

A white silhouette of the state of California is positioned on the left side of the slide. Inside the silhouette, three children are depicted in white. One child stands at the top left, reaching up towards a cluster of five stars. Another child is crouching in the middle, and a third child is sitting at the bottom right. The stars are also white and vary in size.

Getting Down to Facts III 2026

Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities for California Multilingual Learners

Webinar
September 24, 2026

Welcome

GDTF III Objective:

Provide the best possible evidence on where CA's education system is, where it can go, and how to get there so that CA can be a model of excellence for all of our students

Across the studies, researchers found that California faces three systemwide challenges:

- Accountability and Alignment
- Balance Between State Guidance and Local Control
- Capacity

Thank you!



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Individual Supporters

Jenny and Gerald Risk
Grace and Steven Voorhis
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Today's Speakers



Antero Garcia
Stanford University
(Moderator)

What California's
Latine Students,
Families and
Communities Want
From and For Their
Schools



Alfredo Artiles
Stanford University

Multilingual Learners of
English with Disabilities
in California: Patterns in
Enrollment,
Opportunities,
Outcomes, and
County-Level Variation



Ilana Umansky
University of Oregon

Academic
Gatekeeping of
English
Learner-Classified
Students: The Case
of California



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University of California, Los Angeles

Multilingual Learners
Learning English: What
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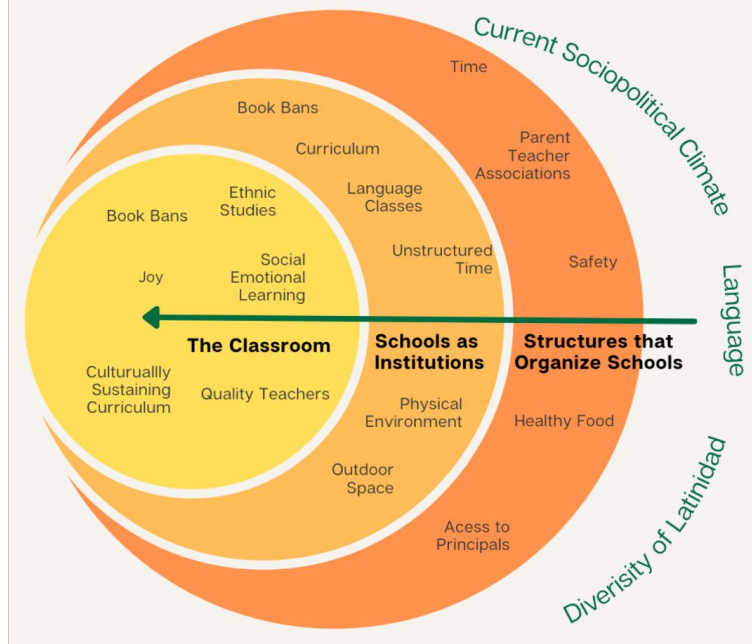
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Antero Garcia
Stanford University



LATINE FAMILY & STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA



Success: Multilingualism Is an Asset Families Want Schools to Build On

- Families want children to develop English without losing their home languages.
- Families value curriculum, teachers, and programs that reflect their languages, histories, and communities.
- Families already bring substantial linguistic knowledge, cultural resources, and educational aspirations to schools.

Challenge: Language, Belonging, and Safety Are Interconnected

- There is not a singular Latine (or "multilingual") learner.
- Language still determines access.
- Immigration enforcement reaches into the school day.
 - **"Anticipatory compliance"**

Opportunity: Build Schools With Multilingual Students and Families

- Move from translation as accommodation to multilingualism as infrastructure: high-quality interpretation, heritage-language opportunities, bilingual/dual-language programs, etc.
- Create curriculum and classrooms where students experience belonging, joy, and intellectual challenge
- Treat students and families as partners in educational decision-making: ask what they need, make governance accessible, and design programs around community knowledge rather than assumptions.

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Patterns in Enrollment, Opportunities,
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Alfredo J. Artiles
Joao Souto-Maior
Stanford University

September 24, 2026



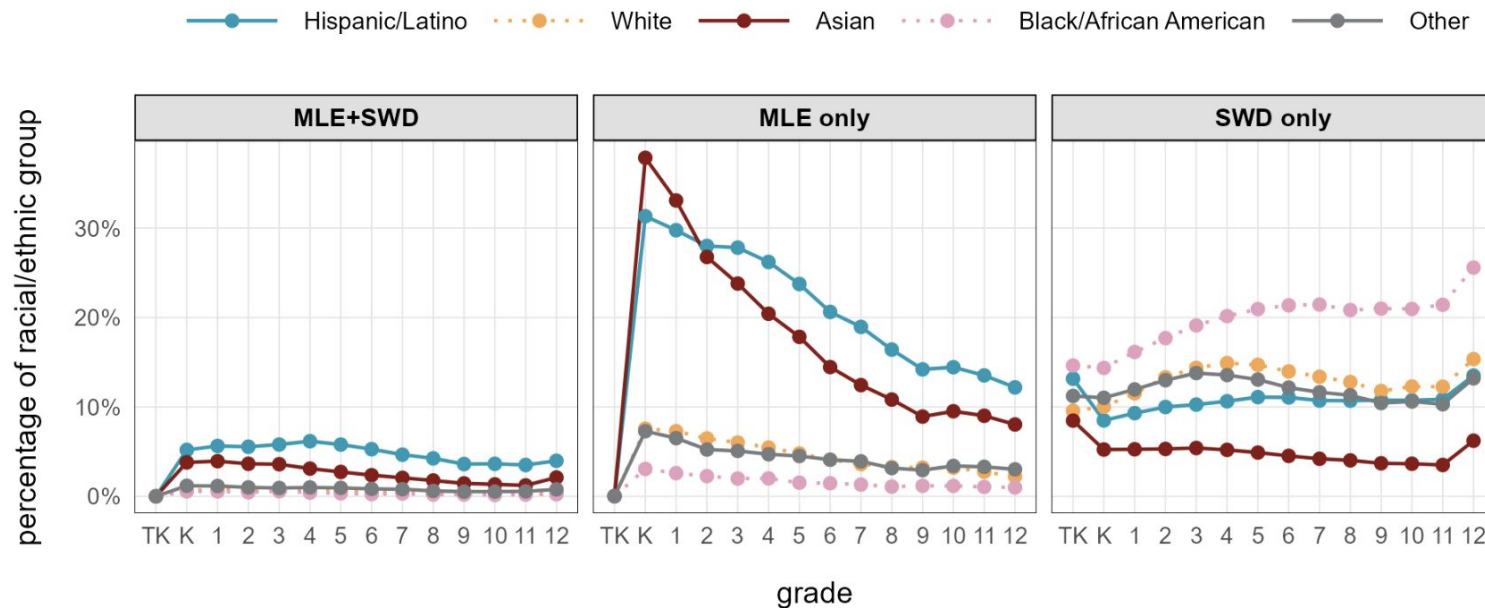
Context

- ❖ **MLLs in CA: 1 in 5 (>1 mill)**
 - **Dually identified: 3% of total enrollment**
 - **18% of MLLs are in sped**
 - **21% of SWD are MLLs**
- ❖ **Forcing narrow choices—is it L2 or a disability?**
 - Access to coherent services—loss of language supports, institutional barriers (scheduling), lack of expertise.
 - Development of L1
- ❖ **Over- and under-identification—equally problematic**

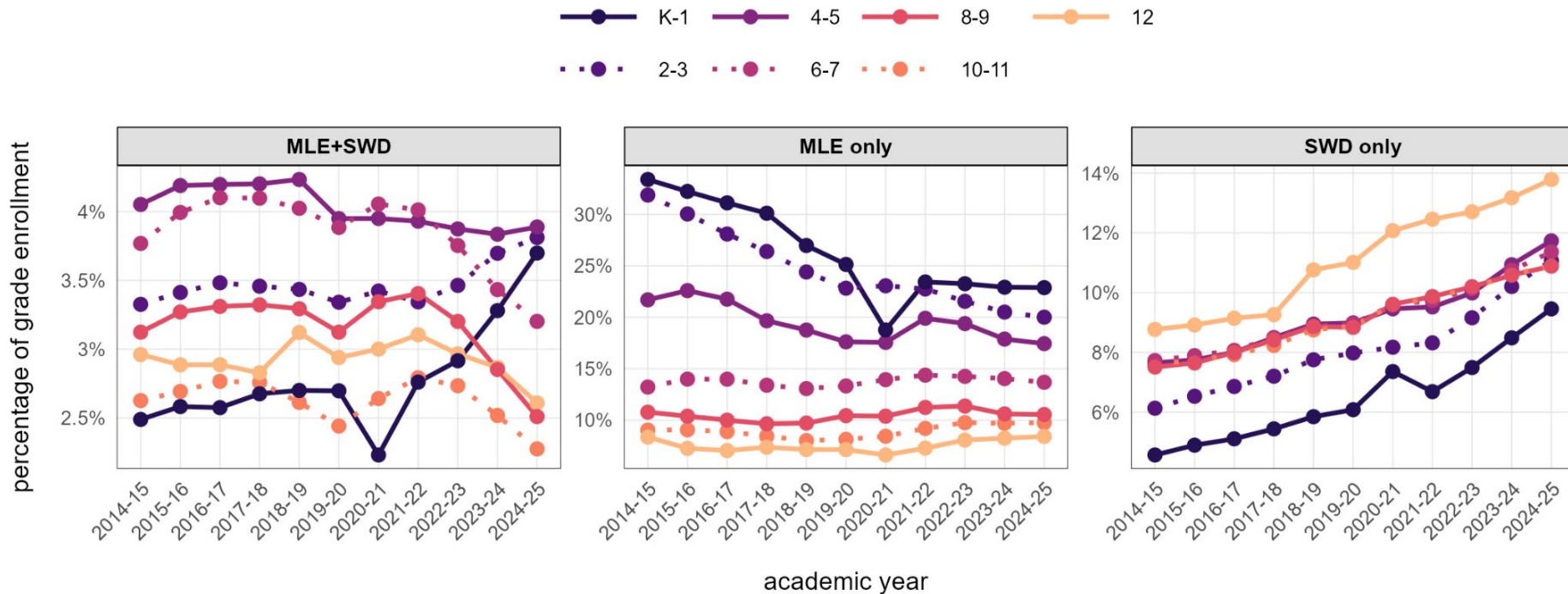
Focus

- ❖ How has the **enrollment and representation** of dually identified students in California changed over time?
- ❖ What are the **sociodemographic characteristics** of dually identified students, and how do these characteristics shift as students progress through K-12?
- ❖ How do **educational opportunities** for dually identified students compare to those of other groups?
- ❖ How do **educational outcomes** of dually identified students compare to those of other groups?

Distribution of group representation by grade and disaggregated by race, California public schools, 2024-25

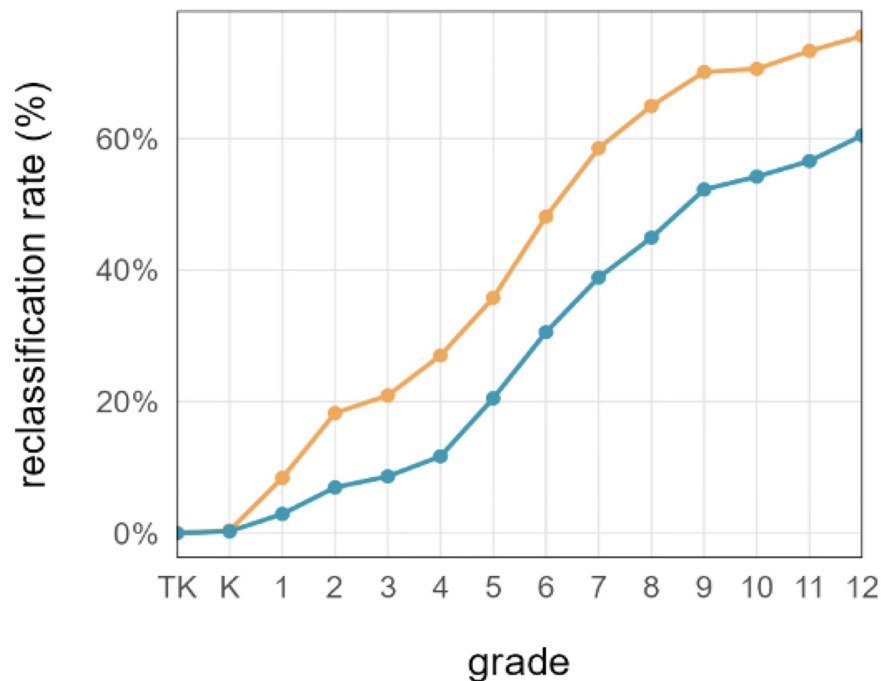


Grade-level concentration by group over time

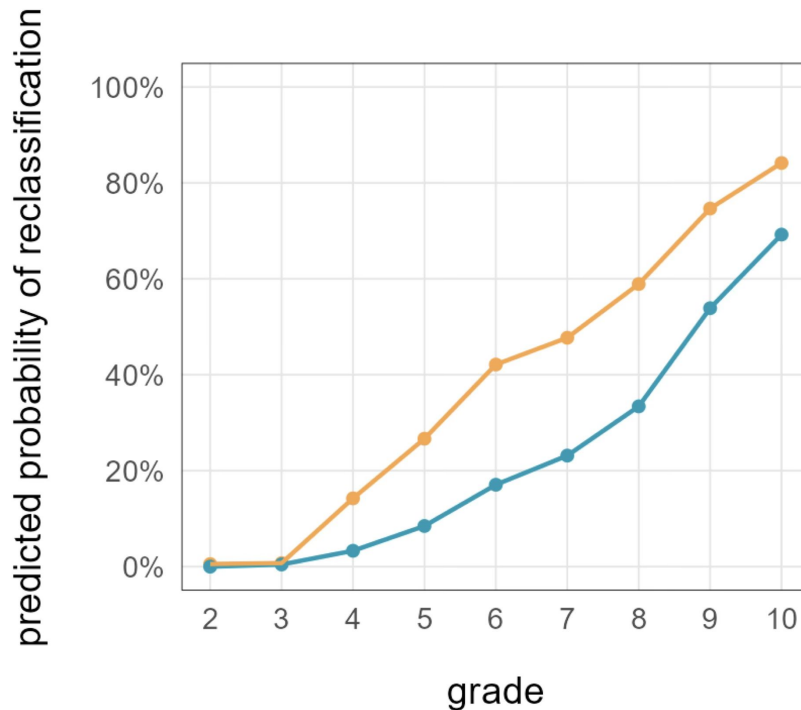


Reclassification of ever-MLE students by grade (disaggregated by disability status), California public schools, 2024-25

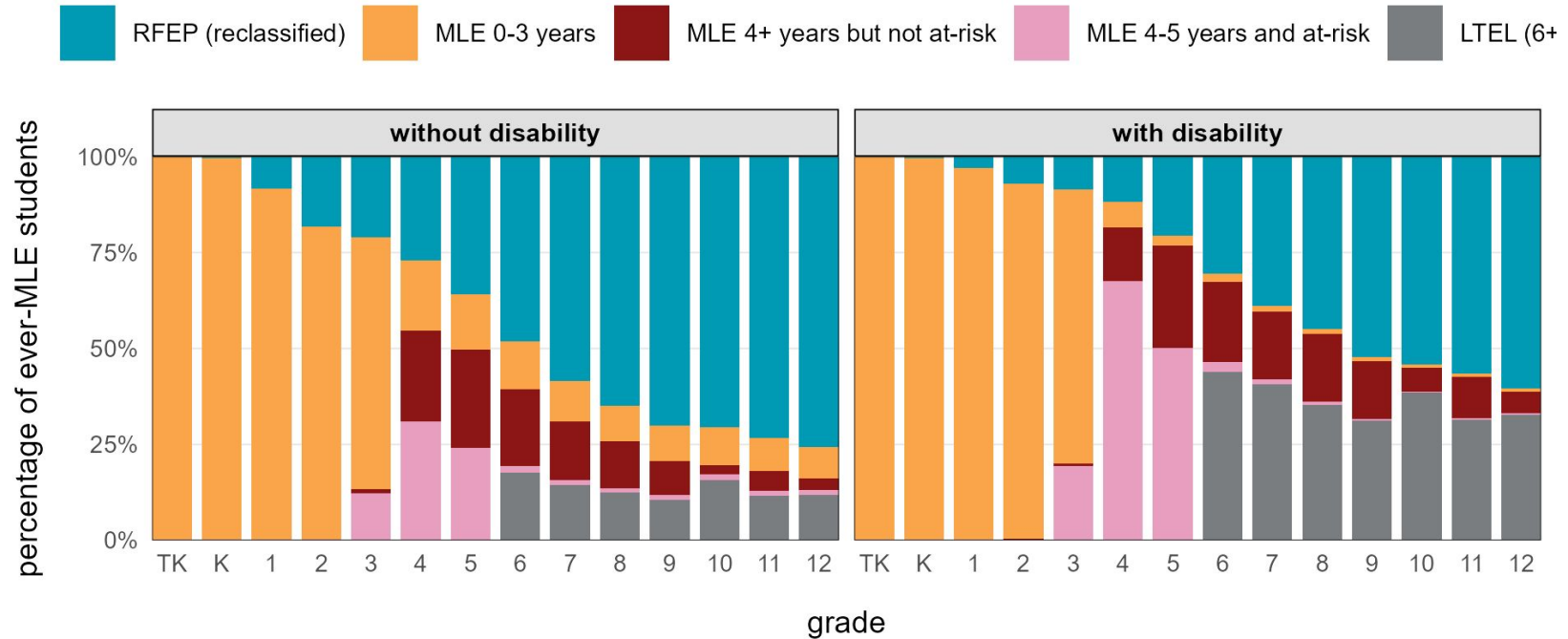
MLE only MLE + SWD



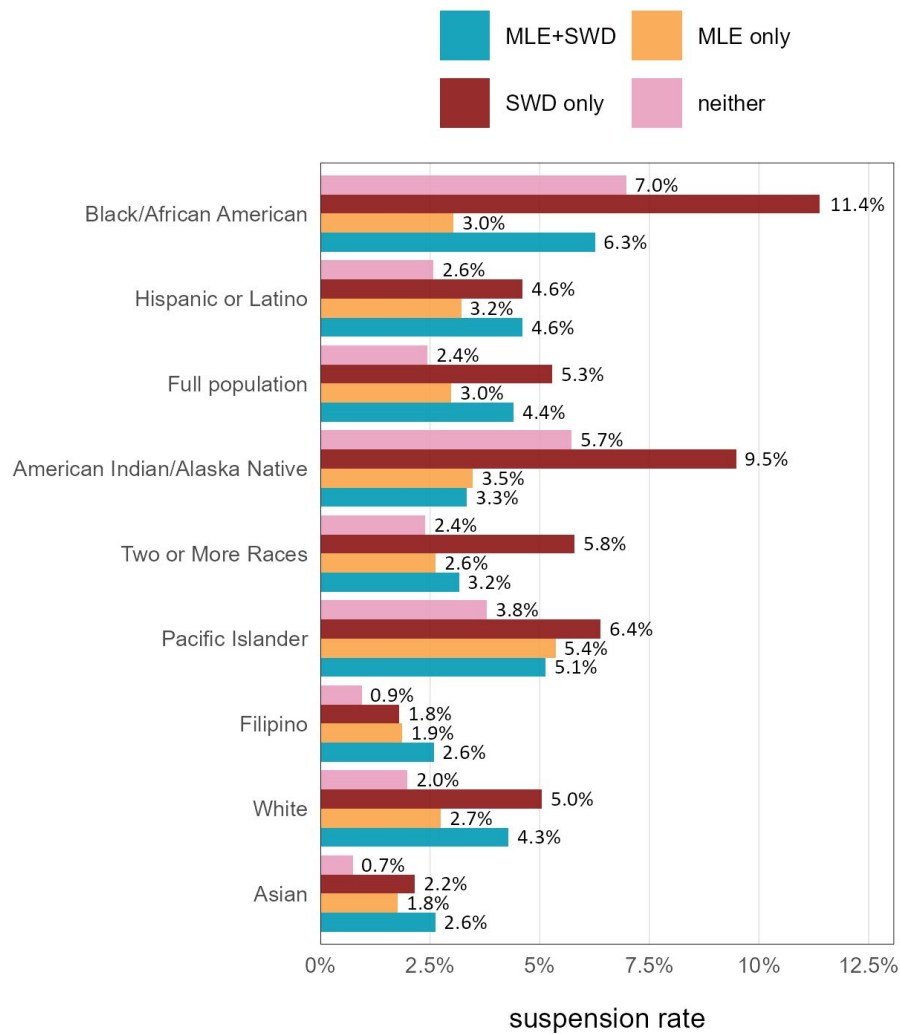
MLE + SWD MLE only



Opportunity: MLE status composition by disability status and grade (2024-2025)

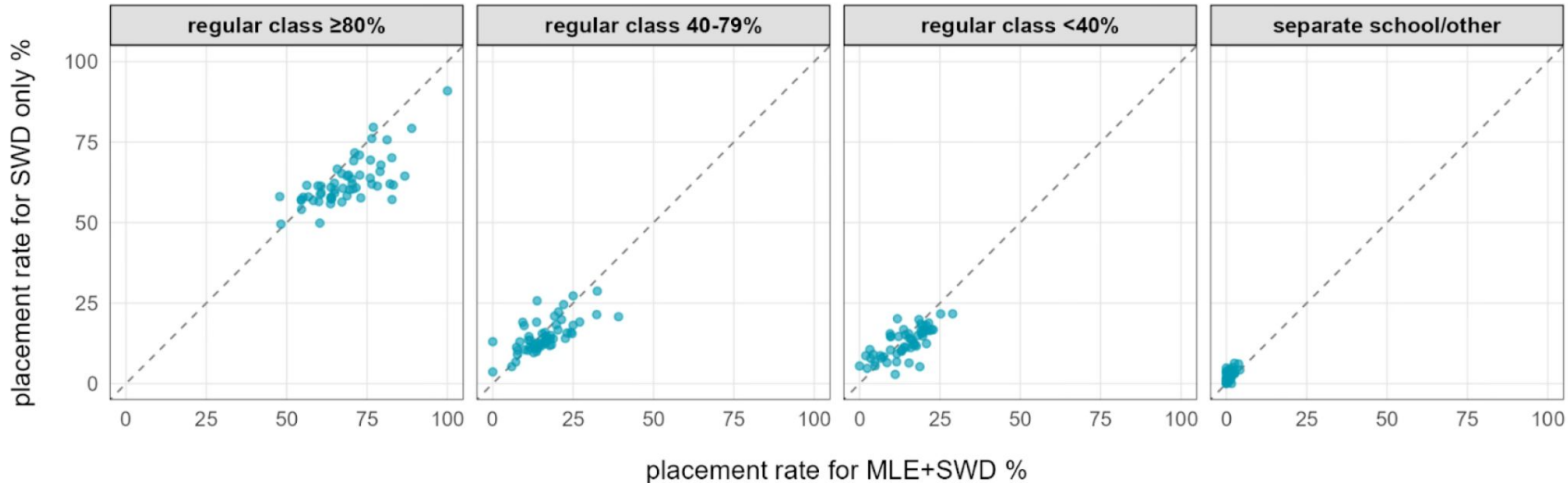


Annual suspension rates by student group and race/ethnicity, 2024-25

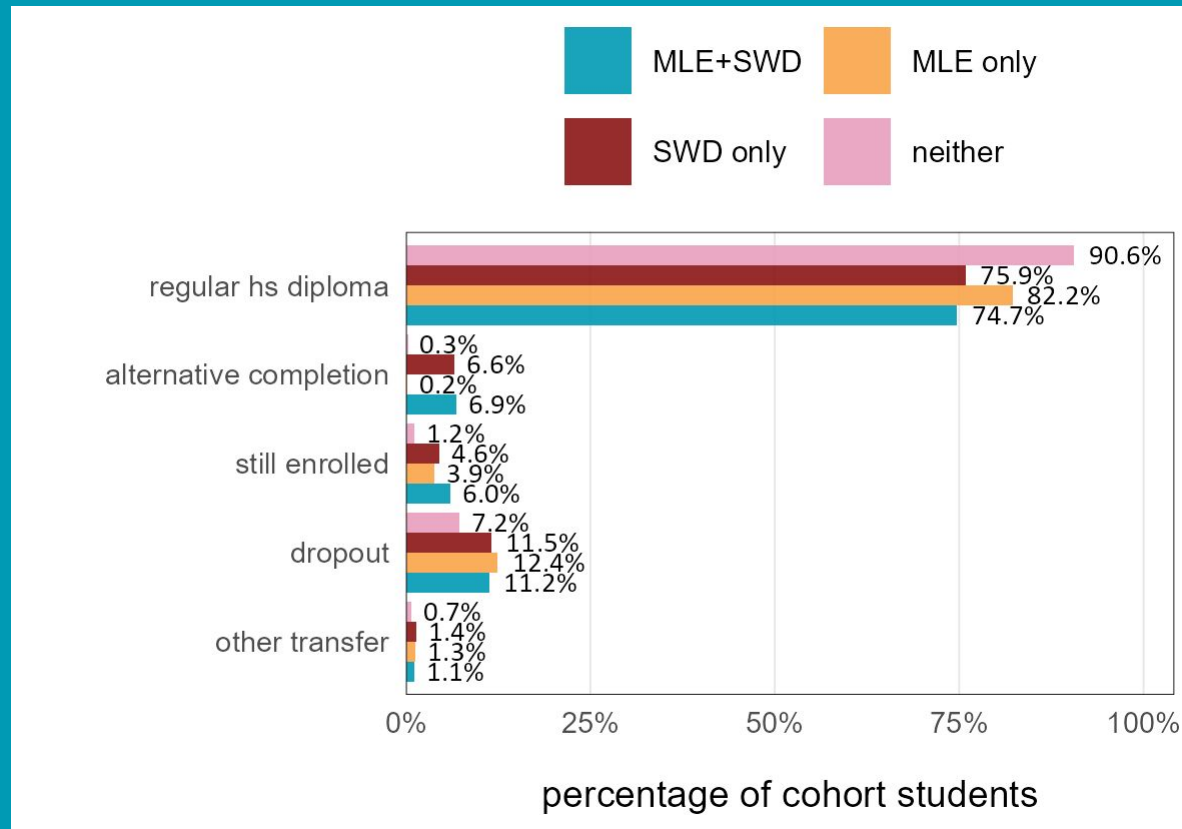


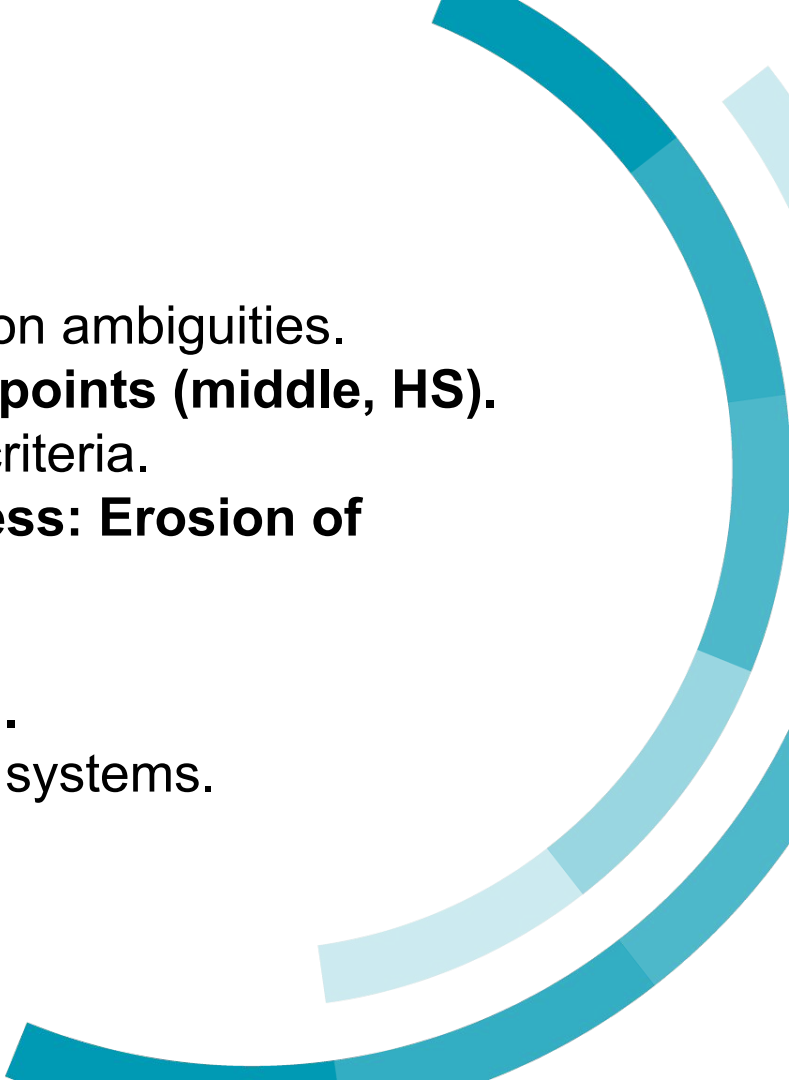
County-level sped placement by setting:

Comparison of MLE+SWD and SWD only students by setting (2024-25)



High school completion outcomes by student group, California 2024-25 four-year adjusted cohort



- 
1. **Concentration in lower grades.**
 - a. Early interventions vs. identification ambiguities.
 2. **Reclassification gaps at transition points (middle, HS).**
 - a. Guidance, monitoring, PD. New criteria.
 3. **Lower graduation and college access: Erosion of opportunities.**
 - a. Post-secondary transitions.
 4. **Share of enrollment at county level.**
 - a. Alignment and integration across systems.



Thank you! Gracias!
aartiles@stanford.edu

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Academic Gatekeeping of English Learner-Classified Students: The Case of California

Ilana Umansky & Havisha Khurana
University of Oregon



Reclassification background

- For decades, CA has had uniquely complex reclassification statute
 - 4 unique criteria: English prof (ELPAC), teacher eval, parental consult, and **academic ELA “basic skills” (BS) criterion**
 - Only 1 is based on English proficiency
 - 3 are locally-determined
- Reclassification not purely administrative; changes students’ opportunities & outcomes
- Reclassification is part of interconnected system with EL & RFEP services

This study asks:

1. How do districts' define their basic skills (BS) criteria?
2. How many students meet BS compared to ELP criteria?
3. How does being held in EL status impact otherwise eligible English proficient students? (academic and behavioral outcomes)

Sample

- CDE student level data 2022-2024
- Stratified random sample of 76 districts that use SBAC for their BS criterion
- 11% of state; 112K observations

District basic skills criteria vary widely

	#District-Grade Combinations	#Student-years
Total	430 (76 districts)	112,077
SBAC or	344 (80.0%)	95,433 (85.1%)
SBAC only	61 (14.2%)	10,845 (9.7%)
SBAC and	25 (5.8%)	5,799 (5.2%)
Level 2	138 (32.1%)	45,154 (40.3%)
2 < Level < 3	98 (22.8%)	31,293 (27.9%)
Level 3	194 (45.1%)	35,630 (31.8%)

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- 4 out of 5 district-grade combinations allow multiple pathways to BS

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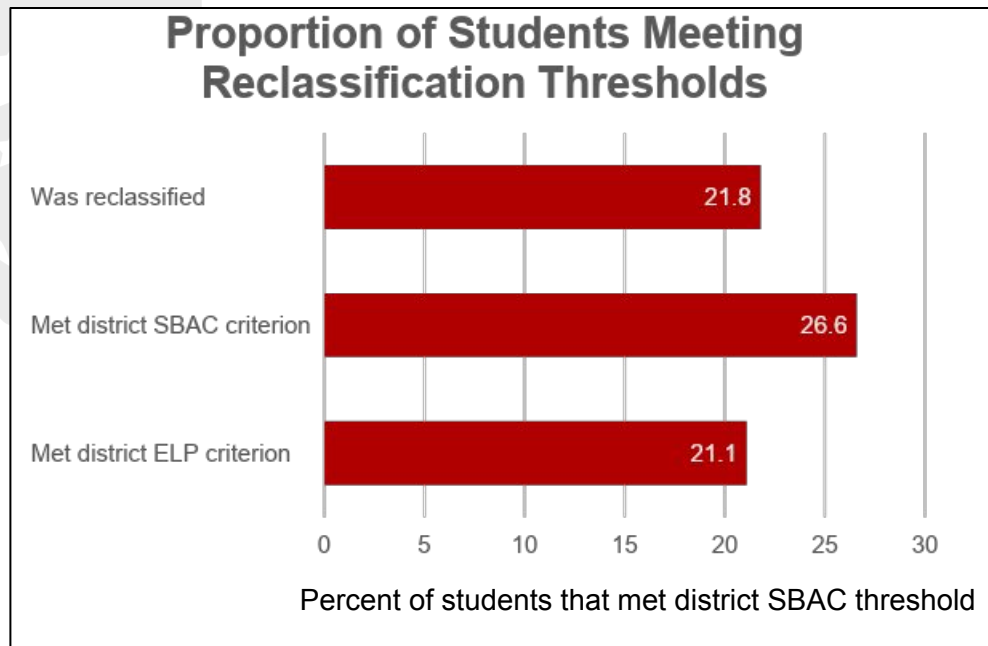
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- 20% had rigorous high-stakes BS operationalizations (“SBAC only” and “SBAC and”)

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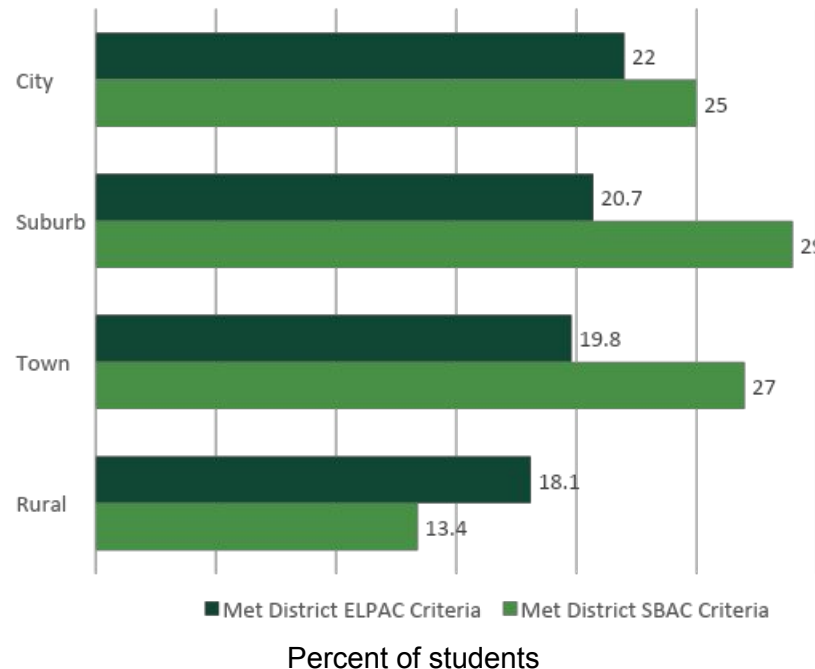
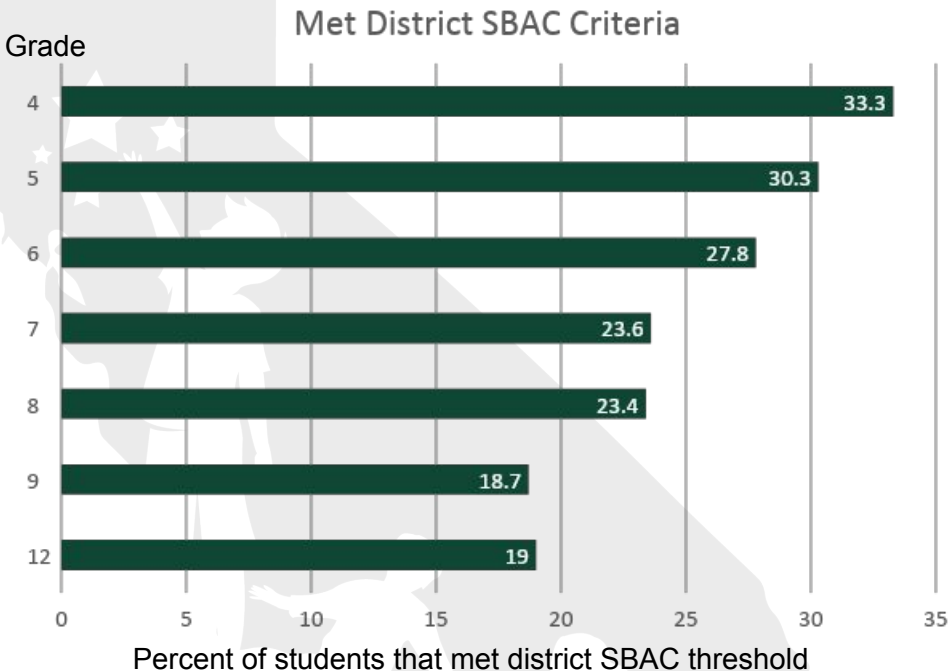
- 4 out of 5 district-grade combinations allow multiple pathways to BS (“SBAC or”)
- 20% had rigorous high-stakes BS operationalizations (“SBAC only” and “SBAC and”)
- District thresholds ranged from well below (PL2) to well above (PL3) the state SBAC ELA average for non-EL students (2.53).

BS a barrier in higher grades & for specific populations & in specific settings



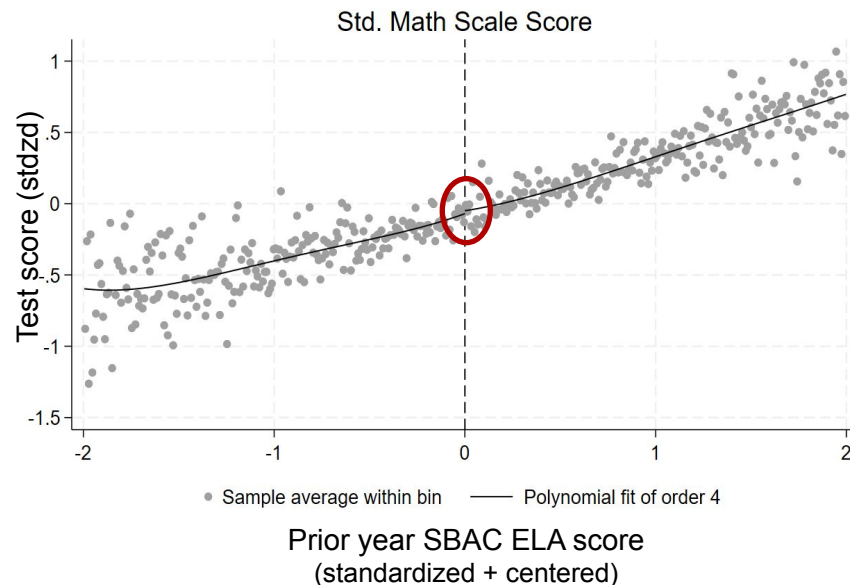
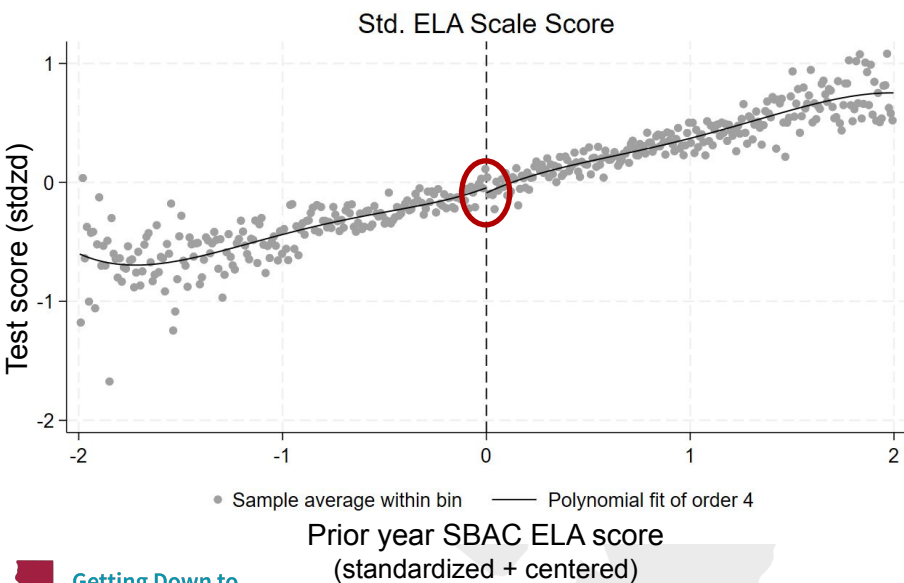
More students clear district SBAC than ELPAC criteria

BS a barrier in higher grades & for specific populations & in specific settings



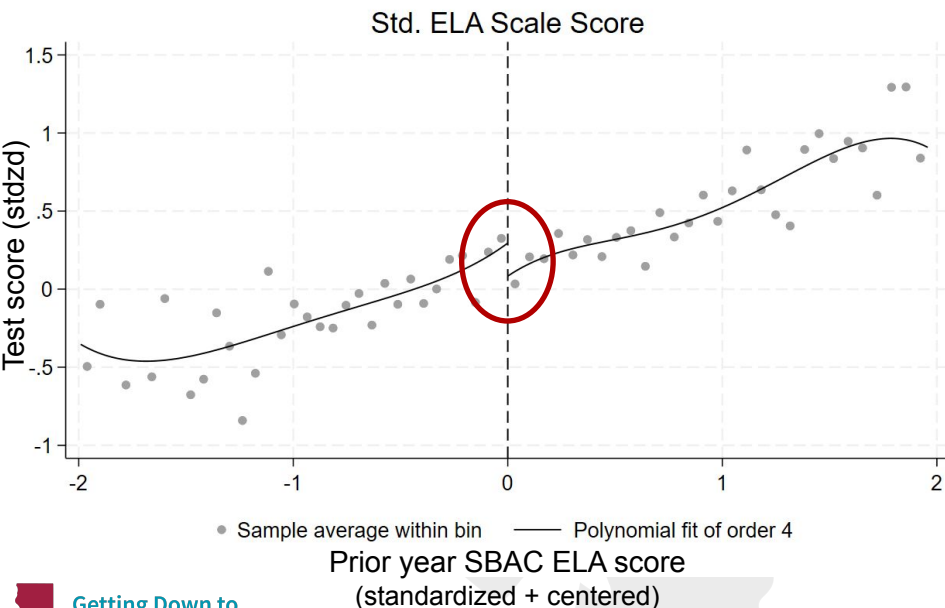
No average effects on achievement or behavioral outcomes one year after being held in EL status

- Students with higher prior year BS scores have higher ELA and math performance, but no meaningful discontinuity at the reclassification threshold



Being held back positively impacts subsequent year ELA scores in districts with harder BS criteria

Effect of Being Held Back on Next-Year ELA Score,
Among Students in "SBAC Only" Districts



- Not aligned with conventional framework
- Large estimated effects (ITT: 0.24 SD; TOT: 0.55 SD)
- Estimates in "SBAC or" districts are close to zero
- Some evidence of positive effects on math scores, as well ("SBAC and")
- Results hold when looking at difficulty as measured by required PL (3)

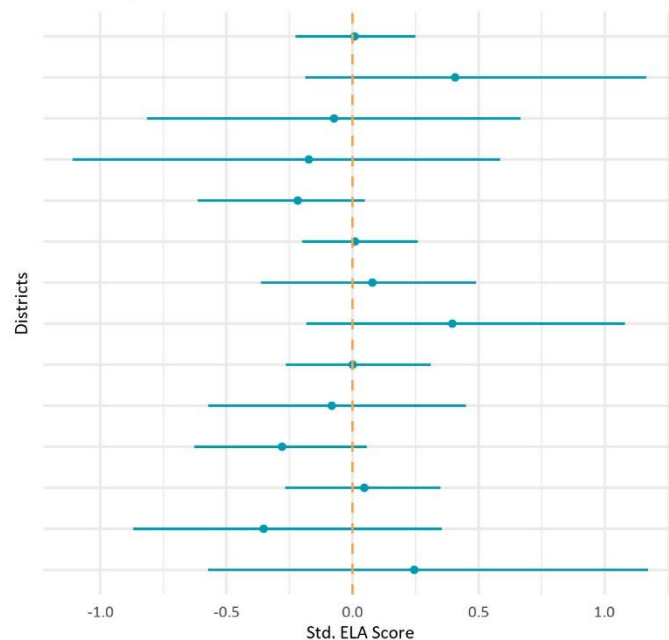
Why might we have this counterintuitive finding?

- Districts that select harder BS criteria differ in other ways as well (instructional?)
- Effects of being held v. reclassified may be driven by other factors (instructional?)

★ Student and District Characteristics, by BS Difficulty Level

	SBAC-Or	Only SBAC	SBAC-And
N	19,482	2,522	1,689
Asian	18.8%	21.7%	39.3%
Latine	73.4%	67.0%	47.2%
White	4.1%	6.3%	10.4%
Newcomer	2.3%	3.6%	8.7%
Prior year math PL 4	8.9%	4.2%	20.5%
City	47.9%	51.8%	68.7%
Suburb	37.3%	37.6%	30.4%
Town	13.5%	4.3%	0.9%
Rural	1.3%	6.3%	*

District-Specific ITT Effect : SBAC-Or Districts



Bigger picture

- Local control has resulted in widely varying basic skills criteria.
- Despite apparent efforts, thousands of English proficient students are held in EL status annually.
- The transition to reclassified status is bumpy for students in some settings, and recently reclassified students may need greater scaffolding.

AB 2555's provisions of elimination of BS criterion, removal of local control over criteria setting, and more structured monitoring of reclassified students align closely with the findings of this study.

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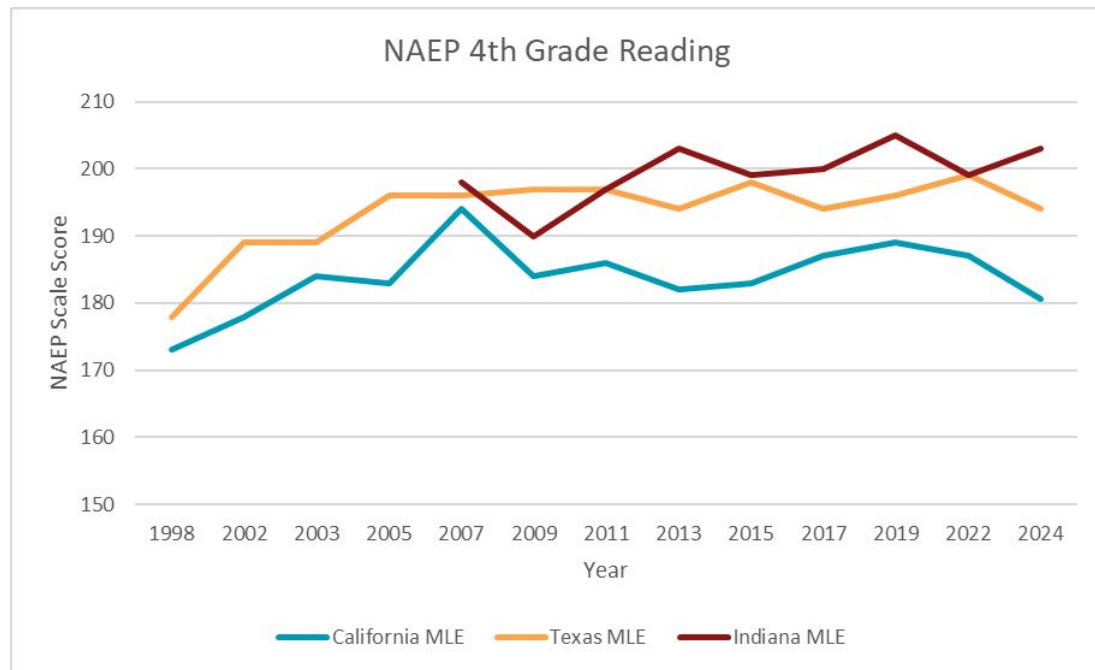
Multilingual Learners learning English: What Can California Learn From Other States?

Lucrecia Santibañez
UCLA



Key Finding 1:

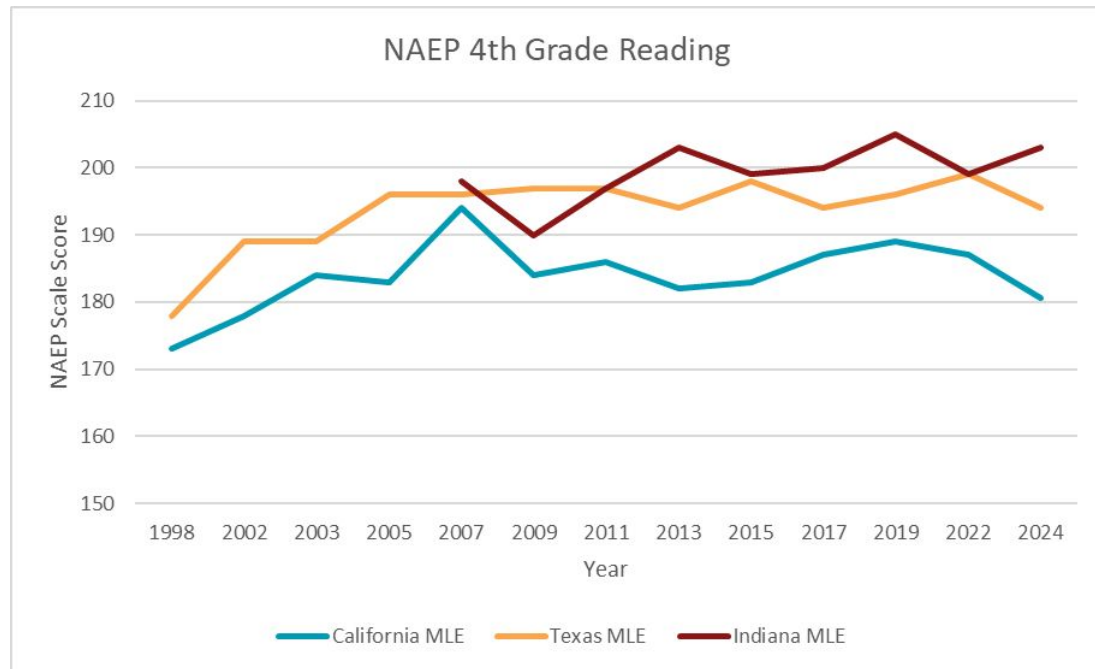
Higher achievement outcomes for MLEs in Texas and Indiana



Indiana ($d = .56$, moderate) and Texas ($d = .33$, small-to-moderate) MLEs score significantly higher than California MLEs on NAEP 4th-grade reading ($p < .001$).

Key Finding 1:

Higher achievement outcomes for MLEs in Texas and Indiana



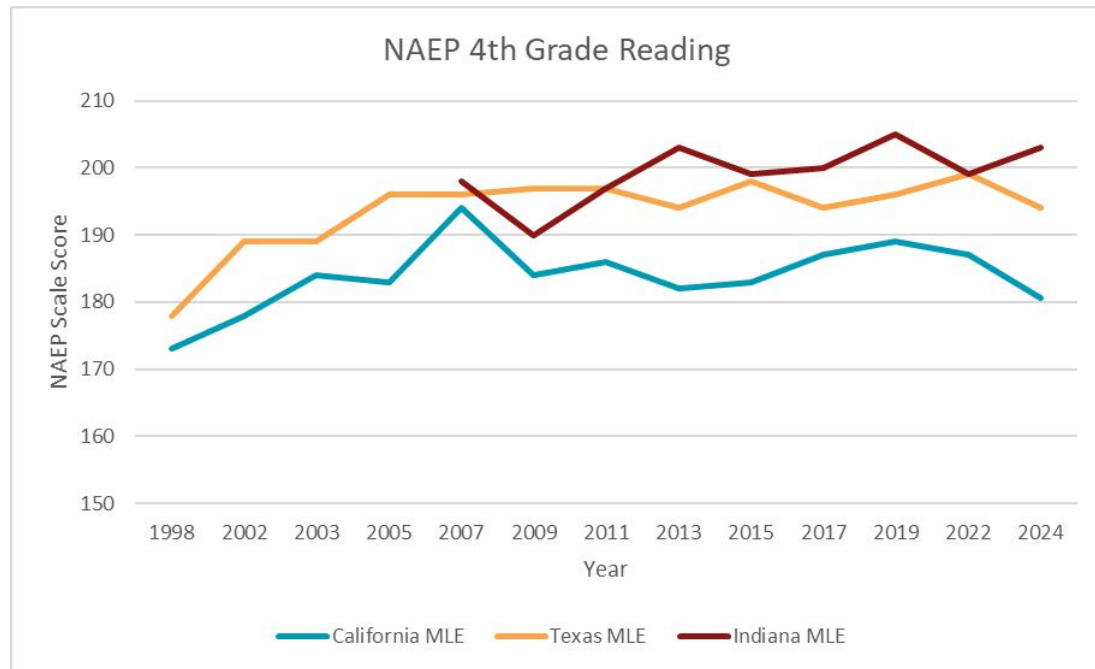
Indiana MLE Graduation

92%

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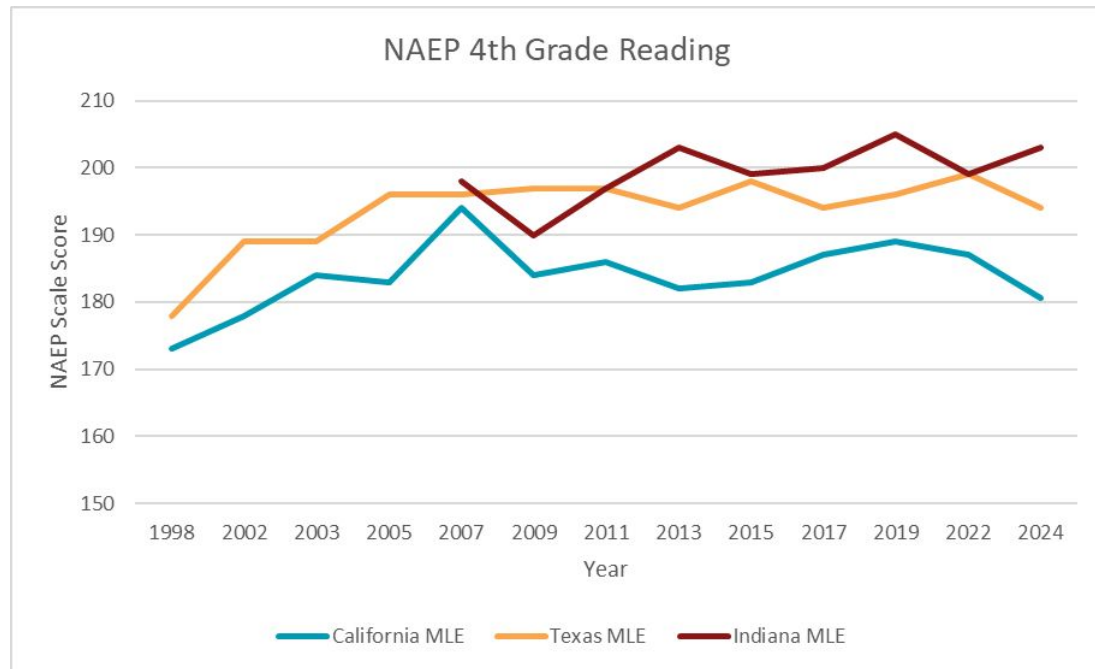
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Texas MLE Graduation

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California MLE Graduation

69%

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Key Finding 2: Teacher Preparation Differences Verified Expertise vs. Embedded Authorization

CALIFORNIA

TEXAS

INDIANA

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CALIFORNIA

MLE authorization embedded in all credentials since 2002; no standalone MLE exam

TEXAS

Distinct bilingual & ESL certification pathways required by statute

INDIANA

English as a New Language (ENL) specialist license required for all teachers of record who teach MLEs

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Induction not MLE-focused

Bilingual Authorization available separately; shortages in some areas

TEXAS

Distinct bilingual & ESL certification pathways required by statute

State-mandated licensure exams cover MLE-specific domains: pedagogy, linguistics, assessment, and policy

Induction MLE-focused

Bilingual educator shortage since 1990.

INDIANA

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Induction MLE-focused

Assigned educator must have ENL license. In unavailable, meet MLE Rubric criteria → ENL licensure.

Key Finding 3: The Bilingual Access Gap as A Policy-Made Disparity

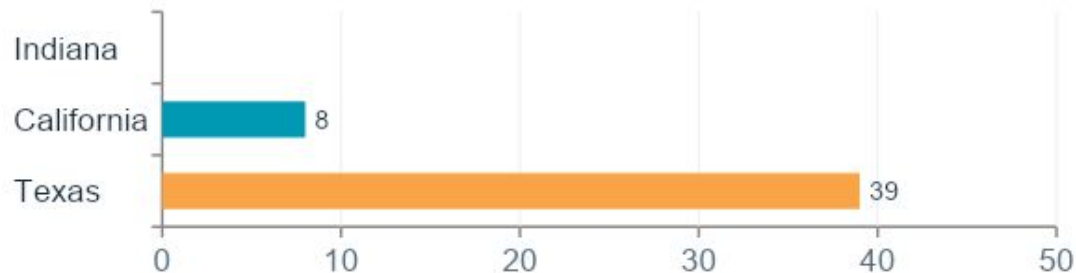
~40%

of Texas MLEs
in bilingual programs

~10%

of California MLEs
in bilingual programs

MLEs in bilingual programs (transitional + dual language), 2021–2022



How California got here

Pre-1998

~30% of CA MLEs in bilingual programs

1998

Proposition 227 devastated bilingual teacher pipeline

2016

Proposition 58 repealed English-only but pipeline not yet fully rebuilt

2022–23

Insufficient bilingual auth. (for some areas); only 7 Vietnamese authorizations

Key Finding 4: Funding Formula Insufficient to Meet Needs



Policy Feature	California	Texas	Indiana
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Key Finding 4:

Funding Formula Insufficient to Meet Needs

Policy Feature	California	Texas	Indiana
Dual Funding	 Unduplicated count: CA is among 5 of 42 states that do not allow dual counting	 Students generate funding under multiple categories (MLE, low-income, etc.)	 Separate MLE allocation alongside other funding categories.

Key Finding 4:

Funding Formula Insufficient to Meet Needs

Policy Feature	California	Texas	Indiana
Dual Funding	 Unduplicated count: CA is among 5 of 42 states that do not allow dual counting	 Students generate funding under multiple categories (MLE, low-income, etc.)	 Separate MLE allocation alongside other funding categories.
Funding Weight	 20% supplemental grant not specific to MLEs	 0.10 base weight; researchers recommend 0.40	 \$384–\$550 flat allocation; full funding would require double

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Funding Weight	 20% supplemental grant not specific to MLEs	 0.10 base weight; researchers recommend 0.40	 \$384–\$550 flat allocation; full funding would require double
Program Incentives	 Same weight regardless of program type. No incentive for dual language.	 DLI weight = 0.15 formula-based incentive for expansion.	 No program-based differentiation.

Key Finding 4:

Funding Formula Insufficient to Meet Needs

Policy Feature	California	Texas	Indiana
Dual Funding	✗ Unduplicated count: CA is among 5 of 42 states that do not allow dual counting	✓ Students generate funding under multiple categories (MLE, low-income, etc.)	✓ Separate MLE allocation alongside other funding categories.
Funding Weight	⚠ 20% supplemental grant not specific to MLEs	⚠ 0.10 base weight; researchers recommend 0.40	⚠ \$384–\$550 flat allocation; full funding would require double
Program Incentives	✗ Same weight regardless of program type. No incentive for dual language.	✓ DLI weight = 0.15 formula-based incentive for expansion.	— No program-based differentiation.
Proficiency Tiers	✗ Single weight regardless of English proficiency level.	✗ Flat program weights that are not tiered by proficiency.	✓ Lower proficiency → higher per-student allocation.

Key Finding 5: Funding Isn't Reaching Students

CALIFORNIA

~60%

of California districts planned to spend less on high-need students than LCFF funds received

California's EL Roadmap establishes a strong vision but is largely non-binding. Districts can redirect MLE supplemental funds without enforceable minimum spending requirements on direct services.

TEXAS

55%

Minimum spending requirement for bilingual/ESL program funds with expanded enforcement for proper use

Overall funding still considered inadequate.

INDIANA

16%

of Indiana complexity grant dollars statewide used to backfill special ed and MLE costs (2021–22)

Indiana's MLE population grew 50%+ since 2017, but the complexity grant declined 39% since 2015. 16% of those dollars were redirected away from their intended purpose, leaving MLEs without targeted services.

What Might California Consider?

Teacher Preparation

Funding Policy

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Teacher Preparation

Institute formal, statewide verification of evidence-based MLE instructional competencies

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Integrate specialist expertise *and* shared responsibility across the teaching workforce

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Allow dual funding for students who are both MLEs and low-income

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Institute formal, statewide verification of evidence-based MLE instructional competencies

Address specialized expertise;
Target teacher preparation “deserts”
Improve data availability

Funding Policy

Allow dual funding for students who are both MLEs and low-income

Increase the MLE funding weight

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Integrate specialist expertise *and* shared responsibility across the teaching workforce

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Allow dual funding for students who are both MLEs and low-income

Increase the MLE funding weight

Create formula-based incentives for dual language programs

What Might California Consider?

Teacher Preparation

Institute formal, statewide verification of evidence-based MLE instructional competencies

Address specialized expertise;
Target teacher preparation “deserts”
Improve data availability

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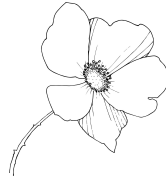
Differentiate funding by English proficiency level

Strengthen accountability for MLE funding use

Q and A



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