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The multilingual learner population in Connecticut continues to increase and there is a growing need for greater support and resources to better educate and serve multilingual learners and their families. However, there are a number of areas of concern that currently limit the ability of the State of Connecticut and its public schools to make accurate and informed decisions regarding multilingual learner education. These areas of concern include:

- **Connecticut's current system for reporting district and school spending does not provide clear insight into how money is being spent to educate multilingual learners.**

Without a mandate to use uniformed and detailed reporting of how funds are being used for educating multilingual learner students, there is limited ability for state or local education stakeholders to have a true understanding of how multilingual learners are performing and whether the funding provided and investments made in multilingual learner education are sufficient to ensure the achievement of Connecticut's multilingual learner student population.

- **Connecticut is not educating most multilingual learners for postsecondary success.**

While performance has improved on some assessments, Connecticut's multilingual learners are consistently underperforming on statewide assessments in comparison to their English-fluent peers.

- **Funding from the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula's multilingual learner weight is not required to be spent on multilingual learner education or services.**

With the lack of a mandate to use ECS funds weighted for multilingual learners specifically on multilingual learner education and services, or requiring more detailed reporting of funds for educating multilingual learner students, it is hard to assess if the policies in place are actually helping multilingual learners reach Connecticut's academic standards and/or achieve English language proficiency.

- **Connecticut's Bilingual Education Program grant is small, narrowly focused, and not responsive to the growing multilingual learner population and the increasing number of districts eligible for the grant.**

Districts are currently being required to provide bilingual programming for more students but with less aid per student due to the flat funding of the state bilingual grant because the formula for disbursement has been level funded at approximately \$1.9 million.

- **Multilingual learners do not currently have a dedicated group of stakeholders that specifically represents their interests.**

While there are organizations throughout Connecticut that advocate for policies that can improve multilingual learner education, there is no group formed by the State

that understands and represents the needs of multilingual learners to ensure these students are considered during the policy creation or implementation processes.

Recommendations

Given the areas of concern noted above, there are clear opportunities to aid in the improvement of multilingual learner education in Connecticut and remedy current limitations. Our recommendations to improve how the education of multilingual learners in Connecticut can be broken down into three main sections: data and reporting, funding, and advocacy and support. Each of these recommendations also includes a summary of responsibilities at the state and local levels.

Data & Reporting

Improve how multilingual learner spending and performance data is captured, reported, and disseminated.

State Roles	Local Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a public-facing dashboard that displays English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment results, multilingual learner program type, standardized test scores, retention-in-grade rates, graduation rates, and enrollment in special education, enrichment, gifted and talented, and other advanced learning programs for current and former multilingual learner students. (This data is currently being collected at the Connecticut State Department of Education.) • Provide achievement data for multilingual learner students who qualify for the state's Bilingual Education Program grant. (This information is collected but has not been recently released publicly.) • Provide staff counts for multilingual learner teachers and support. (This information is collected but not reported except at the federal level.) • Analyze longitudinally a cohort of students by school and multilingual learner program to assess whether students enrolled in each program model are overcoming language barriers within a reasonable period of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request data and information from the State or local school on services provided to multilingual learners to aid in the improvement of the overall educational experience of these students. • Participate in efforts to improve data collection and reporting for multilingual learner students.

State Roles	Local Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a system that accurately tracks whether multilingual learner students receive equitable shares of federal, state, and local education funding and whether the unique needs of multilingual learners are being met by all schoolwide programs. • Require districts to provide a detailed accounting of their costs and funding sources and report what they expect to spend on fulfilling their obligations to multilingual learners for the previous and upcoming school years. 	

Funding

Evaluate whether state supplementary funding provides the necessary support for multilingual learner students and whether districts with different multilingual learner populations are receiving equitable shares of those funds.

State Roles	Local Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the calculation and reporting of per-pupil expenditures for multilingual learner students. (This information is currently not being collected.) • Require the calculation and reporting of expenditures for multilingual learners by resource and by program. (This information is currently not being collected.) • Require that funding provided to school districts as a result of the multilingual learner weight in the ECS formula be spent on multilingual learner education and services. • Revise and improve the Bilingual Education Program grant to better support the state's growing multilingual learner population and the increasing number of districts eligible for the grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in efforts to evaluate the state's basic funding formula for effort, adequacy, and progressivity. • Calculate and report per-pupil expenditures for multilingual learner students. (This information is currently not being collected.) • Calculate and report expenditures for multilingual learners by resource and by program. (This information is currently not being collected.)

Advocacy & Support

Create an ecosystem that provides advocacy and support for the needs of multilingual learner students and their families at the state level.

State Roles	Local Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a statewide advisory group focused solely on multilingual learners to ensure the needs of multilingual learner students and families are met and considered when policies are being made and implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide input during state and local budget negotiations for education as well as health and human service agencies to ensure adequate investments are made to support multilingual learner students and their families. • Create partnerships with health and human service agencies and nonprofits to support community school models and wraparound services. • Invest in helping the families of multilingual learner students build knowledge systems as part of family and community engagement.