lot more mixing. A lot more students speaking out when they see discrimination. Students have become a force on campus to bring students together, lessen tensions. And I think students feel more a part of the school. It's not that all the problems have been solved, but it has changed who is included on campus."*

At the three-year WASC visitation and review occurring in the last semester of the PROMISE pilot at one of the high school, students in the Bridging Multiple Worlds activities talked about the positive changes in the school. The Principal recalled:

> *"Students expressed that for the first time they feel heard on campus. They talked about feeling connected to campus, and a greater ability to relate to different groups of students. It wasn't*

just the BMW kids who said that, it was ALL of the students interviewed for WASC who talked about this shift. And it was the BMW work that brought all that to our campus"

Teacher Shane Morey, after several years of implementing Bridging Multiple Worlds at his school, reflected that the impact goes beyond shifting the school climate.

"It's empowering to me as a teacher to deliver knowledge that students actually take out into their lives, take onto campus to increase social justice here, in their own community. I see them. They hear comments in the hallway that are racial put-downs or stereotypes, and they stop and talk to other students about it. They ACT on what they have learned. And I see this as a personal long-term legacy in a way. When our students graduate and go into the world, they are going out as people who will act on behalf of social justice. We are developing a more educated population that will push for social justice."

A vivid example of this occurred on the last day of school. One of the BMW Leadership students, Lucy Cardona, had been selected as the graduation speaker. Her speech was prepared and had been handed in for approval. Lucy was practicing delivering it when she looked outside the window. As she recounts it,

"I saw a group of African Americans and a group of Latinos running towards each other, and a huge fight broke out. It was scary and I was crying. Why do groups want to hurt each other just because of skin color! One kid was really badly hurt, bleeding profusely. There were cops everywhere. And all I could think, over and over again, was WHY does this happen? And all of the work we had done in Bridging Multiple Worlds came flooding into my mind. I thought that if everyone had been part of Bridging Multiple Worlds, they wouldn't let this happen. And I knew I needed to do something. That I needed to take some action and some leadership. So I threw away the graduation speech I had prepared and spent all night working on a new one. It was all about racism, and the harms of racism, and the need for us to see through skin color to who we are as humans. I was really nervous about giving the speech. In our community, people don't talk about these things. I couldn't believe I was actually going to get up there and say it all. But I did. And the whole room was really quiet when I was speaking. Then a huge applause! Afterwards, a lot of people came up to me – students, parents, teachers, thanking me for talking about it.   You know, we all need to find ways to talk about these things. And that's what BMW did for me. I was able to articulate the concepts, and I had the courage to get up and say it. That's why BMW is such a really good foundation for life."

- **A focus on bilingual futures and careers at Mar Vista Elementary School in Ocean View.**

Mar Vista Elementary School entered into PROMISE as a school with a well established bilingual program, a staff that reflected the cultural and linguistic composition of the community, supportive of the culture and languages of the students, and strongly valuing bilingualism. The district, Ocean View, was motivated to join PROMISE in large part because they would be able to be among a

community of educators working to create stronger and stronger bilingual programs. Their Director of Federal and State Programs said at the very first PROMISE Convocation,

> *"We believe in multiculturalism and bilieracy and the desire to create "world citizens." PROMISE seemed like a breath of fresh air to us."*

While they educators at Mar Vista believed in bilingualism, their early-exit bilingual program is a model that by design does not actually support biliteracy. Mar Vista chose to work on the core principles of Challenging Curriculum, and High Quality Professional Development. Through their PROMISE Plan, the school invested heavily in school wide implementation of GLAD strategies, and in creating a stronger and more coherent program design that might more powerfully result in biliteracy. Even with that intense work and focus on program design and instruction, and even given their climate supportive of bilingualism, Mar Vista found there was work to be done with their students around attitudes towards education and towards bilingualism.

By the end of the first year, the PROMISE Lead Team expressed their concerns about fourth and fifth graders who were becoming more and more disconnected from school, uninspired academically and with low expectations for themselves academically, with narrow visions of what their options for the future might be, and whose attitudes were becoming more negative about their home language, Spanish.

 In the End of Year One revision of their PROMISE Plan, Mar Vista articulated (among other things) a new, additional goal: *"To Increase student's positive attitudes and feeling about their culture, heritage and language – and the culture and language of others."*

The PROMISE Lead Team wanted to open children's eyes to options for their futures, to help them see the connection between developing biliteracy and what those futures might hold. Their Plan for year two called for a survey of students about their attitudes towards bilingualism, an exploration of ways to offer Spanish to non-Spanish speakers, and several strategies to engage their students in new ways in pursuit of academics and bilingualism. One of these strategies was the Bilingual Career Fair.

The Bilingual Career Fairs was instituted as an annual occurrence in the school.

> *"We wanted our students to be proud of being bilingual and see that biliteracy and education are ways to serve their community. We wanted to expand their limited view of possibility and realize that being biliterate would make them twice as effective and helpful to their community."*

Teachers put their heads together to identify people they knew in the local community who were doing inspiring work, in careers that serve the community, and for whom biliteracy was a key part of being able to do that work. They identified an engineer, an artist, a lawyer, a firefighter, a doctor, a court-interpreter. They approached the police officer who had won the "Latino Officer of the Year" Award in the city. The response was wonderful, and the first Bilingual Career Fair was set to go.

Each speaker was given sample questions to address, questions that would make the presentation appropriate for 9 and ten year olds. But the children added their own:

How did you end up in this job?
When you were our age, did you know this was what you wanted to do?
What inspired you?
What do you DO?
What did you have to do to become this?
How do you use bilingualism in your work?
Do you like doing this job?
How much do you get paid?
How long did you have to go to school?

Fourth and Fifth graders were put into small groups and handed Passports. For the afternoon, they would be circulating from one room to another. In each room was a different biliterate professional/worker. Their Passports were vehicles for taking notes about what they were hearing, for writing down questions. One page per career. PROMISE Facilitator, Claudia Caudill, explained:

"We thought Passports set a nice tone.   This activity was about widening their sense of possibilities in the world. It was about helping students learn about paths and journeys they could take in their own lives."

Each speaker began with a presentation about their work and their lives. They brought props and regalia related to the work they do every day. The doctor brought a mask that is used for administering anesthesia. The artist was able to show them her work. The artist spoke to them about how inspired she had been by Frida Kahlo, and talked about Kahlo's life.

A businesswoman talked about coming to the United States as a child and an English Learner, and how her parents had really encouraged her to hold onto her home language and become biliterate. Now she owns her own business – a clothing and jewelry line. She spoke about how her bilingual skills make it possible for her to target clientele who are English speaking and clientele who are Spanish speaking. It has strengthened her business to have both languages. Because of her background as an immigrant child and English Learner, her presentation was particular powerful to many children. One of them declared with wonder:

"She was like me when she was a kid! And look at what she has become!"

The format of the presentations were not just one-way. Students asked questions, and students also told their own stories. The doctor heard about the experiences children had had with hospitals. As the students listened to the visitors and were invited to talk about their own experiences as well, students were making meaning. They were making connections.

The PROMISE Lead Team made sure that each time, there were speakers included who grew up speaking only English, and who learned Spanish later in their lives because they saw its value in being able to serve communities and reach more people.

At the end of the day of the Bilingual Careers Fair, students returned to their own classroom for a reflection about what they had learned. Some teachers extended the unit – having students investigate more about the bilingual careers that interest them, having the class write thank you letters expressing what they gained from the presentations and what excited them most.

Some might think that taking time to focus on careers for elementary school students is a luxury that a school in Program Improvement shouldn't do. The teachers at Mar Vista disagree. The staff is universally supportive about taking time for the Bilingual Career Fair – even those who have been the voice for not disrupting academic time in school. As one teacher explained:

"For students to access academics, they need to know what they are studying for."

The PROMISE Facilitator expressed it this way:

"Career choice is absolutely relevant to our students. Because imagining what they might become, dreaming about who they might be, seeing possibilities for their futures – all that results in school making sense to them in a new way. It sparks their interest in school. And, it reinforces why maintaining their home language, and why becoming literate in their home language as well as English should be such a priority. If they don't build the biliteracy at this point in their development, they miss an enormous opportunity. And it helps them set goals, to know there is more out there in the world that they may want to accomplish, to see beyond what they think is possible in their community now."

In many ways, the Bilingual Career Fair is a fairly simple thing to institute in a school. It takes scheduling, it takes having staff interested enough to be willing to call people they know in the community to invite them to visit, it takes making it a priority and scheduling it. Beyond that, as one teacher on the PROMISE Lead Team expressed:

"The Bilingual Career Fair really has a momentum of it's own now. It's easy, and it's powerful, and it's really made a different for our upper grade kids in how they see their own futures, how they think about their own language, and how relevant they see schooling."

CORE PRINCIPLE #3:   CHALLENGING AND RELEVANT CURRICULUM

Challenging and Relevant Curriculum:
Engage English Learners in well-articulated and age-appropriate curriculum that
purposely builds bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism. This curriculum
is cognitively complex, coherent, relevant and challenging.

Challenging and Relevant Curriculum Defined

Too often, English Learners have been instructed in programs designed as compensatory and that in reality have become a low academic, basic skills curriculum. Bounced from program to program each year, often receiving services through pull-outs (or no services), English Learners experience a fragmented and inconsistent schooling. For academic success, they need a coherent and well-articulated program with consistency in approach across the school-day and from year to year in both their primary language and in English. All students need access to the full core curriculum that is challenging and high level, with the support needed to master grade-level standards and beyond. They also need to acquire the knowledge and skills to live in and take responsibility for our complex 21st century global world. Bilingualism and cross-cultural competencies are now essential. The added bonus is that the mastery of two or more languages has cognitive advantages – increasing mental flexibility, problem-solving skills, divergent thinking capacity and strengthening mastery of literacy.

Challenging and Relevant Curriculum: The Work of the PROMISE Pilot Sites

The PROMISE pilot schools approached the work of creating a more challenging and relevant curriculum both through enhancing the rigor of the curriculum, and by ensuring students have access to the supports that would enable them to succeed in such curriculum. Almost all schools worked on strengthening their English Language Development (ELD) programs – leveling the instruction by fluency level, aligning instruction to the state ELD Standards, placing students more intentionally into appropriate ELD groups and courses, and monitoring their progress. Similarly, the secondary schools in PROMISE sought to increase offerings of sheltered courses to make grade-level standards more accessible, and to provide additional supports (e.g., tutoring, homework help) for students.

Challenging and Relevant Curriculum: Case Study Exemplars

The following two examples describe: Saturday Scholars at Orange Glen High School in Escondido, and the institution of Spanish for Native Speakers curriculum across the PROMISE network of secondary schools.

- **Saturday Scholars at Orange Glen High School in Escondido**

On any given Saturday morning at Orange Glen High School (OGHS) in Escondido, CA, hundreds of students show up to participate in Saturday Scholars. The design is simple: teachers open

their classrooms and invite any students who want to come to spend an hour or two or three or four doing their homework, and getting help as they need it – from their teachers, from other students. Unlike many Saturday Schools that are mandatory and punitive for students who are truant or failing classes, Saturday Scholars at OGHS is a place to come and get help.

Two years ago, as part of the PROMISE effort at OGHS, the school had been working to make sure that students were being taught grade-level standards. As they looked closer at the master schedule, it was apparent that there were not enough courses being offered in rigorous, college preparatory classes that were designed to meet the needs of English Learners. English Learners could take any of the A-G courses, but without the supports and scaffolds in those classes, many struggled and failed. The administration attacked this challenge from two directions.

First, the school created more SDAIE A-G content classes. In a comprehensive high school, this is not an easy thing to do. Designing any master schedule is complex and a matter of negotiation. There are not enough staff or spaces in a particular period for all courses that should be offered. What teachers are prepared to teach or want to teach, may or may not match the needs. Looking at the situation, school leaders agreed: what they've always done wasn't enough anymore. Orange Glen administrators approached this first with a dialogue with staff about what OGHS students most need. The increasingly high number of ELs in the school, and evidence of increasing academic struggles experienced by ELs, put English Learners at the top of the list. As the faculty talked, teachers began to share how difficult they found it to teach mainstream classes when English Learners don't have the level of academic English needed to participate. From both the teacher perspective and the learner perspective, the need for SDAIE courses was clear.

Higher level courses were needed – Geometry, English 12, Chemistry – courses that were not available previously for English Learners. And, while some A-G courses existed for English Learners, there weren't enough sections offered to meet the need. In the course of one year, the school added a dramatic increase in SDAIE courses. This required a commitment to being sure students had the supports they would need to succeed in the courses. Administrators then sat with department chairs to figure out who would teach the classes, and how it could be done. Teachers would need the strategies, and students would need additional help. Thus was born Saturday Scholars.

Four hours every Saturday, students have the opportunity to come to school and get help in a safe environment, staffed by teachers in the curriculum areas students are studying, with other students who are also wanting a good place to study and a supportive environment. Students can work on their own, asking questions when need be – or they can work in small groups getting help from peers.

It started slowly at first, but one year later, hundreds of students show up each week. Students are doing better in their classes, and they like having a place to go on Saturday mornings to be with other students. The district recoups some Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funds. Teachers find they can do more in a class period because more students are prepared. And, teachers are developing stronger relationships with their students because they see them in an additional context that is somewhat more informal and less pressured. Everyone describes it as a win-win situation.

Teachers get an hourly pay for participating, and this is a school of teachers who are willing to do whatever is needed. The fact that students are there because they want to be, and that they are responding to a need generated from the students, is a big motivating factor for the teachers. Anne Ukrainetz, an English teacher, described it as a snowball gathering momentum:

> *"At first just a few teachers did it. But when you see your students showing up on a Saturday when they don't have to be there, and coming because they really want to learn the material and do the work, it's so motivating! At break time, they go out and hang with friends, and when break is over, they come back in voluntarily. This is what school should be like! An academic atmosphere, with the computers and textbooks and reference materials, and teachers available to help – where students can focus on what they feel they need to focus on. I do it regularly."*

Although Saturday Scholars wasn't designed as a way to strengthen an affirming learning environment, it does just that. Students know their teachers are there to support them. And the teachers go out of their way to make the atmosphere welcoming and nurturing. Sometimes, on cold morning, Anne brings donuts and makes hot chocolate for the students.

For the students, Saturday Scholars has become a sixth day of school – albeit a different kind of schooling experience. Almost 25% of the students at Orange Glen come every week. Failure rates have declined in academic classes. Passage rates and course completion rates in A-G have increased dramatically.

- **Spanish for Native Speakers Across the PROMISE Network**

Over the course of the three years of the PROMISE pilot, a powerful and rigorous Spanish for Native Speakers course sequence in Escondido schools spread throughout the PROMISE Network, becoming a key component of the English Learner programs in secondary schools participating in the pilot. The Escondido Union High School District has offered Spanish for Native Speakers courses for decades. Ten years ago, a small group of young, passionate high school teachers came together to share a number of concerns about the program. There was an equity concern: students in Spanish for Native Speakers classes were not getting A-G credit while students in other Spanish courses were. There was a quality concern: the program had no set curriculum and wasn't articulated across levels, instruction and curriculum weren't standards based. Placement was haphazard. Jennifer Rasmussen, one of that group of teachers, remembered:

> *"We wanted challenging curriculum for our students, a rigorous one, that would help them reach the highest levels of proficiency in Spanish, and that would give them a pathway to college."*

The group set a goal to create a series of courses that would be a pathway to Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Language and AP Spanish Literature. They wrote new course descriptions, and then began to rewrite curriculum. The teachers agreed that any student studying his/her own language must follow the standards for Language Arts, and that the courses should also remain within the

framework for Foreign Languages. With both sets of standards in front of them, the teachers focused on writing, grammar, vocabulary and culture. As Foreign Language teachers, they were confident in their ability to infuse the Foreign Language standards into their curriculum. They sought assistance in working with the Language Arts Standards.

The district had already partnered with San Diego County Office of Education's WRITE Institute to strengthen the teaching of English writing, and, serendipitously, the WRITE Institute was just launching a groundbreaking Spanish curriculum (Aspire) aligned to the English Language Arts standards. The teachers incorporated Aspire, and built in Spanish literature that they felt was particularly relevant to the lives of their students. The students would read books and then discuss in Spanish the literary elements, breaking down terminology and paragraph structures that they would revisit in their English classes. Students would gain the analytical tools and academic concepts to enhance their speaking, reading and writing skills in English. Students would be granted UC/CSU Foreign Language credit for all Spanish for Spanish Speakers courses.

Once they had the curriculum and course descriptions, issues of placement arose, and outreach, and assessment, and then to the need for professional development for teachers. To build the program, the group would have to address misconceptions held by students, parents, teachers and administrators about the quality and benefits of the courses.

Together, the teachers developed a simple placement test, given in the spring before registration to assist in properly placing students in appropriate classes. They tested all students with Spanish as a home language, including entering 8th graders. In 2003, the test was given to all English Learner students. In 2005, it was extended to all incoming Spanish speaking freshmen and any new Spanish-speaking students entering the school. And the program began to grow. From three classes to nine sections, from one AP level course to 3 AP courses.

The teachers carefully monitored the impacts on students, including their success in English classes, and saw that their English Learners were indeed successful in other classes when their home language was being reinforced and developed. The concurrent curriculum with aligned standards in English classes and the Native Speakers classes was providing students with the opportunity to transfer skills from one language to the other. The data was brought to the attention of the administration and the district, and the Spanish for Spanish Speakers program was written into the English Learner Master Plan.

In a video describing the development of the program in Escondido, Donna Dutton, former EUHSD Director of Curriculum, explained:

> *"It accelerates their learning", it accelerates their ability to get on the highway to using and understanding the English language. They tackle advanced concepts in their native language and once they understand it, they bring that grasp to English classes. They build bridges and parallels between the languages."*

Over the course of five years, the advanced placement enrollment for English Learners and Latinos skyrocketed in the district.

Advanced Placement Course Enrollment

	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
All	1171	1641	2026	2232	2729
English Learners	13	22	35	33	95
White	751	987	1182	1277	1422
Latino	300	449	559	627	930

In 2006, the district was awarded the Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association for its Spanish for Native Speakers program. The award was in the category of exemplary programs for English Language Arts and Reading. Student quotes, gathered as part of the Golden Bell application, underscored the appropriateness of this:

> *"This is the first time I received 100% on an English paper. I took what I learned from my Spanish teacher to figure out how to organize my essay. And I got 100%!"*

> *"English class is hard for me. In Spanish, I can learn it in my own language so it makes sense. Then I do better in English class."*

Across the region, in Riverside County, another PROMISE pilot site, Sunnymead Middle School had selected the PROMISE core principles of "Empowering Pedagogy" and "Enriched and Affirming Learning Environments." Seeking to engage and connect their students more strongly to the school, to create an atmosphere that embraced the Spanish speaking, Latino students, as well as to strengthen academic achievement, the PROMISE Lead Team sought ideas from within the PROMISE collaborative. Attending the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series, the team learned about Escondido's Spanish for Native Speakers program. Their interest was piqued by the ways in which the program conveyed the value of Spanish, provided an opportunity for students to learn about their culture and heritage through a rigorous program, and engaged students in school. At the PROMISE mid-year symposium, the team sought out the Escondido teachers to learn more about the Spanish for Native Speakers program.

Over the course of that first year, Sunnymead Middle School sent a team to Escondido to learn more about the program, to see how placement was done, and to talk further with teachers about the use of the WRITE Institute's Aspire units for the Spanish for Native Speakers courses. They were able to participate in a placement process for hundreds of students. For the Sunnymead teachers, the connection was clearly made between the core principles of empowering pedagogy, enriched and affirming learning environments, and a challenging and relevant curriculum. The PROMISE Team grabbed the idea and ran with it.

Lilia Villas, Principal, agreed, feeling it would give English Learners and Latinos a greater pride in their home language. The administration made the program a priority, hiring a teacher to provide the classes.

> *"I knew we would need a passionate teacher who understands our students, who has the initiative to put a new set of courses in place and would seek continuous improvement as we implemented it."*

Proudly, the Sunnymead PROMISE Lead Team, looking back on the three years of PROMISE, cited the creation of their Spanish for Native Speakers program as one of the most powerful changes they had implemented in the school in terms of impacts on EL students.

CORE PRINCIPLE #4: HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

High Quality Instructional Resources:
Provide and utilize high quality standards-aligned instructional resources that provide equitable access to core curriculum and academic language in the classroom, school and community.

High Quality Instructional Resources Defined:

In partnership with a well-trained teacher, high quality appropriate standards- aligned instructional resources are a key component for assuring English Learners access to the core curriculum. Merely providing the same texts and materials for English Learners as for English fluent students does not provide equal access. For English Learners, the text must not only be standards aligned, texts in English need to be designed with the graphics, linguistic accessibility and formats to enable students to engage with text in a language they have not yet mastered. Such materials need to be geared towards the English language proficiency level of students in order to be accessible. In addition, primary language resource materials, academic texts and other instructional resources are needed for students studying academic content and developing literacy to advanced level in that language. The quality and scope of available materials in English and primary language is critical.

Mastering technology as a tool for learning, expression and communication has become a core competency for the 21st century for all students. Generally, middle-income students and native English speakers have access to a wider range of technology and print resources outside of school. English Language Learners depend, therefore, upon the school as a source of access. In effective schools, teachers and students are able to use technological resources as an integral part of the instructional program, and is used to engage students in interactive and generative learning.

High Quality Instructional Resources: The Work of the PROMISE Pilot Schools

Only one of the PROMISE sites selected "High Quality Instructional Resources" as a core principle in the first year of the pilot. For many of the others, however, the focus on high quality professional development engaged them in approaches to instruction that included new and different uses of materials. For example, the WRITE Institute was used widely in the secondary schools of the pilot, for English Language arts, English Language Development and Spanish for Native Speakers. The WRITE units are based upon high quality literature selections, thus bringing new literature into the classrooms. Similarly, many elementary and preschool teachers were engaged in professional development and implementation of Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) and Preschool GLAD strategies. A key component of GLAD is the use of teacher-created books and materials related to the themes being studied.

In addition, the elementary schools in PROMISE were involved in professional development, implementation and use of state adopted Language Arts materials. This work was happening to a large extent parallel to the PROMISE work, but not as a focus of the PROMISE Plans.

The most extensive focus within PROMISE on high quality instructional materials occurred in two areas where there has been minimal guidance, direction or access to materials in the field. The PROMISE preschool sites developed a strong professional learning community seeking to understand, define and implement age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum and approaches that would support powerful bilingual and Spanish academic language skills. To a large extent, their work together centered around exploring choices and uses of text, curriculum and materials.

The secondary schools were similarly engaged in trying to determine appropriate curriculum to use with Long Term English Learners whose language needs and motivational/engagement issues were significantly distinct from newcomers and regularly developing English Learners. In the creation of specially designed English Language Development courses for Long Term English Learners (called English for Academic Purposes), secondary school teams explored the use of writing focused curriculum, of relevant literature, and newly available language arts materials designed for advanced English Learners.

While technological resources are an important part of the High Quality Instructional Resources principle, only one school focused significantly upon technology as an instructional tool.

High Quality Instructional Resources: Case Study Exemplars

The following examples are provided of PROMISE pilot schools' work on instructional resources: the story of Gates Elementary School in Saddleback Valley use of technology to enhance English Learner education, and the PROMISE Preschool Network's search for appropriate Spanish curriculum.

- *Technology and a 21st Century Education at Gates Elementary School in Saddleback Valley*

Ralph Gates Elementary School in Saddleback Valley Unified School District (Orange County) selected to focus in PROMISE on the core principles: Parent and Community Engagement, and High Quality Professional Development for teachers. Interestingly, the presence in the school of one teacher who had established a television program (KGATES), and the individual passions of other teachers brought to the PROMISE work the additional overlay of technology. As a result, technology emerged as a tool for transforming classroom instruction of English Learners, as a means of engaging parents in new ways, and as a force for developing a stronger sense of community across the school.

The impact on classroom instruction is illustrated in the fourth grade classroom of Deborah Lawson. During the years of the PROMISE pilot, Lawson's classroom was transformed by the arrival of an LCD projector installed in the ceiling of her classroom, the installation of a white board (SMART Board), the purchase of a document camera, ten computers and a flip video camera. Like many teachers receiving new technology, Lawson had no official training in the use of the equipment. Yet she was excited about getting started. Her students helped with the uncrating of the equipment, and worked with her to figure out the features and how the equipment might be used in instruction.

Ms. Lawson talked about the changes in instruction and in her students' engagement in their learning. The docucam, she discovered, has multi-uses. Students can watch the teacher work her way through a math problem and can see the solution evolve. Students are able to come in front of the group and show the whole class their approaches to math problems. The zoom feature helps make science more immediate. If they are studying rocks, the teacher can place a rock on the docucam and zoom in on specific details for the whole class to see. The things that are being studied becomes, Lawson explained, *larger than life for them."*   When students bring things to class to share, or have class projects to present, the technology gives them a way to use visuals more powerfully, which for English Learners is an important support for the frightening task of standing in front of a room of one's peers and trying to explain something in a language that is only partially mastered.

All teachers at Gates were trained in GLAD strategies as a result of their participation in PROMISE, with monetary support from their PROMISE partner, the Orange County Office of Education. The interactive White Board added new dimensions to Lawson's use of Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies. No longer dependent just on butcher paper, colored markers and recopying materials, she could use the White Board to highlight one feature or another in a drawing or text, and to develop pectorals (a GLAD strategy using drawings) in new ways.

Lawson taught her students to use Powerpoint for presentations to the class, and to use the internet for research purposes. They were introduced to Google Earth and Google Sky. From that point on, students regularly have used the computers to research topics for the class, and have added like the White Board and Google Earth/Google Sky to their repertoire. Ms. Lawson, reflecting on the impact on her students, said:

"The technology literally brings the universe into the classroom and brings history to light."

All of this comes together in student assignments. For example, when the class was studying the history of California, students were given the assignment to research a mission and make a class presentation. Students used Google Earth to locate their mission and them zoom in so they could show other students what it looks like now in comparison to the historic representations they found online and in reference books. The student excitement was palpable. Suddenly, the missions were not just something from history. Students realized that the missions actually exist and are part of the current world in which students now live.

When the school sponsored a Family Astronomy Night, telescopes were set up all throughout the parking lot aimed at specific planets and stars. Ms. Lawson's classroom was opened up so families could see the technology and software being used by the class. Students proudly showed their parents how to use Google Earth, and the families looked up their home villages thousands of miles away in other nations of the world – able to zoom in and see the houses, the streets, the markets.

As a result of this technology, teachers reported that students were much more engaged, participating more deeply, and more excited about learning. While this was true for most of their students, it was particularly true for English Learners. English Learners often don't feel able to

participate in a classroom, and are not comfortable speaking in front of a class until they develop confidence and skills in English. Technology changes these dynamics. The visual vibrancy that can be accessed through technology provides the visual cues and contexts for them to understand despite language barriers. The ability to develop a presentation that can illustrate and support what they are trying to say, strengthens their voice and expression and ability to communicate. Lawson expounded:

> *"Technology is so essential. The world is changing so fast. This is the 21st century. The world our students live in is a technology-thick world. They need to see it in their learning. Pencil and paper isn't sufficient anymore. Text alone isn't sufficient. They need to be able to use the tools available now in the world."*

Technology at Ralph Gates Elementary is not confined to classroom and instructional uses. Throughout the school, teachers have been given Flip Cameras to document the life of the school. A Resource Teacher was assigned to provide technical support to teachers on using the cameras and on simple editing. Field trips, Funny Hair Day, special science experiments, interviews with students on key topics – all became fodder for videotaping. And what was once an occasional television news program at the school, KGATES, has now become a weekly production drawing upon video footage taken throughout the school. The program gives all students a view of the life of the entire school. Younger children see what older children are doing. Fifth graders can see where the third grade went for a harvest field trip. Students eagerly look for footage of themselves on the weekly show and begin to absorb the notion that their lives are "newsworthy." Teachers create videos to show to parents - giving them a more immediate understanding of what goes on in the classroom. All of this creates a stronger sense of community across the school.

A member of the PROMISE Lead Team declared:

> *"All of this is not just about entertainment. Making technology part of the life of the school, and part of learning and communicating – al of that is what it means to have a relevant curriculum, and it's a key element in crafting a 21st century education for our students. Their whole lives outside of school are steeped in technology. What a mistake it would be to divorce "school learning" from what is clearly a new generation mode of communication, researching, learning and knowing."*

- ***The PROMISE Preschool Network:* A Search for Language Models and Curriculum**

The PROMISE Initiative was designed to pilot the PROMISE model in schools preschool through high school. Starting with the same vision, core principles and co-design process, schools were able to define how to adapt and implement in ways that were appropriate for the developmental needs of their students and the contexts of their communities. For the preschools, this journey led to the creation of a Promise Preschool Network, bringing together directors of preschool programs with researchers and PROMISE Working Group members in a search to define and support each other in implementing the PROMISE preschool.

The PROMISE pilot included two preschool sites, each of them a feeder to a PROMISE pilot elementary school. In addition, two PROMISE elementary school sites sought through their PROMISE work to strengthen the alignment and relationship between their programs and the preschools on their campuses. As a result, four preschools were engaged in the PROMISE preschool community of practice.

Although PROMISE sought to be a preschool through 12th grade approach, much of the thinking, the research base and the experience of those guiding PROMISE was grounded in K-12 pedagogy and the specific issues of the K-12 system. Early childhood education is a different system from K-12. The pre-service training and credentialing systems differ. The funding and governance structures differ. And, the pedagogy underlying each of the two systems are rooted in different philosophies and traditions. Far less research, curriculum or development of models for children whose home language is not English exist for early childhood education than for K-12. For all of these reasons, preschool educators and the preschool PROMISE sites were starting and operating from quite different places when the pilot began.

From the very first roll-out of the PROMISE vision and core principles, the preschool sites struggled with how to apply it in a preschool setting. The vision described student success as it would look at the end of a high school education, 13 or more years after the preschool experience. The core principles and the exemplars and descriptors used as tools to help PROMISE sites understand the principles, were firmly rooted in the K-12 system and developmental levels beyond the needs of young children. As it became evident that the PROMISE core principles and exemplars applied more readily to K-12 schools than to preschools, it became clear that an intentional preschool focus would be needed to help adapt PROMISE to the reality of preschool systems and early development. Thus was born, the Preschool Network.

The PROMISE Preschool Network was comprised of the preschool directors and teachers at PROMISE sites, and members of the Working Group with a particular interest in early childhood education. The group was convened at several points during the year, and got together as a group at the larger PROMISE convenings.

The work began with the PROMISE vision of student success:

The vision of PROMISE is to ensure that English Learners achieve and sustain high levels of proficiency, including literacy, in English and the primary language, high levels of academic achievement, including proficiency on state standards across the curriculum and maintenance of that achievement in English after participation in specialized English Learner programs and through grade 12; sophisticated sociocultural and multicultural competency; preparation for successful transition to higher education; successful preparation as a 21st century global citizen, and high levels of motivation, confidence and self-assurance.
(PROMISE Core Principles, 2005)

Redefining the vision in terms applicable to young children and that might serve as a goal for outcomes of preschool, the group came up with the following:

The PROMISE Preschool envisions a pathway to biliteracy for young dual language children who: develop their home language and culture as well as English, have a sense of pride and connection with their family, acquire a variety of social skills and competencies that enable them to interact with the children and adults in their broadening social world, experience a learning environment that promotes creativity and imagination, and experience art and music from their own and other cultures.

Carla Herrera, Working Group member from Los Angeles County Office of Education was a key part of these discussions. She points out how important it was for the group to apply an early education lens to even the words used to *describe* English Learners:

"It may seem like a little thing, but it was really important that we used the term "dual language learners" in the vision instead of English Learner. In K-12, children come to school with a home language already established, and they are in the process of learning a new language, English. So they are called English Learners, and the strategies for teaching them are based of that notion of transfer from one language to another. That's not really appropriate in preschool, because little children are still developing language, period! So we call them dual-language learners – learning both languages. We think of them as developing language from birth and still developing language in preschool. The PROMISE frame overall is about a focus on English Learners. In the preschool discussions, we say "dual language learners"."

Working with the eight core principles, the Preschool Network found it helpful to think about how children learn in the early years, and elected to reframe the core principles into four that were particularly relevant and applicable to preschool education:

- *Enriched and affirming learning environment:*
- *Curriculum, instruction and materials*
- *Family and community involvement*
- *Assessment*

As they grappled with operationalizing these principles, the group sought out research on early learning and language development. Calling this "conceptual and theoretical work as well as the nitty-gritty practical level", they both worked towards understanding the basis for what preschool education should be and finding examples of what it looks like in real-time, in a real preschool day.

A turning point, and fortunate coincidence, was that preschool educators were doing this work when they attended the mid-year symposium where Dr. Kathryn Lindholm-Leary presented data on dual language education. It was part of the overall PROMISE effort to focus more intentionally on the biliteracy aspects of the PROMISE vision. One member of the preschool network recalled:

"I was struck by the importance of actually developing and playing a role in maintaining family language. I think in preschool we're pretty good about validating and affirming the value of children's languages, but it hadn't really occurred to us that we needed to be intentionally developing the family language or kids would lose it. We were sitting at a table together, and I just remember feeling inspired, and how excited we all were. It was like a light bulb went on!"

Dr. Lindholm-Leary became part of the Preschool Network, creating a rare opportunity for the preschool educators to work in direct interaction with a top researcher in the field. Together, they read research and discussed implications for the PROMISE preschool. A key frame for this research scan was whether or not the research actually was based upon and relevant to the unique issues of children growing up in two language worlds. The first "tool" was born – a set of questions and formats for evaluating the relevance of research to young dual learners.

The more they read and discussed the research on early dual language learners, the more the educators were convinced that bilingualism enhances thinking and language, and that a young child's development in both languages is the foundation for the literacy skills children need for later academic success. Furthermore, here is greater danger of language replacement in early years if children are not supported in developing their home language.

HOW to develop both languages in the context of preschool curriculum and settings was the next challenge. Visits to programs throughout the region, and dialogue with Dr. Kathryn Lindholm-Leary a preeminent researcher in the field of dual language development led to defining a set of language models for preschool classrooms.

The 50:50 model: For classrooms with one major language group. Half of the day (50%) is in the home language, with half (50%) in English where the emphasis is on rich oral language development

The 90:10 model: For classrooms with one major language group. The vast majority of the day (90%) is in the home language, with approximately 10% in English where the emphasis is on rich oral language development

The Primary language enrichment model: for classrooms in which the dominant language is English, or classrooms with dual language children from many different language groups, or, classrooms where staff do not have sufficient proficiency in children's home languages to be able to teach bilingually. While instruction is almost entirely in English, there are many opportunities for children to listen to stories and songs, and to engage in culturally appropriate activities in their home language. Bilingualism is highly valued in these classrooms

As it turned out, the PROMISE sites had programs that represented all of these scenarios and models. The search began for finding high quality curriculum and materials designed for Spanish speaking children, and effective for dual language development. While the interest in early childhood education nationwide had spawned the development of a vast array of English preschool materials, much less was available in Spanish. And those materials tended to be either direct translations (and

sometimes quite poor translations) of English materials, or were prequels to kindergarten – that is, kindergarten texts and materials in somewhat more basic forms. The preschool education director in one of the PROMISE districts, who had been part of the Preschool Network, said:

"We were on a quest to find a meaningful Spanish curriculum that was equal to the English curriculum being used. There is an equity issue here. We talked to publishers, we had presentations. But literal translations aren't sufficient, and we had to figure out what to do."

A PROMISE preschool would require enriched, high quality curriculum in Spanish, as well as high quality enriched English language development curriculum materials. As a set of criteria developed describing the characteristics of such materials, it became clearer and clearer that none of the existing curriculum packages was sufficient. Preschools would need to select various pieces of materials to match the need. One published curriculum seemed to be a foundation to build upon, and two of the preschools purchased that curriculum. But it was clear to everyone that curriculum materials could be tools, they could not be the syllabus.

And so the search shifted to finding resources of various kinds in Spanish, and professional development aimed at dual language development. Professional development in Preschool GLAD strategies, brought to the Preschool Network through one of the collaborating county offices of education, opened the eyes of preschool teachers about what it could look like to build rich, oral academic language at a preschool level, and demonstrated the power of teacher developed materials with specific language objectives.

Shahida Chaudhry, a Teacher-Director from one of the preschools commented:

"I went through huge changes in my vision and my thinking in PROMISE. I was proud to be part of something so big. I work in a small preschool in a small district in a small town. To meet with people from across the state, and know people in preschools hundreds of miles away, and sit down with professors and researchers. My world just opened. But it was seeing the difference in the kids that had the biggest impact on me. When I got into doing Pre K GLAD, my children seemed so confident, and so verbal. When we started to use Spanish for such a big part of the day, I could see how my kids vocabulary just grew and how much more comfortable they felt and their parents felt when they came to school. They actually started to participate more."

Preschool Network meetings became opportunities to share resources and continue to develop sophistication about criteria for selecting good materials. But the shortcomings of the textbook and publishing world in an era of English-Only sentiment became increasingly clear. There hadn't been good packaged curriculum for Spanish, and it appeared there were also dwindling resources for children's books and other materials in Spanish. One person brought a Spanish book to share with the Network, one that they liked to use for rhythmic choral reading. The others got excited, only to discover that the publisher had discontinued the publication because "there is no longer a market for Spanish books."

Over the course of the three years of PROMISE, participants in the Preschool Network posed numerous questions about the process of dual language development in young children, about preschool models and curriculum that might support dual language development, and about curriculum and professional development resources that might be available. As they talked, interacting with researchers and each other, it occurred to them that the questions THEY had been asking were the questions that other preschool directors and educators must be asking as well. Thus, was born the notion of creating a web-based resource guide. The purpose would be to provide research-based evidence and best practices for preschools enrolling three through five-year old dual language children.

While the Preschool Resource Guide begin with the PROMISE preschool vision and the PROMISE preschool core-principles, the rest of the guide is organized around frequently asked questions, such as:

- *What kind of training should I provide for my teachers who work with dual language preschoolers? (A Preschool Administrator)*

- *How can I work effectively with parents of my dual language children if there is no language in common? (A Preschool Teacher)*

- *Should I speak my native language with my child or speak what I can in English to try to help my child learn as much English as possible? (A Parent)*

The web-based guide includes links to online and print-based materials, research, instructional strategies, assessment ideas, and cultural activities and ideas in English and Spanish.

Drawing upon the expertise of the PROMISE researchers, and upon the research literature pulled together by the Working Group, one of the preschools and an elementary school with a preschool on site began to plan to open new bilingual or dual language immersion preschool programs in the Fall. In the end, the PROMISE preschool community of practice that emerged over the course of the three-years of the pilot, was both a powerful support to the preschool sites and the impetus for developing a resource for the field.

CORE PRINCIPLE #5:   VALID AND COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

Valid and Comprehensive Assessment:
Build and implement valid and comprehensive assessment systems designed to
promote reflective practice and data-driven planning in order to improve
academic, linguistic and sociocultural outcomes for English Learners.

Valid and Comprehensive Assessment Defined:

The capacity of policymakers, teachers, students and parents to know how students are progressing is core to good instruction. They are only able to do so, however, if the assessments being used are valid and reliable. For English Learners, this requires assessments in which lack of English proficiency is not a barrier to demonstrating what a student knows and can do. The search for ad use of appropriate and reliable assessments to support instruction for English Learners requires involvement at multiple levels of the system. Thus, valid and comprehensive assessment is about systems. Assessments need to be screened for validity for English Learners, and purchased. Districts need to provide data to sites in accessible formats, and in timely manner – in formats that enable longitudinal analysis by English proficiency level, length of time in U.S. schools, and program placement. Data must be valued and used on a regular basis in the life of a district and school to promote reflection about practice, to inform decision making, and to prompt dialogue about student work and about the success of academic programs. Furthermore, what gets measured and focused upon by educational leaders and policymakers is a statement of values. Schools that are committed to biliteracy as a goal, and to the development of 21st century multicultural competencies, need to assess development of those skills, and to have those assessments "matter" within the accountability system.

Valid and Comprehensive Assessment: The Work of the PROMISE Pilot Sites

All schools in the PROMISE network were involved in some level of focusing on student achievement outcomes as a result of state and federal accountability systems centering on standardized tests. Indeed, it was the spotlight on English Learner underachievement as a subgroup that helped create the sense of urgency that led many of the schools to participate in PROMISE. Yet the California Standards Test, administered only in English, which is central in those accountability systems was of limited usefulness to inform instruction or program design for English Learners.

None of the schools selected Valid and Comprehensive Assessment as a core principle at the beginning of their PROMISE work. By the end of the third year of PROMISE, almost all schools were engaged in some efforts related to assessment. For most of these, assessment issues arose through professional development on instructional strategies. Training in GLAD strategies, SIOP, Frontloading, WRITE and Step Up to Writing all include a focus on assessment. The WRITE Institute includes rubrics and professional development for teachers in how to use those rubrics to gauge student writing and inform instruction. The rubrics are designed to account for language proficiency levels, and are in student-friendly language to facilitate the engagement of students in assessing their own work. One major component of SIOP is "checking for understanding", and includes a variety of strategies for doing

so.   All of these are classroom and instruction based – used to inform and modify instruction. In addition, one middle school instituted the practice of having teachers administer the CELDT to deepen their understanding of the meaning of CELDT levels and to enable them to use informal scores as indications of English language proficiency.

In the secondary schools in PROMISE, the emphasis on assessment focused on placement. The development of Spanish for Native Speakers courses in middle and high schools adopted the placement process developed by Escondido's Golden Bell Award winning program. Teams from two middle schools and one of the high schools from other PROMISE districts traveled to Escondido to observe the placement assessment process and then to participate in scoring and recommending appropriate placements for incoming students. The assessments were adopted and now are used in those other districts.

Several high schools developed systems for determining appropriate placements of English Learners into ELD and into primary language and SDAIE courses based on multiple measures including English proficiency level, progress on CELDT and GPA. In the Escondido high schools, this close look at student achievement measures and placement evolved into a district-wide ELD Monitoring system described below.

The Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series, in which most PROMISE secondary schools participated, focused Lead Teams on several key aspects of assessment. The examination of Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives focused each school on the problem of English Learners who remain stagnant at a CELDT level over years or who lose ground. This information on lack of progress in English, combined with data on length of time students have been enrolled in U.S. schools led to a focus on Long Term English Learners that resulted in new courses, and new forms of monitoring in all of those schools. The series also provided training related to data-based inquiries and student voice. Both of those strategies were then used in four of the secondary schools.

Two middle schools and one high school developed approaches to engaging students directly in understanding their scores and assessments and the implications for their placements and future. These Data Chats are credited by the schools with increasing the seriousness and preparation with which students participate in testing.

Valid and comprehensive assessment applies not only to measuring and using data about student program and achievement, but also to the creation of a climate and set of practices within a school that engage educators in collaborative data-collection and reflection about their practices and their program. Decision-making includes a process of asking questions about programs, services and policies and their impact on English Learners. The school is engaged in ongoing cycles of inquiry. Educators regularly turn to data to illuminate current and emerging issues. Mar Vista Elementary School is an example of a school that actively sought mechanisms to support a process of inquiry, data collection and deep reflection about their English Learner program and practices.

Valid and Comprehensive Assessment: Case study exemplars

Two examples of the PROMISE pilot sites' work on Valid and Comprehensive Assessment include: Mar Vista Elementary School's partnership with the Ventura County Office of Education to perform an external review designed to strengthen their English Learner program, and Escondido Union High School District's approach to monitoring the placement and progress of their English Learners.

- *Mar Vista Elementary School and the Ventura County Office of Education: A Partnership for Data-Based Program Development*

Mar Vista Elementary School entered PROMISE with a long history of commitment to bilingual education. A late-exit bilingual model was instituted in 1979 in response to the community-wide value placed on bilingualism, and as part of the district effort to mount an academic program that would be effective with Spanish-speaking English Learners who comprised the majority of the students at Mar Vista. Over the quarter century since that program was started, many changes occurred within the school as well as in the state political context for bilingual education.

Within the school, teachers left and new ones joined the faculty. The understanding of the bilingual model that existed in 1979 didn't universally sustain through the decades. Individual teachers and grade levels developed varying practices and interpretations of what the bilingual model meant in the day to day practice of the classroom. The model evolved to an early-exit model, and was assumed to be in place, but in reality, the third grade didn't know what the first grade was doing, the second grade didn't know what the fourth grade was doing, and across the school few had a picture of how it all fit together.

Meanwhile, California was embroiled in a statewide public debate over bilingual education with the Proposition 227 ballot initiative which sought to eliminate bilingual programs. As other schools in the region moved to eliminate bilingual education, Mar Vista remained steadfast in their commitment to the model but the leadership recognized the need to reassure themselves and the public that the program was effective.

Mar Vista had joined PROMISE seeking a community of schools similarly working to strengthen bilingual programs and implement the most research-based practices in the field. Jaime Verdugo, Principal of Mar Vista, expressed it as follows:

> *"We knew we had to be one step ahead, in the forefront of what is known about good practices in bilingual education. If we were going to have to defend our program, we had to be confident it was strong. We wanted to go from what we knew was a good program to being a great program."*

By the second year of PROMISE, the Mar Vista Lead Team recognized that if the school was to truly have a strong school-wide consistent model, they needed to engage in some process of helping

everyone see what was going on throughout the school. At a staff collaboration day, the issue of inconsistency in how people understood and were implementing a bilingual education approach was evident. The staff decided it would be helpful to get a picture K-5 of what the model was, and to be able to see their own place and role in that model. Because sufficient trust had been built, and a climate of reflection and seeking knowledge had been established, they decided the school would benefit from an external lens.

Through previous work with Ventura County Office of Education, and the relationships built through the PROMISE partnership with the county, the Lead Team decided to ask Martha Hernandez, the VCOE PROMISE Working Group member supporting PROMISE in Ocean Vista, to lead an external review. One of the Lead Team teachers recounted:

> *"We had a lot of faith in Martha, and we knew that staff would accept her judgment. She had credibility. The county office had credibility. It wouldn't be like some entity coming in and telling us what we had to do differently. It really would be in the spirit of partnership, and would be a continuation of the kind of reflective processes PROMISE had modeled from the beginning. We could trust that they would collect data and give it back to US to be the ones thinking through the implications. And most of all, we knew that Martha had real expertise and we wanted to tap that."*

From Martha Hernandez's perspective as a Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Continuous Improvement at VCOE, the invitation was exciting.

> *"VCOE had been supportive of many efforts in the county to strengthen English Learner programs. We saw the achievement gap growing, and wanted to explore new levels of how to help schools build their programs. So PROMISE was part of that. Our PROMISE partnership with Mar Vista had already focused on instruction with helping them go school-wide with GLAD strategies. But this was another step in going from "good to great" for them. We do a lot of curriculum audits at the county, but this was different because the request for an external review came from the staff. It was their desire to have an outsider look at their program. It was taking place because of their hunger and openness to really look at themselves and their program. They really wanted an honest picture of "what is"."*

Still, teachers were nervous about being observed. Some of the veteran teachers were concerned that opening up the dialogue about the model might result in a decision to abandon the bilingual model they had worked so hard to establish in the 1980s. Their confidence about the process of external review was bolstered as they were invited to help shape how the review would be done and to participate in articulating the questions the review would seek to answer. They wanted to know there would actually be a result from the process. They wanted to be reassured that they would know what the findings were, and that they would be part of determining what it all would mean for the school.

Martha Hernandez set out to lay the groundwork first by talking with the Lead Team and all teachers in the school to invite them to help define the PURPOSE of the review. This created a safe

environment and opened the door for teachers to pose questions about the Mar Vista model without those concerns being viewed as an attack or criticism. It enabled everyone to voice fears and help shape how the review would occur.

Key questions that teacher put on the table were: "How much primary language should be used in instruction at which grade levels? How much were we actually doing across the grades?", "When should students be transitioned to English reading? How is it happening now?"

The External Review was a six-month process. It included:

- Focus groups with the PROMISE Lead Team, administration and district leaders
- Individual interviews with every teachers K-5 at Mar Vista
- The development of an observation protocol designed to address the key questions posed by the school and the core principles selected by the school (Affirming Environment, Empowering Pedagogy, Challenging instruction and curriculum)
- A teacher survey
- Interviews with groups of parents, students, paraprofessionals and office staff

With a team of five people, including PROMISE Facilitators from other counties and members of the Design Center, the external review process observed every single classroom several times. The results were compiled and tabulated and findings were presented to the Promise Lead Team.

They found that there was a strong dedication to bilingual education across all faculty – a fact that had been questioned by some who were nervous that other teachers perhaps didn't support bilingualism as a goal for their students. Everyone wanted Mar Vista to have an effective bilingual program. And, 82% wanted to continue primary language development beyond the transition to English reading and beyond reclassification. The aerial view across the grade levels and classrooms showed inconsistencies in the percentages of English and Spanish that were used as well as in how English Language Development was being taught. Staff wanted clarified what the model really ought to be, and they wanted to be able to clearly articulate it to others – to parents, the board, the community – and know both that it had research behind it and that everyone across the school was on-board and implementing it. They identified the need for better assessments that were aligned and curriculum embedded to give more immediate feedback to teachers and the school about the progress of their students.

Claudia Caudill, the PROMISE Facilitator remarked: *"Usually, the findings of a review are the end of the process. For Mar Vista, it was a launch pad!"*

One of the newer teachers in the school, spoke of the power of the External Review to give her a picture of the history of the school and the bilingual program. *"I heard about why it was started all those years ago, and what had happened to it since then."*

As a result of this work, Mar Vista focused on strengthening their ELD program. They revised a Mar Vista Bilingual Master Plan, and established an ongoing Bilingual Committee with students, administrators, teachers to be sure that the new Bilingual Master Plan was being implemented.

Reflecting on the experience, Martha Hernandez remarked:

"It was really extraordinary. It was so courageous of them to ask for a really honest look at their practices. And it was really courageous of them to hear it and act on it. Change happens from within when people see the need to change. And here it was at Mar Vista. That kind of accountability across the whole school."

A Lead Team member, interviewed in the last month of the pilot, spoke about the power of the external review:

"It was really amazing, actually. It really was not an evaluation. It wasn't like anything we had ever done before. This was like holding up a mirror for us. It was a way for us to SEE ourselves, and then to reflect on what we were doing. Like a mirror, it was reflective. And that's how I really came to understand PROMISE's emphasis on reflection and dialogue. It put the responsibility and the opportunity in our laps – we were the ones who needed to take the new data, the new information, and actually DO something with it."

The External Review led to fine-tuning language ratios across the program. It led to more vertical articulation of the program from grade to grade level. And it pointed out the need to work school-wide on strengthening ELD. Summing up the experience, Principal Jaime Verdugo commented:

"PROMISE really gave us an opportunity to move forward with bilingual education at a time when our program could easily have been modified or watered down. We were helped to strengthen the program and to know that what we were doing was supported by the research. And it wasn't just the bilingual program part of it all, the principles gave us real direction."

- ***Escondido Union High School District: English Language Learner program monitoring***

Under the federal Title III Accountability system, all schools are required to monitor English Learner progress, including the achievement of Redesignated Fluent English Proficient students. The degree to which this actually occurs differs from district to district, and the understanding of what "monitoring" means also varies. Generally, however, it is a mechanical process involving an administrator or counselor, often spotty, and seldom used to inform actual practices or policies.

Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD), near San Diego, not only takes English Learner monitoring seriously, they have elevated the process to a powerful mechanism that combines raising the level of dialogue and understanding about English Learners among staff, assuring the most appropriate placement for students, and guiding professional development to ensure that teachers have the skills needed to serve their English Learner students.

Karen Rizzi, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, was a scientist before she was an educator. Her love of data shaped her path as an administrator. As she sought to understand the English Learner program in the district, and to determine whether the differences from one site to another mirrored differences in achievement, Dr. Rizzi began to dig through the English Learner data. She looked it in myriad disaggregated forms: by English Language proficiency level, by the program, by student typology. She went through every single transcript examining the courses the students were enrolled in and their transcripts at the end of the semester to see if there was any pattern that might inform district policy.

As she and a small district team tried to make sense of the data, they noticed the complexities. There were a large number of English Learners who actually weren't placed in ELD classes – but some of them were very successful in their general education English Language Arts classes. Others were not doing well in those same placements. Rizzi recounts:

> *"It was very time intensive, but I was on a mission to figure out what we needed to be doing and what was working. If I was going to be a useful and credible leader providing guidance to schools and talking to counselors and teachers, I needed to really understand what was going on."*

This was the start of the move towards looking at student achievement data in a somewhat different way. Like most districts, Escondido has multiple kinds of data on students: demographic information, grades, attendance, test scores. Up until a few years ago, it was difficult to access all of the data on any one particular student because the information was stored in different systems and ways. As part of their commitment to serving every student well, and their PROMISE emphasis on English Learners, the Categorical Program Director and the district's Data Management Specialist convened counselors, teachers and administrators from across the sites and posed the following questions: "What do you need to know about an English Learner student in order to determine the best program and placement for them? What do you need to know in order confirm that a placement is working or not?" Based on the responses, the Data Management Specialist created a system that produces individual English Learner profiles, compiling all information on that student in one single profile sheet. The profiles include the following information:

- Previous and current English proficiency level
- Home language
- Date of first U.S. school enrollment
- Program participation (e.g., special education placement, GATE, etc.)
- Overall cumulative GPA (grades 9 – 12)
- Credits earned towards graduation
- CELDT overall score and domain subscores (raw as well as levels)
- CST scores for English Language Arts, Math, EOC Science, Life Science,
- World History and Social Science
- CAHSEE status (e.g., passed/not passed) for English Language Arts and for Math, including the highest scores for each

- A list of every course taken in the prior semester with the grade earned and the teacher for   each course
- A list of every course in which the student is currently enrolled with the 6 and 12 week grade earned, and the teacher of those courses
- Additional attendance data and disciplinary information

The purpose was to provide an easy way for teachers, counselors and Assistant Principals to see the multiple dimensions of student participation and success in one place in order to determine who is doing well, who is not progressing as they would like, and the implications for placements and interventions.

Each site was directed to plan an entire day at two points in the school year when all counselors, the Bilingual Assessment Technician, teachers of English Learners, program specialists and a district staff person could meet together to review every single English Learner profile. Two whole days is a lot to ask, and there was definite reluctance at first about giving up the time. Sharon von Maier, Director of Categorical Programs for the district recounts:

> *"That first year, it was a minor miracle that we managed to get the dates on the calendar when all of the needed people could be in the same room for a full day. But it was a priority for us, a clear priority. It was particularly difficult the first year. As people began to see the power of the process, and learned more and more about how the multiple measures work together, it became easier. They were invested in doing it, and our process was better. Now, after two years, we can usually do it in a half a day twice a year."*

Sitting with the stack of English Learner profiles, the teams went through every English Learner profile to talk about whether they felt the student was being successful, was in the most rigorous placement in which they could succeed, and was getting appropriate support. Every single profile gets examined. Some can b reviewed fairly quickly, and it is clear that the student is "on track" and doing well. But others raise issues to be examined. What isn't this student doing well? What does it appear they are doing well in some ways and not in others? What would an appropriate program be for that student? It was a learning process through which the sites developed a common and deeper understanding of the English Learner program itself, of placement issues, of the assessments and measures themselves, and of English Learners.

Erin Smith, Principal at San Pasqual High School pointed out that this has shifted the culture and climate for talking about English Learners:

> *"There are a lot of conversations now throughout the school about what is the best environment for students, and about seeing our students more as individuals each with their own complex needs."*

And one of the counselors commented:

"We saw that students don't fit into neat little boxes. That you can't just look at one measure, like CELDT or CST or a grade, and be able to determine the right placement for the student. "

That found that often, CELDT was not a legitimate measure of English proficiency for Long Term English Learners. They might have been a CELDT IV one year, then a CELDT II the next and a CELDT III and then a CELDT I. It forced the groups reviewing the profiles to ask "What is going on with this student?" And what they learned not only benefited the student with a more appropriate set of supports, it was a powerful form of professional development for the staff.

A first day is spent prior to placements. A second day occurs later in the year as a check on how well the placement is working. The commitment is to place students in the "most rigorous" academic setting possible, and to never place a student below their rigor level. As one teacher who has been involved in the monitoring/placement process put it:

"We honor our students by placing them where they are intellectually and academically ready to go. Many places use student assessment information to determine how well a student is doing. I think the twist is that we use that same data to let us know how well our program is working and what changes we need to make in how we support and teach and place our students."

Karen Rizzi sees the positive results of this data-based focus on appropriate placements in higher passage rates on CAHSEE, more students accessing and being successful in A-G courses, and in the development of new supports and interventions that support that success.

Ronald Duke, Principal of Orange Glen High School credited this push with the creation of their Saturday Scholars and After School Tutoring programs. He explained:

"Once we see where and how students are stumbling, and once we commit ourselves to the most rigorous placement, we have to have something to offer them so they can succeed. We have to give them more time on task as extra support if they need it. So we added after school and Saturday to their schedules. And it works!"

Counselors and site administrators began to recommend that the district create the same kind of profiles for all students – believing that the profile and monitoring system has been such an important element in strengthening their program and improving student achievement.

Escondido Union High School District takes the monitoring process one step further. LuzElena Perez is responsible for facilitating professional development in the district related to English Learners. Her work is interconnected to the ELD Monitoring.

"Appropriate placement is really about two things. It's about the kind of program a student is ready for, and it's about whether or not the teachers in those classes have the skills to really provide access so the student can succeed there. That's why professional development is linked

to the monitoring. The best possible placement for a student is the most rigorous academic placement possible with the strongest supports for success."

For LuzElena Perez, this means, for example, that if some English Learners are going to be placed in SDAIE ELA classes instead of dedicated ELD classes, that those teachers need to receive professional development and coaching in advanced SDAIE strategies. As she put it, *"purposeful professional development starts with data."*

The "monitoring" and placement process now has become part of articulation between the elementary/middle school districts and Escondido Union High School District. EUHSD requests information on all 8th graders who will be enrolling as 9th graders. Sharon von Maier developed a matrix for the information requested from feeder districts on incoming 9th graders. This is what she called *"the first shot at appropriate placement."* Articulation meetings are set up between 8th grade teachers of English Learners and the 9th grade teachers who will be receiving those students. They share information about the programs with each other. Recommendations from the 8th grade teachers are added to the data on student achievement and progress, and all of these inform the placement for the 9th grade year. The 8th grade teachers get feedback mid-semester on how their prior students are now doing in high school, and on adjustments to the placements that have been made.

Functioning across school sites, and across elementary and high school districts, EUHSD's ELD Monitoring process creates a systemic approach to ensuring that English Learners receive a coherent and appropriate schooling experience.

CORE PRINCIPLE #6: POWERFUL FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Powerful Family and Community Engagement:
Implement strong family and community engagement programs that build leadership
capacity and value and draw upon community funds of knowledge to inform, support
and enhance teaching and learning for English Learners.

Powerful Family and Community Engagement Defined:

Active parent engagement is a hallmark of schools in which students thrive, as is intentional effort to build a bridge and relationships between school and home. In these schools, parents have the information to support their children's learning at home, are active in the classroom, and help teachers to bridge and connect to community resources for learning. It is important that parents monitor their childrens' schooling and have the skills and knowledge to advocate effectively to create the conditions students need to learn and master the curriculum. English Learner parents, however, face both language and cultural barriers to such involvement. Many do not have a strong educational background in their own lives. Schools that do not intentionally and seriously create inclusive, welcoming and supportive conditions for English Learner families, often create additional barriers to their involvement.

Powerful Family and Community Engagement: The work of the PROMISE Pilot Sites

Over the course of the PROMISE pilot, all schools initiated strategies for strengthening family and community engagement. Powerful family and community engagement requires a range of strategies, and across the PROMISE network, all of these were worked upon.

- *Leadership development for parents and active recruitment into leadership groups*

Parent leadership workshops were instituted by some schools. Two sites sponsored the Parent Institute for Quality Education's nine-week leadership development series. One district designed it's own Parent Ambassadors program developing Spanish speaking parents as leaders to reach out to newcomer Spanish speaking parents. The Latino Booster Club at one school was an effort to specifically recruit Spanish speaking parents to become involved in school activities.

- *Professional development for teachers and administrators in cross-cultural skills and competencies for building two-way communication with English Learner families*

Three sites applied for and were awarded Nell Soto Parent/Teacher Involvement grants enabling them to do home visits and community meetings to strengthen the relationships between home and school. Several schools began to sponsor regular informal drop-in sessions where parents could meet with the principal or key school staff to talk about whatever was on their minds. These *"cafecitos"* also became opportunities to disseminate information about resources for families.

- *Parent education on how to support students graduating from high school college-ready, and for their own development through adult education courses*

Parent education was the most common strategy across the PROMISE sites. This included bringing external parent education resources such as Adult Education ESL, the Orange County Office of Education's Ten Educational Commandments workshops for parents and others to the site. Most sites had CBET Adult ESL and computer classes on site for English Learner parents. Saturday Family Workshops, Family Literacy Nights and Math Nights were created as occasions for family members to learn about the curriculum and how they might support their children's academic development. The preschools all adopted Virtual PreK as a resource that parents could use in their homes to bolster early childhood development and language skills in Spanish and in English.   Partnering with Migrant Education and county offices of education, some PROMISE sites were able to develop or make use of videos made specifically for English Learner parents about topics such as A-G courses and Advanced Placement courses.

- *Resources allocated to enable teaching/learning projects in the community*

Only one district worked on the community engagement aspect of this core principle from the perspective of engaging students more in their community. The Bridging Multiple Worlds sociology course and student leadership projects focused students on learning about the issues in their communities and designing projects to have a positive impact addressing some of the community problems.   However, other sites brought community members into the schools as part of their program resources. Several schools engaged parents and community members in sponsoring cultural activities afterschool such as a Mariachi band, Ballet Folklorico and a Latin Dance Club. Other schools brought in community members as speakers for Bilingual Career Fairs, and in Spanish for Native Speakers classes.

- *Orientation for newcomer parents*

A Parent Ambassadors program was started across three sites in one district to provide intentional outreach to newly arrived Spanish speaking newcomer parents.

- *Signage, written materials, information and staffing ensure that English Learner parents are welcome and have the information they need to participate in the school and be effective advocates for their children*

Some schools worked to create a space and welcoming environment for parents on campus, including the creation in one school of a Parent Center.

Powerful Family and Community Engagement: Case study exemplars

Three examples of PROMISE pilot sites' work on Family and Community Engagement are described below: Sunnymead Elementary and Sunnymead Middle School's Home Visits, Escondido

Union High School District's Parent Ambassadors program, and Strategies for Parent Engagement at Gates Elementary School

- *Sunnymead Elementary and Sunnymead Middle schools knit relationships between teachers and families through home visits*

Sunnymead Elementary School, one of two PROMISE pilot sites in Moreno Valley School District (Riverside) selected Powerful Family and School Engagement as an initial core principle. In the first year of their PROMISE effort, the Sunnymead PROMISE Plan included the establishment of a parent Booster Club, and literacy and ESL classes for parents held on the school site. Sunnymead Middle School (the second PROMISE site in the district) had not selected Powerful Family and Community Engagement as an initial core principle, but chose to focus on Enriched and Affirming Learning Environments. As the middle school Lead Team developed a deeper understanding of that core principle, it led to the creation of structures and meaningful ways of involving parents.

To support both schools in finding ways to build stronger relationships between the school and English Learner families, the PROMISE Working Group member from Riverside County Office of Education and the PROMISE Facilitator researched and then presented to the sites the opportunity to apply for a state-funded Nell Soto Parent/Teacher Involvement grant.

The purpose of the Nell Soto Parent/Teacher Involvement Program [Senate Bill (SB) 33, 2002] is to strengthen communication between school staff and parents to improve students' academic achievement – exactly matching the objectives of the two PROMISE sites. The legislation allocated funds to promote family-school partnerships through a competitive district grants program that could be used to train teachers to conduct home visits and to organize family-school meetings.

At the Sunnymead PROMISE sites, facilitated sessions were held for staff and administrators to explore the meaning of "powerful family and community engagement". In that context, the possibility of the Nell Soto grant was raised. At Sunnymead Elementary School, two teachers upon hearing about the Nell Soto approach spoke movingly of their experiences as young children when a teacher visited their home. Said one,

> *"I still remember so vividly that day. My mother was wearing her green pedal pushers, and we had made cucumber sandwiches – our best effort to create a nice tea kind of snack for the teacher. I was absolutely thrilled that my kindergarten teacher was coming to our house. I still remember that feeling of being honored by her visit, feeling we were important, feeling she would be a guest in my home. It was the only time a teacher ever visited us. If I remember it that vividly all these years later, that shows how powerful it was."*

As a condition of participation in the grant program, the district was required to complete home-school compacts with at least 50% of their participating families. This also meant that at least 50% of the teachers had to be willing to do the visits. The PROMISE Lead Team was unsure whether there

would be sufficient will to meet this criteria, but across the sites, 75% of the teachers voted to go forward.

Working together, Sylvia Lomas, the Riverside County Office of Education working group member and Miriam Blum, the PROMISE Facilitator, wrote a proposal that won Nell-Soto funding for the program for both PROMISE sites.

The work started with training for the teachers, establishing the purpose, process and approach to the home visits and community meetings. These were not to be opportunities to talk about how the students were doing in school. They were not to be the time for teachers to explain their curriculum. Rather, the visits and meetings were explicitly for building relationships one on one between teachers and the families of their students.

Sunnymead Elementary sent letters home to parents explaining the program and asking if they might be interested in having the teacher visit them in their home. Not all teachers were ready to jump in, but a solid core took the lead and made some visits. Their excitement when they returned to school and shared out at the faculty meeting inspired other teachers to do home visits as well. Similarly, some families were not so sure about participating, feeling skeptical or nervous about why the teacher wanted to check out their home. When children whose homes had been visited came back to school so proud and full of things to tell other children about the visit, the word started to spread.

In the primary grades, by the end of the first year, almost 100% of families had responded affirmatively and been visited. Each teacher was allotted a specific number of paid hours to do the visits, and there were funds to purchase supplies and gifts to bring to the home (reading books, pencils, crayons, rulers, etc.).

Teachers made the visits in pairs. Amy Fryer, third grade teacher, was motivated to take part in the visits because, as she put it,

> *"I knew we needed to build a better bridge of communication between parents and teachers, to feel comfortable with each other so we could really work together for the children."*

She found that the visits did more than strengthen her relationship to parents, it also strengthened her relationship to her students.

> *"They interact differently with me now, more comfortably, they talk more, they refer to their pets and their rooms knowing that I know what they are talking about, it's a closer interaction."*

Parents cited the impact these visits had on their relationship to the teacher and to the school – as well as on their children. Ruby Jara, parent of two young children, spoke of the visit:

> *"I was surprised that it wasn't about the teacher telling us how the kids were doing or what we should do to support them in school. It wasn't like that at all. It was a conversation! They*

asked the girls what they wanted to be when they grew up. They asked us about our goals for the children. We talked about our dogs. We talked about movies. We just talked like equals. We made a connection! Ever since then, I volunteer at the school. And all of that has changed my girls' attitudes towards school also. They are excited about going!"

The visits were powerful for the teachers as well as for the families and children. Teachers felt honored by the ways that families opened their homes and prepared snacks and even meals for the teachers. When teachers witnessed the excitement with which their visit was met, it was deeply touching.

"One visit I will never forget was a time I arrived about 15 minutes early because I had been so nervous about finding the address. When I got there I thought I would just sit in my car or go get coffee until the right time. But I looked up at the apartment and saw three little eager faces peering out at me, and the mother watching as well. They were looking for me, waiting for me, expectant – even fifteen minutes before the time, they were watching out their windows. They were that excited! It meant that much to them."

In reflecting on the experiences, over and over, teachers gave examples of what they had learned about the children by visiting their homes, that facilitated incorporating things from children's backgrounds and experiences into the classroom. One, for example, told of a child whose family owned a cockatoo that could sing the National Anthem. The child was engaged in taking care of the bird and knew a lot about birds in general as well as the amazing feats of cockatoos. The teacher was able to invite the child to share about birds when they were doing a unit on animals.

Sunnymead Middle School approached the work somewhat differently. Rather than home visits, they opted to hold small meetings in the community, at the community center, at apartment complexes. Teachers would select a few students and invite them and their families to a "meet and greet" sessions. Teachers provided drinks, snacks. Several teachers would be there. It was a social event for the students and the families as well as a venue for informal conversations and one-on-one connections between teachers and families. These evolved into Shakeys Pizza Parlor Family Nights – still with each teacher inviting just a select number of students and families, but elevated to a more social context that includes eating dinner together. The middle school students are given gifts of binders, pencil bags and other school supplies.

In reflecting on the PROMISE work, teachers on PROMISE Lead Teams from both pilot sites talked about the home visits and community meetings as key elements of their pursuit of empowering pedagogy, affirming learning environments and parent and community engagement. One Lead Team member explained:

"The visits and meetings show that we are willing to be part of our community, that we WANT to be part of it. They have created a bond, a sense of connection. We know each other in more human ways. There is less stereotyping, and less nervousness. It really feels like we have come together, teachers and parents, to pull together for the child's success. And there is no question

that our children feel safer at school, they feel closer to us. And when a student feels cared for and connected to the school, they work harder and achieve more."

- ***Parent Ambassadors in Escondido High Schools***

The Escondido Union High School District selected two of its comprehensive high schools to participate in the PROMISE Initiative. In the first year of the pilot, members of the PROMISE Lead Teams from each site enrolled in the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series at San Diego County Office of Education. The first day of the series focuses on "Knowing Your English Learners", exploring the many issues in the lives of students beyond the language barrier that impact their participation and achievement in school. On that first day, the teams from Orange Glen High School and Escondido High School sat talking intently about the challenges facing newly arrived Spanish speaking families and students in their community. They had just watched an emotional segment of the film, The *New Americans*, about the Flores family from Guanajuato and the difficulties the mother had faced in adjusting to a new nation and culture. It raised numerous questions for them about their own students:

>*"What do you think it is like for parents of our immigrant students?"*
>*"What kind of supports do we have in place that help families in the transition?"*
>*"What is the impact on our students?"*
>*"What can we do?"*

It was the last question, *"what can we do?",* that was the seed for the development of a parents-helping-parents approach that would grow into the Parent Ambassadors model now being replicated in other districts.

Escondido's Parent Ambassadors Program trains parents to reach out to other Spanish speaking parents with support and information on the specifics of what is needed to understand the high school system, academic programs, and community resources available to them. Through the program, a core of parents receive training on how to effectively communicate the information they have received, while agreeing to share that information with other parents, and to become involved in their student's school through a formal contract designating them as a link to at least five other Spanish-speaking families. The role of Parent Ambassadors is not just to provide information, it is also to help newcomers feel part of their new community and school.

Jennifer Rasmussen, PROMISE Facilitator for Escondido Union High School District, explained the context that made Parent Ambassadors such an important part of the PROMISE work:

>*"We are a community near the border and with many Spanish speaking immigrant families newly arrived to this country. A lot of them feel lost and pretty alone about how to help their students become part of and successful in what is to them a foreign and a very complex schooling and academic system."*

Parent Ambassadors grew, in part, through the district's understanding that students are parts of families, and that creating a strong link between family, school and community is an essential part of an effective school.   Although "Strong Family and Community Engagement" was not a PROMISE core principle chosen for the initial focus at either campus, they *had* selected "Enriched and Affirming Learning Environment" and "Challenging and Relevant Curriculum". There was no question in the minds of the PROMISE Lead Teams that being sure parents had information on academic requirements and support resources was a key element in moving students into more challenging curriculum – and that an affirming learning environment had to include reaching out to parents and families.

Parents, counselors, teachers, district staff and administrators were pulled together to help identify the information they thought parents would need in order to become part of the school community and to guide their students through the complex system. Students were also asked for input. From this process, emerged a list of overall categories and many key types of information within each category.   And thus was created the Parent Ambassadors binder.

Within the resource binder, information is available in ten sections:

- General School Information and Contacts: the school calendar, bell schedules, a map of the campus, important telephone numbers, emergency procedures, important dates such as Homecoming and Club Rush and Proms, the Cashier and fiscal policies, the library

- Attendance and Discipline: Policies governing attendance and discipline, disciplinary procedures and due process

- Special Academic Programs: Descriptions and eligibility issues related to he English Learner program, Migrant Education, and AVID

- Counseling Department: The role of counselors, how to access counselors, how to change classes, the placement process

- Graduation and University Requirements: CAHSEE, A-G requirements, Advanced Placement classes, report cards and codes, standardized testing, reading and understanding transcripts

- Extra-curricular activities: clubs, sports, the Associated Student Body (ASB), student government, Summer School, Spanish speaking clubs on each campus

- Community resources: lists and contact information for health, family support, legal and other resources

- Health: the nurse, policies and procedures when students are sick, policies about administering medicine

- The Parent Ambassadors: Parent Ambassadors program, ELAC, recommendations to parents about how to help students with homework

When any parent delivers their child for the first time to a high school, it is a big transition. For immigrant parents who don't speak the language and don't know how the schooling system works, it can be frightening.   The binder alone, though chock full of information, was not a sufficient support. The delivery vehicle would be other parents, parents who can speak the languages of the newcomers – and the point of the connection being not only information sharing, but relationship building and support.

In the first year of the effort, after the parents who had signed up to be Parent Ambassadors completed their four evenings of training, they set up tables at each school – one Parent Ambassador at each table, with their binder. New Spanish speaking parents came to join them. The intention was that parents would stay at a table for 15 to 20 minutes. But the discussions were so intense that it wasn't until 45 minutes later, when the room had to be cleared, that the discussions ended. For the newly arrived parents now armed with information and knowing the name and contact for a Spanish speaking parent who might help them find their way, the effort was clearly a success. It was also powerful, however, for the Parent Ambassadors themselves.

Rose Pedraza was one of those Parent Ambassadors. She spoke about the importance of the training they had received. At the end of the four sessions, there is a celebration and the Parent Ambassadors who've completed the series receive certificates.

> *"For some of the Parent Ambassadors, this was the first time in their lives they had received a certificate, the first time they had completed a program. The celebration was so important to them. And they felt so confident. Their self-esteem was so high. They knew they could now reach out to help other parents."*

Each year, the binder is revised, and the training for new Parent Ambassadors is updated – building on lessons learned, and incorporating new information. Hundreds of parents have now been trained as Parent Ambassadors. District leaders report that they see an impact.   Since new parents are better informed about what's available, there have been more students enrolling for the free lunch program, more students enrolling in A-G and honors classes. And, Spanish speaking parent presence is now a regular feature on the high school campuses.

Escondido Union High School District's symbol is the lighthouse. When they entered PROMISE, the Superintendent declared that he was hoping that in addition to learning from others, that the work in Escondido might be a beacon to schools and districts elsewhere. True to that commitment, as the success of Parent Ambassadors became evident, the district put together a website with all of the information, the binders, the training agendas, invitations and anything else that might be useful to others seeking to replicate or adapt the model for their own school.

- *Supporting the connection between Spanish-speaking immigrant families and the school: Strategies at Gates Elementary School*

Three schools in Saddleback Valley Unified School District joined the PROMISE Initiative: an elementary site, a middle school and a high school.   They shared an interest in focusing on Parent and Community Engagement as an element of their PROMISE work, and each site developed Plans for doing so.

 At Ralph Gates Elementary School, the interest in strengthening parent engagement was partially fueled by the distinct differences within the parent community served by the school. Just over half of the students in the school are English Learners and are socio-economically disadvantaged. Due to a Dual Language Education strand in the school, the school also enrolls the children of higher socioeconomic classes and native English speaking families. The need to create a community within the school, and to address the issues of equity between parent/family groupings in terms of understanding of the schools and engagement in the school, drove the decision to make Strong Parent and Community Engagement the center of PROMISE work across the three years of the pilot.

Most of the English Learner parents come from other nations and are unaware of the role parents are expected to and can play in their children's education in the United States. Many work long hours and hold two jobs, as well as parent younger children.   Facing a language barrier, cultural barrier and lack of knowledge about U.S. schools, many do not feel comfortable coming to school and asking questions, and few have the skills or understanding about how to be effective supports and advocates for their children at school.

Across the district, schools found ways to fund a Bilingual Parent Advocate position through Title I or EIA funds. Mostly, these advocates were a liaison and support to parents, but were not particularly involved in the life of the school.   At Gates, the role of supporting parents and the task of strengthening the academic program at the school would become closely linked through PROMISE.

The PROMISE Lead Team, including among them the Bilingual Parent Advocate at the school, identified several key goals: finding a way to help English Learner families feel comfortable and welcome at the school, and finding a way to provide parents with the information they need to be effective supports and advocates for their children,

To help parents become more comfortable coming to the school, the team began by setting up a table in front of the school and serving coffee and donuts in the morning hours when parents drop their children off at school. "Parents Welcome" and "Please come talk with us" signs and a few chairs encouraged parents to walk over and begin conversations with the Spanish-fluent PROMISE Facilitator and the Bilingual Parent Advocate. Informally, relationships began to build. Offers of information were made, and parents asked questions, posed concerns, and framed ideas. A rolling bookshelf of Spanish-language pamphlets and materials about community resources and about the school began to be brought out at these weekly Coffee Hours.   As the conversations at Coffee Hour gains in depth, and topics

became identified that parents wanted more information about or more of a change to discuss, forums and workshops were planned inside the school.

One of the Teachers on Special Assignment, a member of the PROMISE Lead Team, took on the task of being the liaison to teachers to engage them in connecting with parents. She took shared responsibility for the Coffee Hours, and for encouraging teachers to present at the workshops on topics like: math ideas you can do at home, selecting good books for your children, dealing with the problem of bullies, homework, etc. As parents raised issues that suggested the need for a good forum for discussing with teachers, the TOSA would arrange it to happen.

The weekly Coffee Hours became over time, a way for parents to get information, to talk with teachers and administrators, and to talk together about issues in the school and in their lives. Teachers would come to the Coffee Hour to share with parents what was going on in their classrooms, ideas about how parents might help with homework, and to hear what parents were thinking about their children's experiences in school. Outside speakers were brought in to address topics parents had identified. School staff and administrators were able to use these forums to inform parents how to use the website at the school to access information, and to clarify issues of policy at the school.

Gates revamped the school website, a good portion of it is now in Spanish, listing the kinds of resources identified through the Coffee Hour as needed by families, and answering the kinds of questions parents have posed to the school. All PTA information is posted in both languages. The events calendar for the school is in both languages. And the school continues to try to find ways to make it easy for parents to get information they need.

Over the years of PROMISE, the Coffee Hours continued to sometimes be outside as a draw to parents not yet comfortable coming inside the school – and also became a regular forum of meetings and workshops inside the school.

In addition to the Coffee Hours, Gates sought more formal kinds of parent education and leadership development. The Orange County Department of Education trained the Bilingual Parent Advocate to provide The Ten Education Commandments workshop for parents. It's a four-hour workshop, for parents of children from preschool through high school, designed to help parents understand the schooling system and some basic things parents can do to help their children achieve.

The PROMISE Facilitator, Beth Borkowski, viewed her role, in part, as seeking community resources to support the work of the PROMISE sites. Attending a meeting of the Latino Education Attainment Initiative at the Orange County Business Council, Beth met a university professor/community organizer from California State University/Fullerton who was able to obtain funding to support a more intensive parent leadership effort at Gates. For parents who could manage the time and who were interested in more sustained and in-depth leadership development, the school was able to contract with the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). PIQE provides a ten-session course (1.5 hours each session) for parents about U.S. schools and how they work, about standards and what children should be learning, about how children are graded and what grades mean, about university

and college requirements, questions to ask teachers and how to use parent-teacher conferences, and other essential information. PIQE is in many ways a parent leadership development approach. Patty Pineda, the Bilingual Parent Advocate at Gates, was one of the parents who went through PIQE and serves as a Trainer/Facilitator of the series.   She proudly reported their success:

> *"This last time, we had 100 parents sign up for PIQE, and 70 of them graduated, getting gold seals on their certificates for perfect attendance. These are hardworking parents, who take the time to come week after week to PIQE because they want their children to succeed at school. By graduation at the end of the series, I see they are acting different. They come to school, ask questions, aren't afraid to raise concerns, and they know what they are talking about. And their self-esteem is different."*

From informal mechanisms to entice parents to engage in conversation with someone from the school and to help bring parents into the building, to short intense workshops to provide information, to regular forums for dialogue, and the more sustain parent leadership work of PIQE, Gates has created a continuum of ways to engage parents.

CORE PRINCIPLE #7:   HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

High quality Professional Development: "Provide coherent, comprehensive and ongoing professional preparation and support programs based on well-defined standards of practice. These programs are designed to create professional learning communities of administrators, teachers, and other staff to implement the PROMISE Vision of excellent teaching for English Learners."

High Quality Professional Development Defined:

Changing classroom practice is difficult. One-shot workshops may be chock-full of good strategies, but rarely actually impacts what teachers do in their classrooms. National and state professional development standards articulate the importance of high quality professional learning as part of the daily work of educators and call upon schools to provide the resources to support adult learning and collaboration. School and district leaders have the role of guiding continuous instructional improvement through data-drive priority setting, drawing upon research, and fostering learning and change. High quality professional development has to focus upon the content that teachers need to teach English Learners, and needs to be designed in ways that maximally support teachers in actually improving their practice. Professional development that maximally supports changes in practice includes workshops, readings, and hands-on planning.

High Quality Professional Development: The work of the PROMISE Pilot Sites

Professional development was part of every PROMISE school site plan. The secondary schools were engaged primarily in:

- Sending teams to the five-day Secondary school Leadership for English Learner Success series provided by PROMISE Partner Dr. Laurie Olsen, and offered through the county offices of education.
- Sending teachers to GLAD Strategies training
- Sending teachers to SIOP professional development provided through the county offices of education
- Sending teachers to the WRITE Institute training provided through the San Diego County Office of Education

All of the above are designed to provide support over time, and were designed specifically to address the needs of English Learners. Other professional development used by secondary schools included: Advanced SDAIE training through San Diego County Office of Education, Side by Side (ELD/ELA) also provided through San Diego County Office of Education.   Some of the professional development utilized through PROMISE engages teachers in networks with other teachers, building collegial support. The Dual Language program networks through the county offices of education also emphasize this valuable part of professional development.

PROMISE secondary schools visited each other, seeking to learn from the strengths and lessons learned of other schools. The visits were cited as having important impacts. Specifically, the visits of

Baldwin Park high schools and Sunnymead Middle School to Escondido to learn about the Spanish for Native Speakers programs and to observe the placement process for incoming 8th graders inspired new programs and innovations in Moreno Valley and Baldwin Park.

Professional development in GLAD strategies was provided across all PROMISE elementary schools. In addition, the constellation of professional development that the elementary schools in PROMISE engaged in were: Systematic ELD, Frontloading for Academic Success, Marzano Strategies for English Learners, WRITE, and Step Up to Writing.

The preschool programs engaged PreK GLAD and Virtual PreK for professional development. They found little else in formal professional development specific to addressing early education for English Learners. Instead, preschool teachers and directors cited their involvement in the PROMISE Preschool Network as the major source of learning and development.

Across the grade levels, those schools that were involved in establishing professional learning communities, found particular power in using those structures and practices in tandem with the focus on English Learners. In Baldwin Park, this involved the UC School of Management.

All of the professional development that PROMISE schools cited as having an actual impact were designed specifically to address the needs of English Learners.   Where implementation was schoolwide and occurred with the leadership of highly-respected teachers and the support of the principal, schools saw impacts on learning and a change in the school climate.

Many schools joined PROMISE out of a desire to be part of a community with other educators working on best practices for English Learners and with a vision of biliteracy. They came in looking to learn from and share with each other. And, the professional development and professional dialogue that emerged was a central part of the PROMISE experience. Being part of the PROMISE network across counties and districts was a major boon for professional development. Much of the professional development schools engaged in had been developed by or through the six county offices of education, and PROMISE schools received deep discounts in order to enable them to engage large teams. Educators in PROMISE schools learned about powerful professional development from educators in other schools – and were able to visit and check on the impacts of implementation.

The research partners in PROMISE also played a role in professional development. The Loyola Marymount University researchers interviewed teachers across all PROMISE school to learn about their challenges, needs and desires for professional development and learning. The reports from LMU to the PROMISE Lead Teams propelled a professional development focus. Specific emerging findings from their research were shared with schools, prompting a far greater emphasis on oral language development.   And, LMU developed a series of online courses designed around the PROMISE core principles, and provided discounted registration to teachers and others from PROMISE schools (see story below).   Dr. Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, a nationally renown researcher on dual language and early education, worked directly with preschool teachers and directors in the PROMISE Preschool Network to support their understanding and reflections on effective practices for English Learners.

Finally, across the schools in PROMISE, building professional collaboration and learning into the daily practice of schools was a crucial structural element supporting instructional change.

High quality professional development is a necessary support for almost any kind of change in a school - and even those PROMISE schools that did not select it as a core principle, found that a focus on professional development was essential to moving other PROMISE principles forward. The examples below demonstrate the interrelationship between the focus on Challenging Curriculum and High Quality Professional Development at Margaret Heath Elementary where schoolwide, GLAD strategies were being implemented, and the interrelationship between creating an Affirming Learning Environment and High Quality Professional Development in the Escondido Union High School PROMISE schools.

High Quality Professional Development: Case study exemplars

Three examples of high quality professional development in the PROMISE pilot are provided here: School-wide GLAD strategies at Margaret Heath Elementary School, Advanced SDAIE strategies in Escondido, and the Loyola Marymount Certificate in Leadership in Biliteracy.

- *School-wide GLAD at Margaret Heath Elementary School in Baldwin Park*

High quality professional development was identified as a focus for all three of the schools in Baldwin Park Unified School District that became part of the PROMISE Initiative. This was a reaction, in part, to a state Categorical Program Monitoring process that had identified the need for professional development for teachers in meeting the needs of English Learners.   English Learner test scores throughout the district were low and not improving. Madalena Arellano, District Director of Student Achievement, recalls that time four years ago.

> *"Every new adoption teachers get materials, books, teachers guides, and some professional development to implement the adoption. But in the classrooms, we could see that lessons still weren't high caliber, teachers weren't implementing consistently. And we knew this was an area that we wanted to work on in order to ramp up English Learner achievement."*

Los Angeles County Office of Education, as a PROMISE partner to Baldwin Park school district, sent a team to do walk-throughs in the schools the first year.   Shelly Spiegel-Coleman reported:

> *"You could see evidence of some professional development, but it wasn't systematic. One teacher was doing Thinking Maps, another had a word wall, another was working on new writing strategies. These were clearly faculty that wanted to learn and implement effective instruction –but there really wasn't anything consistent within or across the schools."*

Margaret Heath Elementary School, was one of the Baldwin Park PROMISE sites, serves a largely Hispanic community. Of the 526 students enrolled in the school, 95% are Hispanic, and half are English Learners.

Through participation in PROMISE, the PROMISE Lead Team from Heath Elementary sought information about effective instructional strategies. Attending a PROMISE mid-year symposium in the first year, the Heath PROMISE Lead Team learned about GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) strategies – an approach developed by the Orange County Department of Education (part of the six county PROMISE collaborative). GLAD was developed through federal English Learner funding – bringing together expertise in language acquisition, and an understanding of the need to build language and content knowledge.

Heath's Lead Team had their interest piqued. A year later, several other PROMISE schools had begun implementing GLAD strategies, and gave a workshop presentation to others within PROMISE. The Heath teachers present at that workshop were enthusiastic, and were ready to move it forward at their school. Principal Maria Rios remembers:

> *"We saw the research, we heard from teachers who were using the strategies and the impacts they were seeing in their classrooms. Our Lead Team was so excited. And that positive energy was transferred to the rest of our staff when we returned from the PROMISE symposium"*

PROMISE Lead Team member, teacher Laura Reyes, reported being "blown away" at what she heard from teachers in the GLAD workshop.

> *"It was so powerful. I saw it and just thought, WOW, here it is, just what our English Learners need. I knew there wouldn't be any problem with "buy-in" back at Heath. People would want to do it."*

And she was right. It was easy sell to the rest of the faculty. The strong research base behind GLAD strategies, the fact that they were designed to address English Learners specifically, and the glowing reports from other PROMISE districts about the impacts of GLAD, were enough to interest the Baldwin Park district leadership attending the symposium in bringing it to their district – and viewing Margaret Heath as the first step in what would be a district-wide rollout. Heath would be the site to pilot and model school-wide GLAD.

The district was able to contract two trainers through Los Angeles County Office of Education for the two day overview and a five-day classroom demonstration. During the summer of 2007, all teachers from Margaret Heath were trained in GLAD strategies. They were able to see the strategies actually demonstrated in their own classrooms, with Heath students. Veteran fourth and fifth grade teacher Laura Reyes saw the impact on her students almost immediately.

> *"GLAD has us teaching through pictorials and charts, so our kids can literally see the learning develop, and visualize it. It makes it much easier for students to remember the learning –*

especially our English Learners. English Learners may not understand just by reading about something, or even just hearing the teacher talk about something. The visual is SO important. I'm teaching now about the rain forest, so as I teach, I draw the layers, the understory, the canopy. It comes to life in front of them. And then, as we learn more and more, we add to the picture."

Common meeting time was established so that grade levels could plan together regularly, twice each month. To make it manageable, the school selected one GLAD strategy per month as a school wide focus. Teachers would plan with their grade-level teams, try the strategy, problem solve with each other on how to strengthen the implementation. One of the teacher-leaders explained:

"It was important that we do this as a school. In order to get consistency across classrooms, all of us had to be doing it. We want our students as they go from grade to grade to walk into environments where the strategies and expectations are familiar. So everyone has to do it. It also is a way to keep teachers engaged, and accountable. We're all doing this. There is no such thing as opting out."

Implementation was not left up to chance. Each month, teachers were asked to fill out a half-sheet form stating when in the month they would be implementing the strategy. These were turned in to the Principal, who used them to plan visits to classrooms to observe. Maria Rios describes:

"Over the course of the year, I really saw it take shape. It is so evident now in the classrooms. Print rich environments, a lot of vocabulary – academic vocabulary – compare and contrast posters, graphic organizers. GLAD is so visual – and there it was, on the walls of every one of our classrooms. And, there it was in the students. It's so wonderful to go into classrooms and hear students talking, interacting, engaged, using words and vocabulary that are academic. It's very impressive."

The mix of whole school involvement, regular collaboration time, and the commitment to try one strategy per month, ensured that all teachers had support in learning the strategies – and held each other accountable. And, each teacher was able to benefit from the ideas and wisdom of the others.

GLAD was a high quality professional development choice for Baldwin Park because it matched the needs of their students as an approach designed for English Learners, it focused on language development and access to content in just the way English Learners need. And, the training was structured to address what teachers need in order to improve their instruction. Teachers got the theoretical overview, the big picture. They were able to see the strategies actually demonstrated in real-time, in Heath classrooms, with Heath students. There was a structure in place to provide support as teachers tried new strategies. And, site and district administration were clear about expectations and support for having the strategies used throughout the school.

Even in a time of budget constraints, Baldwin Park committed to funding three full time Teachers on Special Assignment coaches to work with teachers on implementing GLAD strategies.

Teachers can call on a coach at any point. As expertise is developed among Heath teachers, the district coaches and Heath teachers will be available to model and coach teachers in other schools throughout the district. The Board is behind this, and it is part of the Superintendent's vision of investing in high quality capacity-building efforts that will impact students across the system.

- *Advanced SDAIE strategy of the month in Escondido*

Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD) identified from the start of their work in PROMISE the importance of high quality professional development to support the work they hoped to do to create an affirming learning environment and to strengthen the rigor, challenge and relevance of the high school curriculum for English Learners.   Teachers already had collaborative planning time built into their schedules, and the district had made a significant investment in WRITE Institute training for teachers across the schools. Yet the specific PROMISE focus on professional development in SDAIE strategies for classroom teachers across the curriculum took several years to evolve.

The Challenge:

The San Diego County Office of Education had a longstanding leadership role in developing and providing professional development in instructional strategies for English Learner success. And, indeed, many teachers from the Escondido high schools had participated at some point in training in SDAIE strategies.   But while most came back from those trainings enthusiastic about what they had learned, there was a disconnect between that enthusiasm and actual implementation in the classroom. Escondido was experiencing what is generally true in the field of teacher education and professional development:

- One shot trainings without mechanisms for ongoing support at the site seldom result in implementation of new strategies

- The involvement of individual teachers or even a whole department may result in some implementation, but fails to have the impact on students that a school-wide or more systemic application produces.

- There are many, many SDAIE strategies, and the needs of English Learners are diverse and complex. It is very difficult to implement SDAIE approaches all at once, appropriate to the specific levels of need among students. Overwhelm is one of the major factors in curtailing implementation.

- Implementing new strategies takes trial and error, effort and refinement. The process requires a school climate supportive of trying new things.

Yet when the PROMISE Research Team from Loyola Marymount University interviewed teachers in Escondido about their needs, overwhelmingly, teachers asked for SDAIE strategies and ways to engage their English Learners. In response, the EUHSD PROMISE Lead Teams created the SDAIE Strategy of the Month initiative. The approach would create a small core of teachers from each school

who could provide expertise and energy in teaching and supporting all teachers to implement a common set of SDAIE strategies across the curriculum. By rolling the initiative out school-wide across all of the schools in the district, they intended to create a safe and professional climate for learning, adapting, trying and refining new strategies.

The partnership between EUHSD and the San Diego County Office of Education was key in developing the initiative. Terry Barron, a trainer with the county office of education, already provided a highly respected professional development in SDAIE strategies. SDCOE agreed, when approached by the PROMISE Leads in Escondido, to have Terry work to develop an Advanced SDAIE Training to prepare a core group of teachers from each PROMISE high school to become trainers at their own sites.

A team from each site was selected to get Advanced SDAIE training in preparation of serving as site experts who would train and support their colleagues throughout the school year in implementing the strategies. The teams were carefully selected to represent each and every department in the school, and were purposely chosen as teachers who held the respect of their colleagues. Karen Thielman, a member of the PROMISE Lead Team at Escondido High School described the intentionality with which the PROMISE Team set about creating the Advanced SDIAE core group:

> *"We really meant from EVERY department. Too often, physical education, fine arts are left out of professional development – or they are all grouped together at a table and told to figure out on their how to adapt the strategies to their curriculum and disciplines. Yet when you think about, those classes are really important parts of an English Learner students day. And, those are the very classes with many opportunities for the kind of hands-on application that can really be the foundation for language development. So our Advanced SDAIE strategy of the month team really did have one representative from EVERY department."*

Interest in participation was high. The Advanced SDAIE Training began in Spring 2007. Over the course of six days in that Spring and summer, the core group strengthened their own mastery of the strategies, brainstormed which strategies they would roll out at their sites, and how to structure the training and support. In one school, initial training in a new strategy would occur at a monthly faculty meeting, with follow-ups at departmental meetings. In one school, SDAIE Soirees were instituted – invitation only lunches. "Come get a free lunch and a new SDAIE Strategy". But in every school, every teacher would be involved in learning the new strategies. Every teacher would have access to a colleague to help them plan and implement, to observe and coach. And, every teacher would be part of a broader dialogue with others after they had tried the strategy – to share what worked, what didn't work, and new ideas.

One of the teachers who was part of the core team, talked about how important it was that the training be focused, concise, and fit into a small amount of time:

> *"We had to be really clear about what we were trying to accomplish, really focused on the main elements. We wanted to do one short training once per month, and it had to be effective. "*

To maximize the use of the time, the PROMISE Lead Teams decided to really USE the SDAIE strategies to deliver actual important content. And the content they elected to focus upon had to do with their PROMISE core principle, Affirming Learning Environments. In the first year of PROMISE, the Lead Teams had attended the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series, and there, set a goal of helping teachers understand in far more depth the experiences of English Learners and the factors in their lives affecting their participation and success in school. Readings from the Unit One book they received in the Leadership series became the content for SDAIE Strategy trainings. The SDAIE strategies became the vehicle for engaging teachers in learning about and talking about important content.

The core team was concerned at first that some teachers wouldn't do it. But the intent from leadership was clear, the strategies were accessible, support was at-hand.   And the momentum was with the effort.   Karen Thielman reflected:

> *"When we first planned SDAIE Strategy of the Month, we worried about whether teachers would go along with it. High school teachers can be pretty judgmental and hard on professional development presenters sometimes. But when you think about it, no teacher comes to school in the morning saying: "I would like to be really boring today.", or "I'd like to spend an hour teaching my heart out and having my English Learners learn nothing". Really, teachers want to be effective. And we had a way to help that happen."*

Nonetheless, the group strategized about how to present in ways that would be most easily received. At one school, the team sat with the Principal before school began that year, and divided the staff in a "wedding planning" approach – assigning tables, colored name tags – deliberately dispersing the "pockets of negativity" on the staff, and defusing resistance.

And Jennifer Rasmussen, PROMISE Facilitator, created a short "FUN PROMO" DVD called "*Why SDAIE?"* that clearly set this effort apart from other kinds of professional development from the very start.

Jessica Evans, one of the core teachers, talked about the shift in school climate.

> *"The environment really changed somehow. Everyone became willing to try something new – at least once.   And then, it was up to us to be sure that the strategies we were giving them were actually practical and powerful. We were accountable for the quality of what we were putting out there. And they became part of a whole schoolwide effort to give it a try."*

They actually did begin using new strategies. Erin Smith, Principal at San Pasqual High School, recollects visiting classrooms in the week after a SDAIE Strategy presentation, and seeing teachers really trying to implement the strategy. Teachers felt and reported immediate impacts on their classroom dynamics and on student engagement. English Learners participated more and seemed more motivated. Students were talking about the academic talking and using academic language to do so. This translated also into their writing.

Karen Thielman, ELD teacher at Escondido High School began hearing from her students that instructional strategies were being used across the curriculum:

"We did the snowball activity in social studies yesterday!"
"Oh yeah, we did it in science!"

One teacher participating as a core trainer reported:

"My students don't like it when I miss school because I have to go to a meeting or professional development training. But when I tell them I'm going to learn a SDAIE Strategy of the Month, they get excited and can hardly wait to see what I'm going to come back with."

For English Learners, becoming familiar with a routine approach helps as they move from class to class. Once they understand what a "Heads Together – Pair Share" is and how it works, they can more fully participate.

Infrastructure and leadership needed to make it work

The power of the SDAIE Strategy of the Month lies in the care with which it is presented, the appropriateness of the strategy and how it is adapted to each discipline, and the follow-up through. Those conditions exist when there is an infrastructure and leadership committed to making it work.

In Escondido, the PROMISE Facilitator played a key role in brokering relationships to set up the partnership with the county office and the establishment of the school teams. She created a strong set of support materials that made it easier for the teachers who were serving as trainers at their sites to do their work. A website was established with materials describing each of the strategies, and with videos that demonstrated the techniques being used in different subject areas.

Leadership at the district level supported the effort overall, and site level principals gave one of the most precious commodities in a school, the use of TIME. Erin Smith, Principal at San Pasqual, committed half of each faculty meeting every month to SDAIE Strategy of the Month.

"It was a risk, a big leap to take. But I knew that to do right by our English Learners, these SDAIE strategies were essential. It was a homegrown way to go about supporting teachers in strengthening instruction for English Learners, and it was a way to support teacher leadership. So it was a high priority for me. Worth giving up half of my faculty meetings all year long. And, in the end, it was worth it."

- **Loyola Marymount University's Certificate in Leadership in Biliteracy: Using technology to create a virtual professional learning community across the region**

Loyola Marymount University's Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) partnered with PROMISE from the beginning as a research partner. Housed in the School of Education, CEEL was a

major resource on teacher learning and education. In partnership with PROMISE, CEEL developed a Certificate program for educators in Leadership in Biliteracy for English Learners.

The Certificate represents attainment of extensive knowledge in programmatic, political and instructional issues in working with English Learners. A three-course program of study is offered through a combination of on-site, online and video-telecast meetings. The three courses correspond to PROMISE core principles: Family and Community Engagement, Enriched and Affirming Learning Environments, and Empowering Pedagogy and Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum.

Each course occurs over an eight-week period, and participants earn 4 continuing education credits. Four of the sessions are face-to-face via a video telecast. Four sessions occur through the online platform "Blackboard", enabling course participants to access the session at their convenience on flexible schedules.   Students meet for the first time at the culminating ceremony at the end of the program. By this time, however, they know each other well through the carefully and intentionally orchestrated creation of the virtual classroom.

This unique design was important as a vehicle to accommodate the challenges and barriers educators often face to participating in higher education. Educators work long, hard days at their sites and are often exhausted at the end of the day. Freeways across the Los Angeles region are often gridlocked, and travel even for short distances can take hours.   The design of the Certificate courses allowed for the creation of small groups in many different locales, so accessibility was made easier. The video telecast format enabled these small groups, meeting at the same time and linked through technology, to form a community of learning across a wide region.

Dr. Elvira Armas designed and teaches the courses. She explained what went into the design of the courses:

> *"I had to think through very carefully how to create a collaborative learning experience in the class through technology. The format of delivery definitely was a challenge to me, but technology also opened new doors and possibilities. It meant I had to do a lot more prethinking about minute-to-minute how I would deliver and facilitate the class. It meant all materials had to be sent out ahead of time. It meant we needed backup plans in case one site was cut off suddenly by a glitch of technology. So there were logistical challenges, but there was also huge payoff. Participants were able to share and learn from each others experiences in very different communities and districts across the region. They were able to engage with each other at all hours of the night and day through online postings."*

In the video telecast sessions, a variety of approaches are used. Mini-lectures with powerpoints and pre-read materials and followed with prompts. Each site has its own discussion about the prompts, and after a period of about 15 minutes all sites come back on-line and are able to share their dialogue and hear each others' thoughts. They all can hear and see each other through split screens, which Dr. Armas describes as a "Brady-bunch format". Questions and answers, thoughts and reactions can be shared through the videoconference.

The four on-line sessions are through the internet. A student can participate online wherever they can log onto a computer – it may be in the school computer lab after school, it may be at home late at night. It can be accessed through any computer port, at any time. This flexibility is hugely important to teachers, many of whom are also parents of young children.   Students and the teacher can attach files, post links, write comments for each other. They can also schedule common time for a live chat online. The online assignments may be a reading and a prompt requiring a response. It may be for additional extended research. For example, one assignment in the Family and Community Engagement class was to create an ad for a website that would be a good resource for educators working towards more family and community engagement. Students posted their ads, and it became a resource for others in the class.

As a PROMISE partner, LMU/CEEL provided special scholarships for PROMISE teachers and leaders to participate in the certificate program.   The courses are rigorous. And, to receive the certificate, students must create and present a culminating project that examines and extends some aspect of the course that interests them.

An example was a project emanating from the Enriched and Affirming Learning Environment courses. Students shadow English Learners in their own school, observing how often students talk, how many times and where they are able to participate, and reflecting upon the student experience. Written reflections led to completely revamping how that teacher conducts lessons now, seeking to increase participation and language production for her students.   Another took a Direct Instruction lesson and redesigned it as a collaborative structure of teaching and learning based on the same language and content objective, with an added social objective.

The Certificate program draws a wide range of educators: teachers, administrators, preservice teacher candidates, literacy coaches, program coordinators. Approximately two dozen enroll each year. For the PROMISE participants, the courses enable a deeper examination of the core principles, deepening their contributions and leaderships to the PROMISE work at their school site. They have opportunities to align the work within their courses to the specific PROMISE work in their classroom and school. Ongoing professional development at their site (e.g., GLAD strategies) can account for up to 14 of the 40 hours required for the course.

The partnership between the PROMISE Initiative and LMU models the kind of collaboration between school reform and higher education that can foster the intellectual development of educators and the leadership and advocacy skills they need to reform a school system.   Students in the class are there not just as individuals seeking to learn and grow, but also as people engaged in a collaborative effort at improving their schools. At the final ceremony, the students finally meet face-to-face. The celebration is an opportunity for each person's short personal statement to be shared. Just a sampling gives a flavor of the passion and knowledge they carry into their work. A Moreno Valley School District PROMISE teacher wrote:

"I am the colors of two flags…. I want to see happy, confident and responsible students that are well-rounded, successful, multilingual citizens of the world. And I want to break free of my own limitations and preconceptions."

A PROMISE Facilitator who participated in that first cohort wrote:

"I am learning, searching, growing so that I can impact my future and those around me. My vision of biliteracy is a vision where there are no barriers to receiving a well-rounded education in a safe and welcoming learning environment that begins at the front door of the school."

And, a teacher from San Bernardino City Schools wrote:

"I am a bright sunny morning, warming the world. I want to become more involved in the community, to give parents more power in the community, for my students to feel they are part of the community and that they can make a difference."

CORE PRINCIPLE #8: ADVOCACY ORIENTED ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEADERSHIP SYSTEMS

Advocacy oriented Administrative and Leadership systems:
Provide advocacy-oriented administration and leadership that institute system-wide
mechanisms to focus all stakeholders on the diverse needs and assets of English Learners.
These administrative and leadership systems structure, organize, coordinate and integrate
programs and services to respond systemically to English Learner needs.

Advocacy Oriented Administrative and Leadership Systems Defined:

In many districts and schools, English Learners are considered the responsibility of the ESL teachers, or the bilingual program. To create districts and schools that embrace and support English Learners well, the entire school community has to feel and enact ownership of the English Learner students and proactively work towards eliminating the achievement gap. Rather than being served in pull-out programs or in 30 minute "add-ons" after a mainstream academic block designed for English fluent students, in effective schools, English Learners' needs are met throughout the curriculum and school day. This requires strong advocacy-oriented leadership from district superintendents to site-based principals and teacher-leaders that make it clear that English Learners are important and that all aspects of the school must be made accessible and inclusive to them. The administration works with counseling staff to ensure that placement is appropriate and that course sections in secondary schools are created to address the English fluency levels of students. They work on developing articulation and consistency across the grades and across the curriculum so English Learners are not bounced from one program approach to another.

Advocacy-oriented leadership at the district and site levels ensures that the schools structure works for English Learners as well as other students – shaping the day, calendar and schedule to meet the needs of the community. Finally, this is an era in which programs for English Learners that involve use of the primary language are at the center of political controversy. Advocacy-oriented leaders make certain they have the data to know whether and in which ways their program is effective for English Learners, and be prepared to defend that program. School and district administrative systems need to effectively address issues of data, communication, accountability and equity as well as integrate programs and services for students so resources can be leveraged most powerfully.

Advocacy oriented leadership realizes that to achieve the vision of student success requires the ongoing expansion of our community of supporters. A common unity mu7st be developed among colleagues, friends and allies. This involves providing leadership that models, inspires and facilitates relationship building, trust and mutual support. Finally, advocacy oriented leadership requires successes and struggles, It is important to engage in public ceremonies that acknowledge who the students are, what they contribute and what they have the potential to become. Through the celebratory process, new visions and possibilities are created that move schools from a deficit, behavioristic way of thinking, doing and being, to a more asset-based and humanistic approach, which is what students and families need, want and deserve.

Advocacy Oriented Administrative and Leadership Systems: The Work of the PROMISE Pilot Sites

While none of the PROMISE pilot sites selected Advocacy Oriented Leadership as a core principle to focus upon, almost all of them ended up with significant progress and intention in this area. The PROMISE model is a capacity building and leadership building model. Through participation in PROMISE, the Lead Teams from each site were facilitated through the steps of developing increasing shared vision and analysis about the changes needed at their sites. Through their PROMISE Plans and the reflective process of co-design, the Lead Teams regularly examined what was working and what was not, the barriers to change and strategies to address those barriers.

Across the PROMISE sites, numerous approaches towards building and providing advocacy-oriented leadership emerged. English Learner Task Forces and English Learner Working Groups were established as mechanisms to engage teachers and staff in taking leadership for shaping and moving the work of strengthening English Learner programs forward. (See the story of Baldwin Park's English Learner Task Force below).   Teams bringing together administrators, counselors and classroom teachers went together to leadership development series' to learn from each other and together about English Learner needs and to frame the work to be done at their sites. (see the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success story below).   New Master Plans were written, new policies and guidelines created.

Advocacy Oriented Administrative and Leadership Systems: Case study exemplars

Two examples of work on the Advocacy-Oriented Administrative and Leadership Systems core principle are provided here: The Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series, and the Baldwin Park High School English Learner PROMISE Task Force.

- *The "Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success" leadership development series: A common starting place for PROMISE secondary schools*

In the first year of the PROMISE pilot, the county offices of education each made available to the PROMISE secondary schools an opportunity to enroll a leadership team in the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series.   Only one district declined. For the six schools that participated, the series was a pivotal experience, launching them on the PROMISE work with a core team that had a shared language for talking about secondary school EL issues, a set of tools and materials that would be used at their sites to build awareness and ownership for English Learners, a shared analysis of key EL challenges in their schools to address, and a plan for moving forward to address those challenges.

The Secondary School Leadership series was created by Dr. Laurie Olsen in 2005, through a partnership between Los Angeles County Office of Education and California Tomorrow – funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It was created to address the lack of information and support for secondary school leaders to address what was becoming a more and more obvious challenge. Twenty

percent of English Learners in California schools are enrolled in secondary schools. This includes newcomers who have arrived in their adolescent years with little time to learn English and amass required credits for graduation, as well as a large and growing population of English Learners who have been in U.S. schools for six and more years (most or all of their schooling) but are not progressing. In general, the outcomes for adolescent English Learners are poor. Many secondary schools have found in the past five years that unsatisfactory improvement among their English Learner subgroup is a major factor contributing to "Program Improvement" status. Aware of the underachievement of English Learners, feeling the pressure of NCLB, state accountability and the need for students to pass CAHSEE, administrators were hungry to figure out how to meet the needs of all students.

The result was the **"**Secondary School Leadership for English Language Learner Success' Leadership Development Series" was created to provide a leadership development process and a useful, research-based and comprehensive resource speaking directly to the needs of secondary school administrators and leaders. The goal of the series is to enable secondary school leaders to systematically, efficiently and proactively lead their schools towards developing the ownership, structures, programs, policies, instruction, support services and climate that are needed to facilitate the full participation and high achievement of English Language Learners in a high school program preparing students for work and higher education in a 21st century global world.

The Leadership Development model includes a series of five full-day sessions for teams of administrators and school leaders from secondary school sites, with opportunities between sessions for applying the tools and activities. The teams are composed of the Principal (whenever possible), an assistant or vice Principal, counselor responsible for creating the master schedule and placement, the EL Coordinator or Resource Teacher, and one or two academic department Chairs. The PROMISE teams also included the PROMISE Facilitator from their district, and a district level administrator.

Peer support, targeted technical assistance and consultation, and facilitated dialogues between sessions enhance both the learning and the application. The materials and the process are designed to:

- Ground school leaders in the theoretical and effective practices research
- Speak to the specific role of site administrators and leaders and the complex demands upon them in the current school reform and accountability context
- Provide tools and concrete models, including a map of productive paths through high school for diverse English Learners and specific guidance on how to build those paths.

The resource materials and training engage administrators in examining and reflecting upon their own sites and practice – building the understanding and skills of school leaders as well as providing activities and tools administrators can use with their own faculty and school community to build comprehensive supports for English Learners.

Escondido Union High School District sent several teams, and Jen Rasmussen, PROMISE Facilitator credits their participation with "*laying the groundwork for the whole PROMISE path and*

journey of our schools over the next several years. Partly it was the shared dialogue, and the chance to really talk in depth about our vision, and about what we thought was going on for English learners."

The five-unit curriculum is structured to speak to the broad range of English Learner needs and structural and policy issues in secondary schools. Each "unit" includes materials covering basic information and guidelines, summaries of the research, brief descriptions of how various secondary schools are addressing the issue, resource lists, planning tools and templates, and activities that administrators can use back at their sites to engage the school community in understanding and responding to the needs of English Learners.
The series consists of five units.

Unit 1, "KNOWING OUR ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS" focuses on the factors in the lives of English Learners beyond English fluency that affect their participation and achievement in schools. The session uses videos of English Learners talking about their lives and school, a video of a family tracing their immigration to the United States, readings on culture, reflections on the student body at each school, and strategies and resources for finding out more about the English Learner enrollment. .

For the Escondido group, it was an emotional discussion in that very first session, after viewing the DVD The New Americans, that led the Escondido PROMISE teams to commit to some kind of plan that would reach out and provide support to newly arrived immigrant parents – outreach that could both welcome them to the school community, and fill in gaps of knowledge about the complex school system and high school practices. And thus was born the Escondido Parent Ambassadors program (see description under Strong Family and Community Engagement). From that first session and the realization that different groups and "typologies" of English Learners required very different programs and classes grew the focus on Long Term English Learners that would lead them to creating new placement guidelines for this group of students and to creating a new specialized English Language Development course to serve their needs. And, in the words of the PROMISE Facilitator, Jennifer Rasmussen:

"We became really convinced of the need to focus on the cultural issues, on what's going on with our students and their attitudes and experiences, on their identities, and on the need for our teachers to better understand our English Learners. "

It would take them almost two more years, however, before they landed on the SDAIE Strategy of the Month as a vehicle for simultaneously modeling instructional strategies that might engage students deeper in text, paired with the readings from the SSLELS series about culture.

The Holland Middle School team from Baldwin Park walked out of that first session and set about designing a student survey so the staff could gain deeper understanding of their English Learners and the socio-cultural and emotional issues in their lives impacting school. The PROMISE Lead Team used the findings (and quotes) from that survey to bring to the whole staff, laying before them "THIS is our English Learner student body". Mike Rust, Principal of Holland, said:

"It literally changed how we look at our kids. It raised all kinds of awareness among our staff. About how many of our students take care of siblings after school, work in the family businesses, had no one to help them with homework, couldn't get projects done at home, and about how many of English Learners hoped someday to go to college. It switched our conversations from focusing on what ISN'T going on at home for them, to what we could do to enhance what happens during the school day."

Session Two focuses on instruction – providing an overview of research on second language development, and the characteristics and components of good effective instructional strategies for English Language Development, SDAIE, and bilingual instruction; strategies for observing and supporting effective instruction with structures and mechanisms for teacher collaboration and reflection; and resources for high quality professional development for English Learner education. Session Three takes the same basic understandings of language development and applies them to how to design an effective and comprehensive program for English Learners. This is a major need in secondary schools. The session provides a picture of what a comprehensive program for English Learners in secondary schools would include, and then works with teams to determine the inevitable trade-offs required due to the capacity to provide courses and the numbers and composition of English Learners at any one grade level in a school. Basic principles and concrete suggestions are also provided for approaching the master schedule around the needs of diverse English Learner groups.

Arrowview Middle School from San Bernardino sent some of their PROMISE Lead Team members, and credit this session with setting the foundation for a focus on Long Term English Learners. But it was the third session on Program Design where this really developed into a major focus on what kind of placement made most sense for these students, and on the overall program definition for long Term English Learners.

Christine Petzar, PROMISE Working Group member from San Bernardino County Office of Education, participated along with the Arrowview PROMISE Lead Team. Through this experience, she became convinced to become a trainer herself, and has since led a number of series through the San Bernardino County Office of Education for teams throughout the county.

"The format is powerful. It's important content, but it's also the process that is so important. It gives teams tools to use back at their sites to get exactly the kinds of dialogues going that have to take place if schools are going to "own" their English Learners. The process focuses on what transpires within the teams – on helping them share perspectives, on taking them step-by-step towards developing plans, and on following what they need.. The trainer is really a facilitator, posing questions. It's a very reflective and deep process."

Unit Four, "Understanding and Using English Learner Data" reviews commonly used achievement measures and their implications for English Learners; identification of common data mistakes; templates and approaches for analyzing English Learner achievement data productively and appropriately; activities and approaches for using English Learner data to inform program planning and

instruction. Rosa Perez, an ELD teacher from Holland Middle School, credits the fourth session of the series as the point it all came together for her.

> *"We'd already learned a lot about English Learners. But that session about the AMAOs was eye-opening. I looked at the numbers of students from our school who just weren't progressing at all on CELDT even though they have been in the U.S. since kindergarten. And I looked at all those who were even losing ground on CELDT. These were OUR students, it was OUR data. And I just kept asking: "Why?". Our team decided we had to understand it better, we had to know why we had so many students who weren't progressing. We had to do something. And that's what led us to focus so much on reclassification, on working with our students to understand in different ways, in changing how we deliver instruction. We had to teach in ways so that our students would get it and progress."*

The final unit of the series is "Advocacy Oriented Leadership". While the entire series seeks to develop a team of leaders with a shared understanding and vision for the English Learners in their school, this fifth session actually focuses on leadership systems and strategies for moving an English Learner agenda forward in a school and district. It covers the allocation of resources (time, money, leadership attention and weight) to create schoolwide ownership and commitment to meeting the needs of English Learners; creating the administrative roles, team, and infrastructure needed to support English Learner responsiveness; and creating a school environment that brings parents/families into the process, enabling them to become advocates for their children.

This is what brought it all together for Luis Cruz, Principal of Baldwin Park High School. Luis knew from the start of PROMISE that creating widespread leadership and ownership was crucial.   As he said:

> *"I knew it would take all of us to make it happen. And I had to find ways to give people the opportunity to practice leadership."*

And that is exactly what happened coming out of the Secondary School Leadership series. Inspired by the sessions about the importance of listening to student voices, two teachers decided to create a video capturing the voices of English Learners at Baldwin Park High School. It was their idea, and they went forward and did it, using it to bring awareness to the faculty. A Task Force was established in the school, an ongoing vehicle for people with energy and passion about addressing the English Learner needs in the school to work collaboratively to bring about changes. Rosa Diaz, an ELD teacher who had never imagined herself as a leader, emerged through the Secondary School Leadership series and through her involvement in the PROMISE Lead Team as a real school leader – changing her perception about herself, and bringing about changes in the ELD and EL program schoolwide.

Throughout the series, examples of what others are doing throughout the nation to address English Learners in secondary schools are provided. Break-the-Mold models help the leadership teams to imagine and consider new possibilities. It was through the series, for example, that the Escondido

teams learned of Bridging Multiple Worlds, an approach at cross-cultural students leadership development in a small school in Oakland, and led to them bringing the model to Escondido, developing it further and powerfully engaging English Learners in learning about and acting upon the intergroup relations in their community.

At the end of the PROMISE pilot, two years after PROMISE secondary school teams had participated in the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series, counties and sites assessed the things they had done during the pilot that had impacted their English Learners. On a rating scale from 1 = no impact, to 10= dramatic impact, the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success was credited again and again at a level "10" rating.

Three county offices wrote about the impact on their county services, giving it a "dramatic impact" rating. Los Angeles County Office of Education viewed the series as being a major force impacting schools throughout the region. Two people have been trained as trainers to continue providing the series through their office. In the analysis, they wrote:

> *"Our PROMISE schools attribute much of the learnings they got from the SSLELS as the impetus for their PROMISE work and continued growth".*

San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools office had two of their PROMISE Working Group members become trained in providing the series and have, since the initial sessions offered four more five-day series to schools from throughout the region. They further customized aspects of the series by providing county-analyzed data for each participating site to use in Day Four of the series in which schools examine their EL achievement. The focus on "master schedule" in Day Three of the series has prompted plans within the county office to develop additional technical assistance related to this important issue. Ventura County Office of Education, as a partner in PROMISE, brought the five-day series to Ventura even though none of their PROMISE sites are secondary schools. The impact on the many school teams that attended in Ventura led to scheduling a follow-up day six months after the series ended so schools could return and share with each other the work they had accomplished on their SSLELS plans.

The school site that had participated also looked back at the impact of the SSLELS on their PROMISE work, finding the impact dramatic. From Holland Middle School,

> *"The interest to create the videos was sparked after us attending the SSLELS series, and the institute had a profound effect on the leadership team that attended the training. Many of the implemented programs and changes to existing practices stemmed from the knowledge gained about ELs during the series."*

- **The development of collaborative advocacy-oriented leadership: Baldwin Park High School's English Learner Task Force**

Baldwin Park High School (BPHS) serves a large, urban and primarily Hispanic community in Los Angeles County. Nine out of ten students are Hispanic, and almost a third are English Learners. BPHS joined PROMISE in 2006, having just completed a WASC review that recommended the school create an English Learner Coordinator position to monitor EL placement and achievement and to support the school in more focus on the EL program. Over the few short years of the PROMISE pilot, BPHS went through a transformation, building a school-wide focus and culture of shared, distributive leadership for English Learner success. Through that process, their English Learner Task Force emerged as a model of how to effectively structure such leadership in a complex comprehensive high school – a model powerful enough to have been awarded a Golden Bell Award in 2009.

Several years ago, despite the large numbers of English Learners enrolled at BPHS, *"ELs were invisible, just not on the radar"*, as one teacher described it. One of just two English Language Development (ELD) teachers at the time, Rosa Diaz-Avery, remembers low EL achievement, little support for the EL program, and little awareness or "ownership" among the faculty for the EL population.

> *"I remember crying in my room at lunchtime. We had outdated books for ELD that were twenty years old. The program wasn't structured.   With just a Teachers edition of old books, we had to find out own ways to make it work. There was no support for what we were doing, and people just assumed that if there was an EL issue, that the ELD teachers were supposed to be taking care of it. We were alone."*

She contrasts it with the school now.

> *"We have total administrative support now – district and site. Much more teacher buy-in, new updated books specially purchased for new ELD course we designed for Long Term English Learners. We have a consultant to work with us on strengthening the EL program. But mostly, we are a community now, the whole school, helping each other for the good of our EL students."*

The transformation began with the creation of a PROMISE Lead Team including membership from across stakeholder groups in the school. All schools in PROMISE were charged with creating a Lead Team to guide their work during the pilot, but in many schools membership changed, meetings were sporadic. Not so at BPHS   The BPHS PROMISE Lead Team included active involvement of the Principal, two counselors (one who was assigned all ELs at levels 1 and II, and one who was assigned all ELs at levels III-IV), the two ELD teachers, a parent, academic content teachers, the PROMISE Facilitator and, the district's Director of Student Achievement. They came to the first Convocation enthusiastic and ready, wondering what this PROMISE program would entail. They were hoping to re-energize a focus on ELs, and were hoping for a program that would them the tools to meet the needs of their ELs and engage more EL parents. They came away a little sobered. As one of the Lead Team members said at the end of that first-year retreat,

> *"After the Convocation. it was like, OH, they are not going to give us the answer. We have to go back and see what's happening at our school, and we have to work on figuring out what can be*

done to improve it. It was kind of tough, but I think it needed to happen. That's what started to make us really work like a team."

The group met every month, Wednesday's after-school. BPHS was one of the few schools that actually implemented this part of the PROMISE model faithfully. The Lead Team members were not paid. They were putting in their own time, their own commitment. Somehow, it worked. The first year, one of the members reported,

"It was mostly talk. We had a lot to talk about because we had never talked about our ELs before. We had never talked about what we do with our ELs or how well it's going or anything."

They found that communicating the PROMISE vision, and getting their colleagues to focus on ELs was harder than they had anticipated, but by the end of the first year, one of the Lead Team members commented: *"A lot more faculty members were really willing to get involved than we though, as long as we could break it down into steps."*

The core principles helped the group focus their work on parent and community engagement, high quality instructional resources, and high quality professional development. To be sure that the EL efforts were part and parcel of the school's improvement efforts, the team aligned their PROMISE Plan to school goals: 80% of Freshmen ELs would be credit current, and all ELs would have access to A-G required courses. The PROMISE Task Force met monthly, talking about their PROMISE Action Plan, talking about their English Learners, and defining "next steps" for everything they wanted to accomplish. And though it seemed to the group that they had spent a lot of time *talking*, when they looked back on the year at the End-of-the-year Retreat, one of their members summed it up like this:

"We actually did a lot that first year! When we did our Journey Map looking back on it all, we could see everything we had done. We got new ideas from sister PROMISE schools, we increased parent involvement, we got the topic of EL students back to "center stage", we had a good solid game plan, we opened eyes of our faculty and exposed the dire need to enhance instruction for ELs. But one of our greatest accomplishments was having a dedicated EL PROMISE Task Force that is really strong and that can keep us moving forward. It's not just a good plan, we have leadership!"

Luis Cruz came to BPHS as the new principal that year, although he had been principal at the feeder middle school – also a PROMISE pilot site. Cruz had vision and deep commitment to the BPHS community, and to addressing the needs of English Learners. His approach to leadership was to draw out and draw upon the passion and strengths of the teachers and staff at the site – to work with and to support leadership across the school. PROMISE became, in part, a vehicle for doing that.

One of Cruz's first steps had been to act upon the WASC recommendation to create the EL coordinator position, and ask ELD teacher (and PROMISE Task Force member) Rosa Diaz-Avery to take it on. Because the position hadn't been operative for many years, the two sat down and outlined the priorities and duties. Rosa was clear from her years as an ELD teacher some of what needed to happen

in the school, although she didn't have the school-wide perspective or administrative skills to know how to go about making it happen. Principal Cruz put trust in her passion and knowledge, and told her: *"Whatever you see needs to be done, I'm behind you. Do it!"*.

Cruz called upon consultant Dr. Alejandro Segura-Mora to support the work on the EL program, and he became part of the PROMISE Task Force. There was now a formal position to coordinate the work, a strong Task Force to lead the work, and the resources of PROMISE to support what they were doing. Looking at the data on English Learner achievement was a major catalyst for the EL Task Force. The group embraced the Albert Einstein definition of insanity – "doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results" – and decided to change practices that didn't show results for English Learners. This meant studying their data to determine where gaps in learning existed, seeking out best practices via academic research and through the PROMISE network. The Plan was refined. The second year, the steps to put their Plan in place began in earnest. They were ready.

Looking Closer at EL Progress and Placement:

A new counselor joined the staff. In her first week, Cynthia Muniz was given a list of EL students to place into classes, with only their CELDT scores as guidance. She knew from years of experience as a counselor that when ELs who have been in the U.S. schools since kindergarten are placed in lower level ELD (even IF their CELDT scores are low), it doesn't work. They become more disengaged, and less and less motivated. And so, she began to ask some questions – of the Principal, of the District director, of the PROMISE Facilitator.

Cynthia feared she was taking a big risk to raise questions about how placement was done in her first weeks on a new job. What she discovered was that in the context of strong leadership at the district, site administration and within the PROMISE Task Force, it was the perfect combination to create meaningful change for English Learners.

As it turned out, members of the PROMISE Task Force had been enrolled in the Secondary School Leadership series for English Learner Success at the Los Angeles County Office of Education and had just been through a program design exercise of looking at information about ELs and programming them into courses. The idea that the needs of ELs can't adequately be defined simply through a CELDT score, and that length of time in the United States was an important factor, opened their eyes. Looking at their own data, it became clear that the majority of English Learners at BPHS were Long Term English Learners. Some continued to be placed in lower level ELD because of their low CELDT scores; others were simply placed in mainstream classes. The teachers knew well the profile of the Long Term English Learner, but hadn't thought through issues of program and appropriate placement.

The working group began to pull individual Cum Folders of English Learners who had been in U.S. schools since kindergarten and were still at CELDT levels I, II or III. Some showed that they had tested higher in previous years, some showed strong CST scores in English Language Arts, some were getting high grades in academic classes. Those examples triggered deeper looks and deeper dialogue

about what would constitute the best program for Long Term English Learners, and how to determine in individual cases what might be the best placement. Poor attendance, not language issues were holding some students back. Not taking the CELDT test seriously was a factor for some. And, some of these students needed ELD, but a different ELD than was provided for more newly arrived ELs.   In 2007-2008, index cards with data on each English Learner were spread out on the table, and individually determinations were made about what might be the most appropriate ELD/English Language Arts placement for the student. Many of the BPHS ELs ended up placed into classes that were different than where they would have been placed in the old system.

Working as a team, and with the district, a new criteria for EL placement in all academic courses was developed. In June of 2009, BPHS counselors and ELD teachers sat down again with stacks of cards (each card with information on one EL student, three years of CELDT data and scores from the California Standards Test, CAHSEE passage information, and grades) to talk through application of the criteria and to place their students into all classes.

Now it was time to create new courses, more appropriate to the needs of their EL students. A new English for Academic Purposes ELD class was designed for Long Term English Learners. New textbooks were reviewed and selected for that class. The ELD teachers received professional development in the WRITE Institute approach and using the units as a way to strengthen writing skills and productive language for English Learners.

Student Voice and Instructional Change:

BPHS is divided into small learning communities, meant to personalize schooling in the large comprehensive high school. As part of the effort to better meet the needs of English Learners, one of the learning communities (called houses) was assigned all of the English Learners at levels 1 and 2. Within that house, teachers began to look for more EL instructional strategies. One of the teachers reported:

> *"We had the program. We had the students. We didn't know how to teach them. We knew our ELs needed more than we were giving them. But we didn't know how to help."*

Rosa remembers going into a classroom to model a SDAIE strategy, and being asked by a student: *"Are we allowed to talk?"*. That's what prompted what became a focus on oral language and interactive strategies.

Through PROMISE, the ELD teachers were trained in the WRITE Institute. Teachers implemented the units, but didn't collaborate much or do follow-up with each other until the third year of PROMISE. They began meeting to discuss how the units are going, to share strategies - forming their own professional learning community. One of the big challenges was how to create a cohesive program out of various materials. Working with the existing ELD adoption in the district and with the new purchase of ELD materials, the WRITE Institute units and the ELD standards, there was a lot to piece together.   But within the EL house, movement towards strengthening instruction was underway.

Because of the awareness of the large number of Long Term English Learners who were spread throughout the houses in the school, and the creation of new courses to meet their needs, the challenge of bringing about instructional change *across* the school was now front and center. Strategizing how to interest and motivate teachers to learn and adopt new instructional approaches, the PROMISE EL Task Force turned to their students.

A small subgroup of the PROMISE EL Task Force that had attended the Secondary School Leadership for English Learner Success series, were deeply moved by a video they saw there of EL student voices. They returned to the PROMISE Task Force to show the film and start a conversation about what BPHS students were experiencing in school. The PROMISE Task Force decided they wanted a video of their own students talking. They viewed the BPHS faculty as teachers who cared about students, and whose awareness about the specific needs of English Learners could be tapped through hearing from students.

ELD teacher Jesus Gutierrez, working with consultant Dr. Segura-Mora, took on the task of making a film. The questions for the student interviews were designed to help teachers become more aware of ELs, to connect on a human level with the experiences of ELs and become more motivated about learning new strategies to use in the classroom. Students were asked about what helps them learn and what contributes to their feeling stuck academically.

The student voices video was shown in one of the faculty common meeting times. One of the teachers who was there reported:

"I've never been in a faculty meeting that was so quiet, where people were listening so hard. They put down their newspapers and grading books and just listened."

After the video was shown, the students who had been in the film came into the room, and each said a personal thank you to a teacher who had helped them. When the teachers heard their names called, they stood up and were handed a rose and a letter of thanks from the student. That one faculty meeting contributed powerfully to a sea-change in the school culture. Teachers realized in a visceral way that they can and do make a difference in the lives of ELs. They saw that it was more than just the ELD teachers that ELs appreciate. And, the teachers also heard clearly the things students said about the kinds of things that happen in classrooms and instruction that are difficult for them. The door was open for professional development in EL strategies!

This was in the third year of PROMISE. The actual mounting of professional development, and supporting teachers to actually implement new strategies in their classrooms was yet to be done. Teachers were enrolled in SIOP and SDAIE training, a part of the third year PROMISE Plan.

The impact on students was already evident. English Learners state scores in English Language Arts increased, the 10th grade CAHSEE pass rate for English Learners increased, and the Reclassification rates jumped from 0% in 2005-2006 to 25.9% in 2008-2009.

By the end of the PROMISE pilot, BPHS's powerful and active PROMISE EL Task Force was renamed, simply, the English Learner Task Force – a vehicle of leadership that was firmly in place and could take the work forward. Looking back on the three year journey, members of the EL Task Force wrote in response to a reflection prompt:

> "It's one thing to be a leader, an individual who wants to make change. It's a whole new level to have a structure to do it together, to work together to create movement across a whole school. That's what we've done here. That's who we are."

> "We got things done because we have a committed leader, our Principal, who was determined to see BPHS improve, and a committed staff who felt supported by the principal to move forward with innovative changes. It was the leadership of teachers who made it their mission to make these things happen, working with the district office leaders and our administration."

> "Being part of the EL Task Force is a lot of extra hours. But you see the hours paying off. Real things change! And it's an investment in our students and our school. Once you see that, there is no going back."

> "The EL Task Force will definitely go on. There is too much commitment to let it go. Now we really KNOW what we are doing. We have strong support. PROMISE may be ending, but our work is continuing."

And in an interview, Rosa Diaz-Avery's final reflection was:

> "At first, I was just a teacher. I knew what my ELs needed, and I knew what I needed as a teacher to make it work. But now, three years later, I'm not just a teacher, I'm a teacher AND a leader – a leader who can use what I know from the classroom and my experiences as a teacher to relate to other teachers so I can support them and so I can advocate so the school is set up to support teachers and students better. A lot of teachers feel that things have to be different in schools. But now I know (and I tell them) if teachers want to see change happen, you'll wait for a very long time if you are hoping those changes will just fall from the sky. YOU have to be active. YOU have to step out. WE can be leaders.… "

In three years, the PROMISE EL Task Force had developed deeper understanding of their ELs, created new policies for the placement of their ELs, created new courses, guided the purchase of new materials, and initiated new professional development for teachers across the school. They were a key element in making real changes for ELs in their school. They had become an Advocacy Oriented Leadership force, and the work that flowed from the plans they devised touched upon multiple arenas of the PROMISE core principles: high quality instructional materials, high quality professional development, parent engagement, challenging and relevant curriculum (new courses), valid assessment systems (use of multiple criteria for placement), and empowering pedagogy (student voice). It is an illustration of how advocacy-oriented leadership knits together a systemic response.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Over the course of the three-year pilot of the PROMISE model, using the core-principles framework and the resources of the PROMISE infrastructure of support, the PROMISE sites engaged in a tremendous outpouring of effort. Although schools engaged in PROMISE to differing degrees, and through the principles-based and co-design process selected different focuses for their work, the overall initiative resulted in positive impacts on English Learner student achievement and provided strong exemplars for *each* of the core principles. This volume has described a small slice of what occurred in the PROMISE pilot sites, focusing on the core principles framework aspect of their work. As the examples in this volume attest, the PROMISE core principles served to provide important coherence to the work being done in the pilot sites, and to provide guidance for how to deepen the work over time. While each case study is instructive as an example for the field of what schools might do to improve English Learner outcomes, the combined experience across the sites also provides some important lessons that enrich the knowledge base about principles-based reform.

The Promise core principles framework resulted in English-Learner specific research-based changes in schools.

The PROMISE core-principles were distilled from the research literature on what is known in the field of effective English Learner education. As a result, implementation of the PROMISE core principles resulted in increased use of English Learner specific research-based approaches to student grouping, student placement, instruction, school structures, curriculum choices, program design and practices. Schools created more inclusive school cultures, and more knowledgeable and advocacy-oriented school leadership emerged for implementing practices to meet the needs of English Learners. The changes brought about through the core principles focus included implementation of more research-based practices for English Learner success, creation of new structures and policies to better serve English Learners, and the development of leadership to carry the work forward.

The PROMISE core-principles gave coherence to school improvements.

A principles-based approach to school improvement was unfamiliar to most educators in PROMISE, and the PROMISE core principles framework was complex. It took time for leaders to make sense of and figure out how to use the core principles as a lens for examining practice and a basis for planning. However, the majority found that over time, the core principles served to provide important coherence to the work being done in the school, and guidance for how to deepen the work. While many educators in PROMISE schools were initially concerned about the extra work that PROMISE would require, most school leaders across the PROMISE sites ended up feeling that the principles based approach created a sense of coherence among the various initiatives in a school, and reduced a sense of fragmentation and overwhelm.

Work on a few principles led to work on the others –resulting in more comprehensive reform.

Creating schools that support English Learner high achievement requires comprehensive and systemic reform and the enactment of all eight core-principles. Few schools are able, however, to work simultaneous on many different arenas of school practice and at multiple levels all at once. For this reason, each school's PROMISE Plan began in the first year by focusing on just two or three of the principles. The PROMISE model posits that work on one principle will lead to work on the others. Indeed, this is what happened in the PROMISE pilot sites that implemented the full model. As the schools delved deeper into implementing those principles, their understanding of the principles deepened and the Plans were broadened and strengthened, expanding to incorporate other principles – not as a separate new focus, but rather as an extension of their work on the initial principles. In this way, the core principles framework has demonstrated the power to lead to comprehensive reform.

The core principles worked across all levels of schooling.

The PROMISE Initiative was piloted in sites preschool through high school. The core principles were designed to provide a framework and guidance for research-based improvements across all these levels of the schooling system. The core-principles framework was useful as a lens and guide for identifying, selecting and implementing solutions appropriate the various levels, despite the very different structural and institutional contexts. The core principles "held" as a framework to focus work across the levels,

The core-principles do not stand alone – they work in combination with the other components of the PROMISE model.

The PROMISE model is an integrated approach involving four foundational components: vision, core-principles, process of co-design and reflection, and an infrastructure of support. Each component works in relationship to the others. The research-based core principles are the pathway to enacting the PROMISE vision. The core principles require the engagement of teams in collaborative meaning-making and co-design as the mechanism for moving from the generality of the core-principles to specifics of action. The reflective and iterative processes of co-design move schools towards continuous refinement and improvement, and result in fostering distributive leadership and collaboration. It is the combination of supports (e.g., guided facilitation, purposeful convening, professional development resources, participation in a community of practice, access to research and researchers, tools, and a staff person charged with keeping the work moving forward) that make it possible for sites to actually implement their Plans. It is the combination of these components of the PROMISE model that result in significant change.

PROMISE INITIATIVE KEY PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

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      Holland Middle School
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      Orange Glen High School
      San Pasqual High School
Moreno Valley Unified School District
      Sunnymead Elementary School
      Sunnymead Middle School
Ocean View Elementary School District
      Mar Vista Elementary School
      Ocean View Early Childhood Program
Saddleback Valley Unified School District
      Gates Elementary School
      Laguna Hills High School
San Bernardino City Unified School District
      Arrowview Middle School
      Lytle Creek Elementary
      Lytle Creek Preschool

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APPENDIX II: CORE PRINCIPLES ASSESSMENT TOOL

In the initial months of the PROMISE Pilot, school sites assessed their school climates, practices and structures through the lens of the PROMISE Core Principles. The following tool was used to assist in this assessment process, as well as to revisit throughout the three years of the pilot in order to identify additional areas that might require work.

PROMISE INITIATIVE CORE PRINCIPLES
A REFLECTION, DIALOGUE, ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOL

LOOKING AT OUR SCHOOL THROUGH THE PROMISE LENS

This tool is designed to engage school teams in reflecting on the practices, policies and life of their school through the lens of the PROMISE Principles. It is intended to deepen understanding about the principles themselves, and to support both dialogue and planning towards systemic implementation of the PROMISE vision. A matrix for each of the eight principles lists characteristics of schools that are enacting that PROMISE Principle.

▶**Step 1:** Each team selects by consensus which Core Principle to address.

▶**Step 2:** Every member of the "team" i*ndividually* fills out the tool, checking for each characteristic whether they feel it is a "strength" of the school, a "work in progress", "isn't happening", or "don't know".

▶**Step 3:** After all individuals have marked their ratings, the team goes through the principle they selected sharing and comparing how they rated their school for each characteristic.

Questions to consider and discuss: WHY did they rate the school the way they did? What "evidence" led to that rating? Note where there is clear consensus. Take time to talk about those characteristics where there is not consensus. The dialogue is particularly important where there are differences in the ratings. It is an opportunity to share differing perspectives and experiences that together inform a fuller picture of what is going on in the school. Use this opportunity to learn from each other.

▶**Step 4:** One team member calculates the average and range for each characteristic and shares with the rest of the team.

▶**Step 5**: Go back through your ratings and compile a list of all of the areas for which team members marked "don't know". Add to that list any characteristics where there was wide disparity in how members of the team ranked the school. This list becomes an agenda for further inquiry. Your Inquiry plan will be built from that list.

▶**Step 6:** Go back through your ratings and compile a list of those characteristics, which are a "strength" of the school. This is where the PROMISE Vision is already firmly planted. It will be important to celebrate, nurture and protect that work.

▶**Step 7:** Go back through your ratings and compile a list of those which are works in progress. The next step will be to do an Assessment and Alignment Process through which you'll look deeper at what the school is doing to work in those areas, assess how well you feel it is going and what else may be helpful to do.

▶**Step 8:** Go back through your ratings and compile a list of those characteristics about which there is general agreement "isn't happening". These become important topics for further dialogue and possible inquiry and fact-finding. These will require further diagnosis. WHY isn't any happening? Is it lack of awareness? Are there policy and resource conditions that don't allow it to happen? Is it lack of will?

PRINCIPLE 1: ENRICHED AND AFFIRMING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:
Create a safe, affirming and enriched environment for participatory and inclusive learning.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
Staff expresses a positive attitude about the diversity of the students and welcome what students bring from their backgrounds and homes into the classroom and life of the school.				
Intentional classroom and schoolwide strategies are in place so that students and teachers learn to understand and respect differences.				
Through policies, vision statements, activities, signs and images on the wall, the school actively imparts the value of diversity, multiple languages, and multiculturalism.				
School has strong, enforced bottom-line policies of zero tolerance for anti-immigrant, anti-bilingual and racist language and behavior.				
The faculty, staff and administration includes members of the major racial, language and cultural communities of the students.				
Teachers, staff and administrators intervene with positive messages about worth and respect for diversity whenever incidents occur where students devalue or express shame about their own culture & language.				
Classroom climate and curriculum facilitate students exploring learning about, becoming comfortable with and building excitement about each other's languages and cultures.				
Instructional strategies and pedagogy emphasize cooperative learning.				

PRINCIPLE 2: EMPOWERING PEDAGOGY:

Use culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy that maximizes learning, actively accesses and develops student voice, and provides opportunities for leadership.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
Staff understands that the EL population is multifaceted, diverse and complex – and are aware of the role of home language and culture in shaping el participation in school.				
Teachers motivate students to become active participants in their learning by encouraging and providing opportunities for them to ask questions, think critically, and make choices.				
Students are allowed to express ideas and feelings in their home language, and to use their home language for academic work.				
Students are actively and consistently invited to share their experiences, and to draw upon their culture to make meaning of academic work.				
English Learners experience equal opportunities and encouragement as other students to participate in leadership activities of the school – and are proportionately represented in leadership roles.				
Professional development supports staff in developing cultural competence.				
Explicit leadership development components focus on helping young people develop as responsible members, cultural brokers and bridges of their community.				

PRINCIPAL 3: CHALLENGING AND REVELENT CURRICULUM:

Engage English Learners in well-articulated and age-appropriate curriculum that purposefully builds bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism. This curriculum is cognitively complex, coherent, relevant and challenging.

Characteristic	Strength	Work in Progress	Is Not Happening	Do Not Know
Curriculum emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving, analyzing and synthesizing complex ideas, and the active production of knowledge.				
Students have the opportunity to study both home language and a second language to advanced levels of literacy throughout the grades.				
A strong, articulated sequence and designated instructional time for English language development enables ELs to develop full English proficiency.				
Students have access to high quality peer and adult language models in both home language and in English.				
Students are engaged in high level complex learning in both home language and English.				
Students are learning and mastering material at grade level or beyond.				
All students are enrolled & succeeding in curriculum that prepares them for college.				
Teachers use scaffolding (SDAIE) strategies to help el students access the content and comprehend high level academic text.				
Curriculum is designed to promote 21st century competencies related to living in a diverse & global world.				
ELs have access to the full core curriculum in classes designed to meet their English fluency needs.				
Thematic units are used, and the curriculum is constructed so that multiple disciplines are drawn upon by students to complete a task or solve a problem.				

PRINCIPAL 4: HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:
Provide and utilize high quality standards-aligned instructional resources that provide equitable access to core curriculum and academic language in the classroom, school and community.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
All materials used in the classroom are standards aligned to core content standards and to ELD standards (as appropriate for English learners).				
Materials used by ELs in the classroom are designed for and appropriate to the specific English fluency levels of students.				
Instructional materials are developmentally and age appropriate.				
Instructional resources brought into the school reflect and represent the diversity of the students.				
Technological resources are available and used as an integral part of the instructional program to provide access to standards-aligned curriculum content.				
Technology is used to engage students in interactive and generative learning.				
Students have access to a wide range of books in English and home language which are made available in the classroom and school library.				
Students are encouraged and allotted time to read independently in both languages.				
Core curriculum & materials integrate the development of academic language in both English and primary language.				
Teachers effectively use the local community as an extension of the classroom learning environment, identify and utilize resources and expertise of the community.				

PRINCIPAL 5: VALID AND COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT:

Build and implement valid and comprehensive assessment systems designed to promote reflective practice and data-driven planning in order to improve academic, linguistic, and sociocultural outcomes for English learners.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
Standardized assessments are valid and reliable for English learners (normed by EL population), linguistically accessible, free of cultural bias, and administered with appropriate accommodations for ELs.				
Placement and high stakes decisions are based upon multiple measures and methods.				
Assessments track socio-cultural outcomes as well as language and academic.				
Teachers can easily access data relevant to ELs about student achievement in meaningful formats, and consistently use that data plus student work as a basis for planning and instruction.				
School has a data system that tracks individual student progress over time, and can aggregate and disaggregate by English language proficiency level, by length of time in country, and by programs & services.				
Decision making includes a process of asking questions about the specific impacts of programs and services and policies on ELs.				
There are regular, formal mechanisms and supports through which staff collaboratively reflect on data.				
School is engaged in an ongoing cycle of inquiry. The school regularly turns to data to illuminate current and emerging issues and problems.				

PRINCIPLE 6: HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND SUPPORT:
Provide coherent, comprehensive and ongoing professional preparation and support programs based on well-defined standards of practice. These programs are designed to create professional learning communities of administrators, teachers and other staff to implement the promise vision of excellent teaching for English learners.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
Teachers are given time, professional development and support to work together in reflective learning communities on issues.				
Teachers and administrators have ready access to research.				
The school supports good quality teaching through use of mentor teachers, coaches and resource people with deep expertise on EL issues.				
Teachers have collaborative time built into the school day/week for curriculum development, articulation and implementation of programs for ELs.				
Teachers and administrators are tapped into networks, informed about and encouraged/ supported to participate in local and state professional development related to meeting the needs of ELs.				
Teachers are co-participants in decision-making about professional development.				
Teachers are engaged in professional dialogue about student work, student needs and teaching & learning.				
Funding for high quality professional development addressing issues of English learners is built into the school site plan.				
Professional development is sustained over time and ongoing.				

PRINCIPLE 7: POWERFUL FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Implement strong family and community engagement programs that build leadership capacity and value and draw upon community funds of knowledge to inform, support and enhance teaching and learning for English learners.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
The climate in the school is very welcoming and provides open access for parents to the school and their student's classroom(s).				
Teachers and administrators have received training in cross-cultural communication and strategies for strengthening two-way partnerships between home and school.				
EL parents and community members are represented on the leadership bodies of the school.				
The school has an active ELAC parent advisory community.				
EL parents are engaged in leadership development programs that enable them to know their rights, and how to be an effective advocate and support for their child's school success.				
EL parents receive information and guidance regarding the importance of heritage culture and language, as well as information on supporting their student's English language development while maintaining home language.				
Staff speak languages of the families in the school; signs on campus are in the languages of the home; and all notices and parent materials are translated into language of the home.				
School and community programs orient newcomer immigrant families to a new culture and to U.S. schools.				
Partnerships with community groups and members bring the language and cultural expertise from EL communities into the instructional program.				
The school hosts regular forums in which parents meet and mix across language and cultural groups.				
Curriculum fosters home-school collaboration on academic work and recognizes/utilizes parents as a valued and valuable resource of knowledge.				

PRINCIPAL 8: ADVOCACY-ORIENTED ADMINISTRATIVE & LEADERSHIP SYSTEMS:
Provide advocacy-oriented administration and leadership that institute system-wide mechanisms to focus all stakeholders on the diverse needs and assets of English learners. These administrative and leadership systems structure, organize, coordinate and integrate programs and services to respond systemically to English learner needs.

Characteristic	*Strength*	*Work in Progress*	*Is Not Happening*	*Do Not Know*
Leadership is grounded in the research and theoretical frameworks for effective EL instruction and biliteracy development.				
There is equity in the allocation of resources (appropriate teachers, advanced courses, etc.)				
English learner programs are integrated into the curriculum and are not delivered through pull-outs.				
Administrators are well-versed in the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school for implementation and monitoring of English learner programs.				
School leadership makes it explicit and clear that addressing the needs of ELs is a responsibility of the whole school and is key to the school's mission and vision.				
School has a designated person with responsibility for monitoring individual assessment and placement of EL students, for reviewing course assignments and master scheduling to ensure access, and who facilitate smooth transitions through school for ELs.				
Leadership is prepared to defend the EL program with data and research, and proactively garners needed resources to support the EL program.				
Guidance counselors and counseling services are well informed about the needs of English learners and facilitate appropriate placements which provide access to the core curriculum.				
Systems are in place to regularly monitor that ELs are not disproportionately or inappropriately placed into lower academic tracks or special education.				

SUMMARY SHEET

Principle	My Rating	Overall Rating (Group Average)	Range of Ratings (Low to High)	Notes
Principle 1 Enriched and Affirming Environment				
Principle 2 Empowering Pedagogy				
Principle 3 Challenging and Relevant Curriculum				
Principle 4 High Quality Instructional Resources				
Principle 5 Valid and Comprehensible Assessment				
Principle 6 High Quality Professional Development				
Principle 7 Strong Parent and Community Engagement				
Principle 8 Advocacy Oriented Leadership				