

Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and ELLs

Part 1



Slide 1

PEGGIE:

Welcome, everyone. This is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. Welcome to our webinar: Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and English Language Learners.

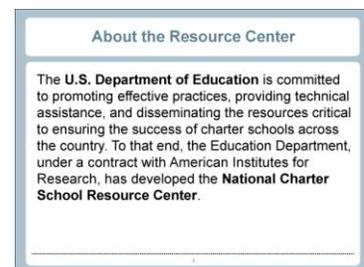
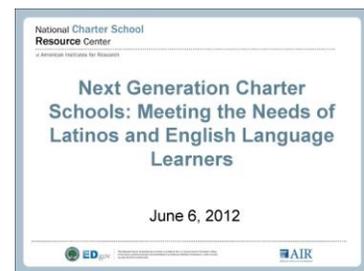
We are funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and this is the 11th in our series of 12 webinars related to English language learners in charter schools.

We are really lucky to have with us today Delia Pompa and Feliza Licon, both of the [National Council of La Raza](#) (NCLR).

I'm going to give everyone a quick orientation to the platform, and then I'll go ahead and turn it over to both of them.

On the left hand side of the platform we have a chat box, so you can go ahead and enter a chat in at any time during the webinar. Just enter your questions as they occur to you, and we'll sort of add [Audio Skips] and cue them up for Delia and Feliza at the end of the webinar.

You can listen to the audio portion either through your computer or over the phone. If you join by phone, please



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mute your computer speakers to prevent an echo effect. If you'd like to listen over the phone and were not prompted to enter your phone number, you can dial the conference number and enter the participant code that are entered in the chat box.

We are also going to be featuring during this webinar the [Next Generation Report](#), which is available at the Web link on your screen in the chat box. Just underneath the chat box is a file share window. You can see that there's a file there called "Next Generation Slides." I sent a reminder this morning with the attachment of the slides, but in case you did not receive that attachment and you want to print out the slides and take notes on them, you can just click right on the Next Generation Slides file name and then Save to My Computer, and it will give you directions to download it directly to your computer. Finally, there's a participant notes box right underneath the PowerPoint slide.

So, again, a reminder to enter your questions at any time in the chat. You can use the full screen option on the top right if the webinar window is too small at any time. You can use the file share instructions. If you listen over your computer, please note that your bandwidth will affect the quality of the audio. You should use only a wired connection for your computer as opposed to wireless and close all applications other than Adobe that are running on your program.

Finally, this webinar is being recorded. An archive will be available after the webinar at the address that you see there: www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars. The archives should be available in three business days after the call.

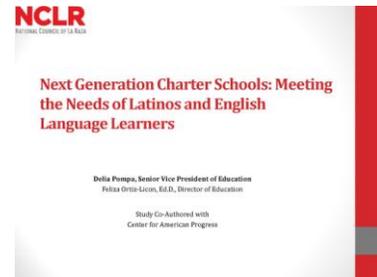
For our presenters, we're hearing a little bit of static. If you could mute yourself until we turn the presentation over to you, it seems like there's a little bit of static in the back. Thank you.

I'm going to go ahead and do quick introductions. Delia Pompa is the vice president at the National Council of La Raza. She oversees all NCLR programs, including housing and community development, education, the Institute for Hispanic Health, and workforce development. She also serves on a variety of boards and advisory committees, including that for the National Charter School Resource Center.



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Joining her today will be Dr. Feliza Ortiz-Licon. She is the director of education at NCLR. And she is the coauthor of the report, the *Next Generation Report*, that I mentioned briefly at the onset of the webinar. And she is also an expert on school reform and education policy. Welcome Delia and Feliza. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you.



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DELIA:

Thank you everyone for joining us. Feliza and I are really excited to be talking to you about this topic today.

As many of you know, the number of English learners in charter schools and the number of Latinos in charter schools grows every day. And we want to make sure that we get it right as we have this opportunity to serve these children in a next generation of charter schools. So thank you so much for being on the call.

We're going to talk up front about the goals to make sure we're all where we want to be. We are going to provide an overview of the Latino demographic in the United States. These are statistics that many of you know already, but we think it's important that we start on the same page.



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Also, we're going to talk about some effective practices for ELLs and Latino students within our own NCLR school network. NCLR has a network of over 100 charter and small schools. We have found many effective practices and not only want to share them with you [but also] want to make sure that they are examples for school districts and other independent charter schools.

Finally, we want to outline some policy recommendations and some program recommendations. As I said earlier, we think it's important as charter schools and small schools get off the ground and continue to increase, that we start out right, and we make sure the policies are in place to support charter schools in serving English language learners and Latino students. So I'm going to turn it over to Feliza now, who's going to talk about some of the demographics.

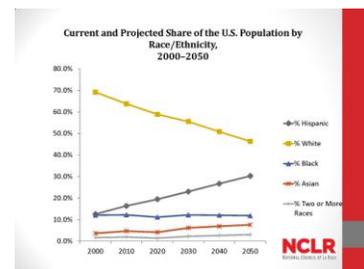
FELIZA:

Thank you, Delia. Hello, everyone. And thank you for joining us.

Before I proceed with my portion of the presentation, I would like to clarify that I will be using the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* interchangeably. You will see both of these terms throughout the presentation. I know the term *Hispanic* is commonly used on the East Coast, and *Latino* is commonly the term of choice on the West Coast. So we're going to be using both to identify the same subgroup.

In this first slide, I definitely want to start with the demographics, so we can frame the conversation about the importance of Latinos and English language learners, also known as ELLs or simply ELs in the school system. As evident by this slide, we see the Latino population has rapidly increased, and it's expected to have an accelerated growth leading up to 2050. At the same time, we see that the white population will have a sharp decrease leading into 2050. And other major subgroups, like African American, will stay pretty steady. There is another exception to the growth that we see in Latinos, although not at the same rate. We see that Asians have a slight growth as well as two or more races.

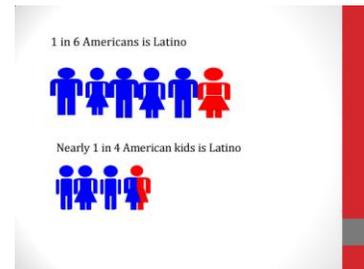
So this is pretty consistent with some of the recent reports that indicate that in 2011, nonwhite babies, in particular Latinos and Asians, outnumber white babies for the first time in the United States. And again, we see the most



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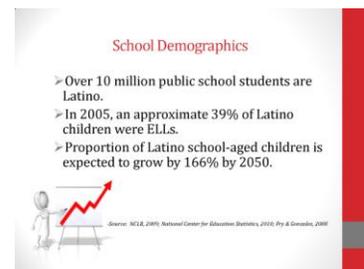
growth in the Latino community leading up to 2050, the year that has commonly been referred to as the “browning” of America. This is the first time that nonwhites as a general population, not just babies, are expected to become the country’s majority.

So what does this mean in 2012? Currently, one in six Americans is Latino, and one in four American kids is Latino. This demographic surge is and will be reflected in the school system. This is precisely why the conversation about educating Latinos and ELs is not only timely but very much needed.



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We know that in the public school system, over 10 million students are Latinos. In 2005, approximately 39 percent of Latino children were ELs. And by 2050, the Latino school age population is expected to grow by 166 percent. Now this will quickly outpace the 4 percent expected growth of non-Hispanic students.



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Again, very compelling numbers, which make this discussion very relevant and appropriate.

So now I’m going to anchor this demographic conversation in the charter school context. The growing number of school-age Latinos has paralleled the expansion of the charter school movement. Therefore, we believe the Latinos will be the future student base of charter schools.



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Currently, four of the five states with the highest number of Latino students—this includes California, Arizona, and Texas—also have the highest number of charter schools. At a national level, about 24 percent of charter school students are Latino. But in states like California, which is my home state, we have the highest number of charter schools. We are currently at 982 charter schools statewide. And in our charter school system, Latinos comprise 45 percent of the charter school population.

States like California have been heavily criticized for attracting high numbers of Latino and African-American students, but enrolling a low number of ELs in the charter school system when you compare that to the enrollment of ELs in the local school district. In terms of language status, it is estimated that 39 percent of Latino children are ELs, and 80 percent of ELs are Latino.

The [Schools and Staffing Survey](#), or SASS, estimates that 16.5 percent of charter school students are ELs. However, it is very unclear what percent of that EL subgroup is Latino because data sets are limited or ambiguous. However, we do know that organizations like the California Charter School[s] Association and other procharter school groups are examining the issue of ELs in the charter school system, and they're trying to gauge what percent of EL students are enrolled in charters. So trying to derive an accurate number, what programs are available to these students, and how schools can actively outreach to ELs and their families so that charters can be more representative of their host communities, reflect a balanced demographic, and properly educate all students, in particular, ELs.

Another factor that accounts for the rapid growth of the charter school movement is the Race to the Top initiative. The Obama administration encourages states to support the expansion of high-quality charter schools by offering states [Inaudible] an opportunity to compete for Race to the Top money. In this process, charter schools were identified as a key turnaround strategy for 5,000 of the nation's most troubled schools. An approximate 28 percent of Latino and EL students currently attend failing schools, when compared to 9 percent of white students. So given this demographic data, it would seem imperative to study the effectiveness of charter schools in serving Latino and EL students.

Latino and ELL Students in the Charter School System

- Charter schools have been criticized for attracting high numbers of Latino and African-American students, but low rates of ELLs.
 - SASS estimates that **16.5%** of charter school students are ELLs.
- Latino students are heavily concentrated in troubled schools that are looking to the charter model as a turn around strategy.
 - 28%** of Latinos attend "chronically failing schools"

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2007-08; Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, n.d.

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I will now provide a quick overview of some of the studies that were vetted in the *Next Generation Report*.

In terms of academic performance for Latino and ELL students, studies really present a mixed picture. Although performance studies were not exhaustively researched, and we want to definitely highlight that, this is not an exhaustive literature review, but we did highlight a couple of studies.

For instance, an evaluation of 22 KIPP [[Knowledge is Power Program](#)] middle schools indicate that these schools serve higher concentrations of low-income black and Hispanic students than traditional public schools but a lower concentration of ELL students. The majority of the study schools in the KIPP network, the 22 schools, did experience statistically significant gains in both math[ematics] and reading state assessments for these particular subgroups. I would like you to know that this evaluation was only representative of a subset of the 82 KIPP schools.

A second study was conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes. They examined charter school performance in 16 states, including states with large Latino populations, such as Arizona, California, and Texas. This study compared the average academic growth of Latinos, ELLs, and other student groups to that of their peers in traditional public schools. Latino charter school students had significantly lower gains overall in math[ematics] and reading when compared to their traditional school peers. There was one exception in this study and that was in Missouri. Missouri was the only state in which Latino students performed better in both math[ematics] and reading when compared to their traditional public school counterparts. One thing I want to highlight is that the ELLs in this study did show higher gains than their counterparts in the public schools in both math[ematics] and reading.

Lastly, RAND's 2009 research examined longitudinal student-level achievement data for students who transferred into a charter school from district schools as well as private schools into charters in cities like Chicago, San Diego, [and]

Latinos and ELLs: Performance Outcomes

- KIPP study of 22 middle schools found higher concentrations of low-income African-Americans and Latinos, but small concentrations of ELLs enrolled at KIPP sites as compared to district schools.
- CREDO study showed that Latino students in 16 states had significantly lower overall gains in math and reading, but the ELL subgroup outperformed their district school counterparts in both Math and ELA.
- RAND's 2009 study found no evidence that charters affect achievement for Latinos.



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Philadelphia and states like Ohio and Texas. In this study, researchers found no evidence that charter schools significantly affect achievement of Latino students, whether positively or negatively when compared to other ethnic groups. And this study did not examine the effects on ELL students.

Again, this was not an exhaustive literature review. We did find some valuable lessons, and we want to point out that the research in charter school performance is relatively new. It's in its infancy state. And the variety of charter school models across states and across districts may really account for the mixed results and the mixed picture that we saw when conducting our literature review.

I will now turn it over to Delia, and she is going to discuss some programmatic and policy recommendations that were identified and outlined in the *Next Generation* school report. Delia?

DELIA:

Thank you. I want to, at this point, acknowledge our colleague Melissa Lazarín from the Center for American Progress who coauthored the study with Feliza. Feliza neglected to say that at the beginning, and I really want to acknowledge her and CAP [[Center for American Progress](#)] for working with us on this important study.

And as Feliza said, there's been very little research. We're just beginning to see the research. So this was, to us, a very important publication to get out there.

Just as you see very little research, we really see very few specific policies that address Latino or ELL students, although there are a lot of state policies that are generic that really matter to Latinos and English language learners. Looking at recruitment, enrollment, and lottery procedures, and policies that actually shape the demographics of charter schools, we see a lot of unintended consequences.



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First, based on our research, 30 out of 41 states require charters to operate an open enrollment policy. Most policies also require that charters use a lottery system when a school's capacity cannot match the enrollment demand. However, states like Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas enroll students based on a first-come first-serve basis. This can be problematic for ELL students and Latino students because often their parents are not as aware due to work demands, language facility, and other situations that shape their access to information. They're not aware of charter schools. They're not aware of their access to charter schools. And they're not aware how they have to enroll their kids. So they have less experience overall navigating our educational system. And you see that often in the enrollment numbers, especially in higher quality charter schools.

There are several states that are now becoming more intentional about recruiting and serving English learners. For example, Massachusetts has an enhanced charter law that requires newly authorized schools to develop a recruitment plan and enrollment goals for English learners as well as for low-income, special education, and other at-risk youth.

Currently, the California legislature is considering a similar bill—SB 1290. This bill would require a chartering authority to consider increases in pupil academic achievement for all groups of pupils served by the charter school as the most important factor in determining whether to revoke a charter. That means you'd be disaggregating data and looking at information about ELs and other subgroups of kids and looking at whether a charter continues to exist.

There are other enrollment considerations, like priority enrollment for siblings and set aside of no more than 10 percent in some cases for staff and board member children of full-time employees. That's a good way to promote family engagement at a school site, but it can work for us or against us.

What we are beginning to see in these policies is, as charter schools increase in Latino and minority communities, you see more advocacy efforts on the part of minority advocacy groups. And we think this is a good thing.

Policies around funding, again, differ so much from state to state. Usually you don't see very specific mention of subgroups or English language learners in particular. But we do see, again, unintended consequences. What we do know is that the Fordham Institute tells us that charters receive approximately 22 percent less funding in comparison to traditional public schools. This becomes very important as we look at the resources that are needed to serve especially English language learners well in charter schools. And it's critical that charter schools begin to receive equitable funding if they're going to continue to serve English language learners, increase those numbers, and serve them appropriately—that's the key, serving them appropriately.

As we all know, English language learners often need more resources. Whether it's tutoring, extra language teachers, the list is very obvious to those of you who've seen the research on the necessary adjustments for English language learners.

There are sources of funding that are often not tapped. It is important that charter schools access sources like Title 3 and other categorical funds—even revenue that's generated by district taxes. What we do find is that under Title 3, which is a federal law providing funding for English language learners, there are some and can be some unintended consequences. For example, often because charter schools are small, they fall under a state's limit on whether you have to provide bilingual education or a particular kind of education for English language learners. There are often sort of floors where if you have below a number of students, the state doesn't monitor you or look that carefully at English language learners. And that's at the state level.

With regard to Title 3, once the state receives the money from the federal government and distributes it, they are not supposed to distribute money to any LEA [local education agency] that generates under \$10,000 based on their student enrollment. And that can have an impact on the amount of money that charter schools get for English language learners. It's important that charter schools join into consortia to be able to access that money because you can join a consortium to up that number. So that's an important piece also.

Looking at policies around accountability, these are beginning to tighten up—probably not fast enough for English language learners. Some state laws really weaken accountability by aggregating assessment results for multiple campuses that operate under single charters, and it makes it difficult to decipher how well each school is preparing Latinos and English language learners.

It's really important—I think we see this running throughout—that schools, charter schools, are intentional about identifying and serving English language learners. We see many cases where well-meaning charter schools—because they feel that they're small and can cater to specific needs of kids—don't identify or serve the kids as a category of kids, and often they fall through the cracks. So it's an important consideration in looking at how these kids are served and the accountability for the school.

Finally, autonomy is something else, another policy consideration at the state level. Because state laws afford charter schools the autonomy to implement dual-language and bilingual models, it can be a boon in states like California and Arizona, where bilingual education, for example, is not allowed under the state law. And so many of our charter schools have taken that opportunity to serve English learners outside a system that doesn't let them serve them appropriately. Unfortunately, the autonomy can work the other way because charter schools do have the

autonomy to create programs that might vary from state law. And it's important to look at each state's law to see how it impacts English language learners and what the possibility is. I think this really calls into play the need for advocacy among parents and for those who serve English language learners and who advocate for their needs.

So I'm going to go on now to talk about some of our high-performing charter schools in the NCLR network and what we see them doing and how it makes a difference. It is very easy to fall into the trap of saying "good teaching works for all kids," and some of these things that we're talking about really are about good teaching. But as you start to break them down, you see that these schools are very intentional about serving English language learners and Latino kids.

I think it's important here to tell you a little bit about our charter schools and our small schools in our network. These are schools who were formed to serve primarily Latino children, although they serve all kids. But they were formed with Latino children in mind so that there are hallmarks of these schools that are important to the Latino community, like a very high level of community engagement, a high level of focus on native language along with second language, a high level of focus on getting kids to go to college to overcome the disadvantages some of these kids have had.

We actually have a set of core qualities that we've developed along with our charter schools that focus on what we think are [the] direct needs of the Latino community that address the many years of low achievement. And so what you see here is very responsive to those core qualities and, again, very intentional.

So establishing high expectations for all students is something you might think—well, that's an obvious. But we often don't see this happening at other schools. Part of the educational gap we believe is due to low expectations. Historically, Latino students and English language learners



High-Performing Charter Schools:
Effective Practices

- Establish high expectations for all students' academic, intellectual, and social growth.
- Accelerate the pace at which ELLs engage with grade-level content.
- Expand learning time opportunities.

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have been viewed as needing more time, having to go slower. Some of the pushback we get when we talk about high standards is, “Oh it’s not fair to those kids.”

So there’s this mind-set that, these poor kids, we really have to go slower or do something different, instead of setting the standards high and teaching them to very high and rigorous expectations. As I said, our schools have been very intentional about doing this. So you see a big difference in how teachers teach, what’s expected of kids, and what the curriculum looks like.

Second is our schools are intentional about accelerating the pace at which ELLs engage with grade-level content. It is important for us that English language learners again be held to very high standards but also that these students jump in immediately on grade-level content and be expected to perform as all students perform. The adjustment there is teachers adjust their teaching so these kids are able to do that.

The schools that we’re highlighting here, and the schools that were examples in the publication, are as [El Sol Science and Arts Academy](#) in Santa Ana, California, and the [Raul Yzaquarre School for Success in Houston](#). Both of these schools have received high marks from their states and enjoy a good reputation in their community. At any rate, these schools and the other schools we looked at all underscore the importance of teaching a second language while simultaneously delivering core academic content. That’s where you see not reliance but the inclusion of the native language to build on that as a strength.

Another feature of our schools that is very obvious once you go in is the expanded learning time opportunities. Most of these schools emphasize expanded school schedules so that parents know from the outset that their kids will be in school longer. Many of our schools are located in community-based organizations. So there’s a really good back and forth in the afterschool hours with programming. If

the school day doesn't all take place in the school, the school day really bleeds into the community-based organization, and there are support systems within that organization for these kids. So their learning time is really extended.

The other piece that expanded learning time affords and includes is benefiting the family and community members. Because these are community-based organizations, often they're intergenerational programs that serve the parents and the kids, benefiting the kids' achievement greatly. For example, at El Sol, they operate a fully functioning campus Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. That's approximately 400 people being served on a daily basis taking English and citizenship classes, taking advantage of the health clinic. That allows the parents to become part of this center and really draws them into the school because they feel part of the center themselves.

[End of chapter 1]

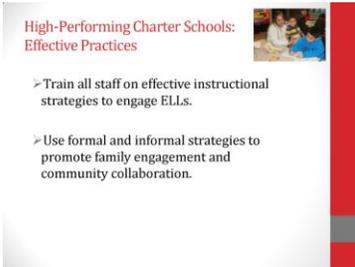
Part 2

DELIA:

Some other strategies that we see around training staff and professional development. Again, these sites are very specific about expecting their teaching staffs to know effective instructional strategies to engage English language learners and to use them.

Most often, teachers are interviewed with this in mind. Many of the schools are intentional within the hiring process about either choosing staff that have had training in this area already or staff that is open to this and understands this approach and the importance of using the variety of strategies necessary to engage English language learners.

And finally, I've alluded to this before. The schools that are high performing in our network and that serve English learners and Latinos well are very, very deliberative about



High-Performing Charter Schools:
Effective Practices

- Train all staff on effective instructional strategies to engage ELLs.
- Use formal and informal strategies to promote family engagement and community collaboration.

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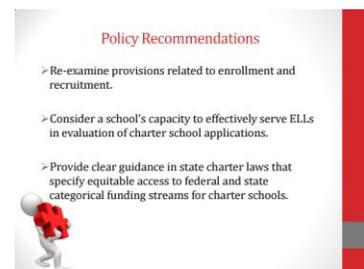
using formal and informal strategies to ensure that there's family engagement and community collaboration. These schools draw their strengths from the community. They use a variety of strategies to create very strong lines of communication with students' parents—especially in languages other than English.

As I said, most of the students our schools serve are Latinos, but many of our schools serve English language learners from other language backgrounds. As a matter of fact, one of our schools teaches Mandarin, English, Spanish, and Nawat. They do value the importance of community. You see a lot of school materials in the native language. You see a lot of communication in the native language. You see regular home visits, and you see bilingual staff, often staff that grew up in the community, so they have a real connection to that community. And I'm happy to answer questions about this when this is over.

So, what are the policy recommendations that we have? I mentioned that recruitment and enrollment can be a major issue in ensuring that English language learners and Latino students are served well. We think it's very important to examine provisions around enrollment and recruitment and important to require an open enrollment practice for all charter schools as well as the lottery process in instances where the demand exceeds the number of slots. We think it's important that states consider monitoring enrollment numbers for certain populations, including English language learners, to ensure that there's equitable access.

Beyond the state law itself, just looking at practice, the schools that do well make a concerted effort to recruit kids from all backgrounds. And so their materials reflect that, the language of their materials, where they recruit, and how they recruit becomes very, very important.

Looking at a school's capacity to effectively serve English language learners is something we think should be built into the evaluation of charter school applications. Right now,



Policy Recommendations

- Re-examine provisions related to enrollment and recruitment.
- Consider a school's capacity to effectively serve ELLs in evaluation of charter school applications.
- Provide clear guidance in state charter laws that specify equitable access to federal and state categorical funding streams for charter schools.

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that is not a widely seen policy. And we think it's very important that that element be looked at when charters are awarded. It should be looked at when districts are looking at opening charter schools within their districts. And especially looked at when the communities that charter schools are opening in reflect large numbers of language minority populations. It really does signal that the state should look very carefully at how those schools are serving ELLs and whether they had the capacity and show that in their charter school application.

Finally, at least on this page, we think it's important that there be clear guidance in state charter laws about equitable access to federal and state categorical streams for charter schools. Including clear guidance on the state to charter allotment for the federal Title 3 dollars that I mentioned earlier and other federal funds. We find that our charter schools are often opened by members of the community who are not happy with the larger school system and want to improve circumstances by opening their own school. They're not always well versed in the use of categorical funds or their access to them. So we would hope the state would provide very clear guidance and training on this.

Two more policy recommendations. You see these policy recommendations really track policy recommendations for all schools, but they really have an important role if you're going to be looking at charter schools and serving English language learners.

Holding schools accountable for progress around the academic proficiency and college-readiness gaps is something that all schools are looking at right now; meeting growth targets is particularly important for all schools right now. However, we often fail to look at that as we disaggregate across groups of campuses of charter schools. And not only the disaggregation requirements but [also] the accountability requirements can begin to sort of degrade as they start being applied to charter schools. We



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really believe this is an area for advocacy on the part of charter school supporters and the part of parents and communities.

When one considers how many Latinos, how many English learners, are beginning to be served in charter schools and the fact that they are coming out of larger public schools, we're opening schools saying we can do a better job. It's important that charter schools be held to very high standards with regard to the academic achievement of all kids.

Finally, it's important, we think, as we look at policy to consider the role that charter school autonomy can have on the education of English learners and Latinos. As I said earlier, it goes both ways. So whenever there are policy considerations for charter schools, we believe it's extremely important to sort of apply a test. What are the affects of these practices and laws and policies on English language learners? And we believe the community needs to be the watchdog about that. They know how a policy can affect their kids. So it is important that advocates look at general policy around charter schools as to how it affects English language learners.

I just want to talk a little bit about the NCLR education agenda because our education agenda for general education and district schools is the same as it is for charter schools, and we think that is important. So our education agenda at the national level with regard to both policy at the national level and practice at the local level includes very strong accountability provisions for student achievement.

- The importance of including parents and community in our schools
- An early and supportive start in early childhood education and the education system
- Making sure administrators and teachers understand the needs of English language learners and Latino students and are prepared to support those needs



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- And, again, making sure that there are expanded learning opportunities

The fact that there doesn't seem to be and isn't a lot of space and light between our policies for charter schools and our policies for district schools, I think really speaks to how important it is that we're able in our charter schools to provide examples for larger district schools. And that really is how we view our charter school system in the NCLR network.

We did not get into the business of charter schools from an ideological perspective. We got into it because we felt many of our students were not being served well in larger district schools. And many in our community felt they could do a better job. But we believe that that makes them even more accountable for serving the kids, and it makes them even more accountable for showing others how our kids should be served.

So, I am happy and Feliza is happy to answer any questions you might have.

I saw one earlier, somebody asked, "What is the definition of English language learners?" That can be said to be the \$64 million question (although it's not). I say that because there is a federal definition that is used for funding. But every state has their own definition of what an English language learner is. We worked for a long time at the national level to try and make that consistent across states. But it isn't. Most of the time under [Inaudible] regulations, it addresses the ability of these children to do schoolwork in English and addresses the interference of the native language on learning in English. In other words, looking at how kids score on an oral proficiency test and academic achievement tests begins to set the cutoff point for who's an English language learner and who's not. But that varies from state to state.



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So are there other questions?

PEGGIE:

Great. I just want to say thank you to both Delia and Feliza. That was a really interesting presentation.

As we enter into the Q and A, you're welcome to enter your questions into the chat. Or if you're on the phone, you can raise your hand using the little guy on the top of your screen, and we can call on you.



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We had two questions come in through the chat. One was from Thomás. He was wondering, “What has been the ADA on a national level and in California for ELLs?” And Thomás, if you're on the phone, feel free to speak up.

DELIA:

Thomás, did you mean the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] in charter schools?

THOMÁS:

Yes, I do. I'm interested in finding out, “Has there been challenges that are specifically attached to ELL charters? And has there been any type of formulas or strategies to address this if there are?”

DELIA:

I'm going to let Feliza answer the California part of that. But let me tell you from a national perspective. Again, it's very mixed depending on the state and the locale. So, for example, in New York City, in the small schools and charter schools effort there, there was a concern that a lot of the schools were not including English language learners. At the same time, you saw specific attention to English language learners in specific schools that targeted English language learners as the major population. It's important to strike a balance. You don't want to segregate these kids, but you want to make sure that they're being included. Right now, that is a mixed bag from state to state.

As I mentioned earlier, there are states that are using charter schools to serve English language learners better in charter schools than in the public school system because of certain state laws that apply to English language learners. So that sometimes there are workarounds. But you can't say there's an average ADA approach or an average approach to English language learners. Do you want to talk about California, Feliza?

FELIZA:

I thought he meant actual money allocation. Is that part of the question too, how much is allocated for ELL students in California schools?

THOMÁS:

No. My question is more directed—perhaps I should have been more specific—to attendance challenges. If charter schools have designed a program that is a virtual or online formula, then they tend to have some challenges that are a little bit unique. When you're dealing with charter [schools] specifically in the Los Angeles Hispanic community, that is going to try to provide an alternative better educational formula for the community. Using that as an example, "Would we encounter additional challenges with attendance? Has that been a challenge in other charter schools in California or on a national level?"

FELIZA:

In California, we haven't really encountered some challenges with attendance from the ELL students. Now, I work with urban schools mainly. Our affiliates are clustered around Los Angeles. I think that may be an issue in the Central Valley because of the rotation of migrant workers. And I also know that in some of our Midwest schools, attendance became a problem when there was a higher vigilance from ICE [[U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)] around the schools, which is immigration law enforcement. But in particular, not specifically to ELL students, but that has more to do with immigration status.

PEGGIE:

Thank you. That was a really thorough answer. So our second question is from Debra. You talked about the importance of providing grade-level content to ELLs and then modifying it appropriately. This is going to be even more important with implementation of the Common Core [State Standards].

Debra is asking for some examples of modifying teaching to ensure that ELLs can access grade-level content. So a few of the webinar participants gave her some examples related to creating hands-on experiences, building background knowledge, using lots of realia, explicitly teaching vocabulary, [and] using lots of visuals. “Are there other strategies that you might mention to give Debra a better idea of what high-quality instruction for ELLs might look like?”

DELIA:

I think those are really good examples. I don’t know if I could top those. I think the important piece to note is teacher training. And so all of these strategies are strategies that work if the teacher knows when and how to apply them. You pair them with high expectations, the concern is that you would weaken the curriculum or slow it down for these kids.

As you pointed out with the Common Core [State] Standards, it is very important that these kids get the information and instruction that is necessary to get them to grade-level standards.

One of the other methods our schools use is bringing the parents [in] early on to talk to them about what the expectations are for that grade level. So in addition to the teacher setting the expectations and providing the instruction, parents, knowing what their kids are supposed to be doing, are used as partners in ensuring that kids are doing their homework, asking the teachers questions about how the kids

are, comparing their kids to other kids, and that sort of thing.

PEGGIE:

Great. Thank you. All right. And then just as a note, Delia talked a little bit about the variation in state implementation of Title 3. So I posted a link to a recent report that talks a lot about that variation, and what an ELL is and the services that he or she could receive—not only by state but also by district within states.

So our last question from the chat, so anyone else who has a question, please enter it in the chat or raise your hand and speak up over the phone. Adrienne is asking, “How do dual-language schools compare to traditional ELL models?”

DELIA:

True dual-language schools use both languages and use them for a fixed period of time. So our dual-language schools that are K–6, the kids receive instruction in both languages throughout the time that they’re in those schools. In traditional ELL models, the program is a more transitional program, where less native language is used as the kid goes up the grades and learns more English. So the dual-language schools kind of keep that value on native language throughout the child’s academic career.

PEGGIE:

Delia, I might add that some dual-language schools also have an emphasis on, for example, bringing in students who do not speak Spanish and helping them to learn Spanish at the same time as traditionally Spanish-speaking students learn English.

DELIA:

Yes, the two-way models do that.

PEGGIE:

So in some schools you have students learning two languages.

I think I hear someone speaking. Do you have a question?
... Does someone on the phone have a question? Maybe not.

I have a question about engaging family and community. So this seems to be a theme that was important throughout your presentation and one that's important in a lot of charter schools. I was wondering if you could talk about some specific strategies that you've seen used in your schools to engage families and communities, both in the recruitment process and communicating with families and in engaging community-based organizations to support the mission of the charter school.

DELIA:

Sure. As I pointed out, a lot of our charter schools are based within community-based organizations. So the parents are already there receiving other kinds of services and feel that the center is already part of their community. So when the schools are formed, there's not the same level of effort that's necessary to get them to come into the school. In places where the charter schools aren't based in the community-based organization, there's lots of use of the native language.

Many times our schools are begun or opened by people who are from the community. So those partnerships are established already. In the cases where they aren't, there's a real openness to parents. We have a parent education curriculum that we use that's been very effective with parents that not only talks about what they should be doing for their kids to help them, which many parent curriculums do, but also talks about their rights as parents and what they should expect of school.

In the case of many of our immigrant parents, the whole process of schooling in the United States is different. There's a large effort to explain to parents how report cards work, how state standards work, what graduation requirements are—the sort of everyday things we assume

parents know really make the parents more comfortable with the school, and it becomes less of a mystery. So there's a lot of effort from that perspective that leads to a lot of parent engagement.

FELIZA:

I would also like to add that some of our independent charters that are not part of a community-based organization really make a concerted effort to partner with organizations that could provide services that are very much needed by families and students.

For instance, El Sol has partnered up with the University of California—Irvine. And they have an on-site clinic knowing that in their demographic, health insurance is not something that most of their residents or students have. And so they have a health clinic on-site. They also have a nutrition dietician that comes in and speaks to the parents about diets and diabetes in the Latino community and how to prevent childhood obesity. So they really make an effort to bring wraparound services. Even if they can't provide them, they partner with organizations that really meet the needs of their community members.

PEGGIE:

Great. Thank you. It's really important to educate the community about the options that charter schools make available. It can be confusing for people from other countries who are not familiar with the educational system to access all of the choices that might be available. So that's really important to talk about raising awareness as one key strategy and then bringing in all of the supports that Feliza noted.

My colleague Tammie Knights has a follow-up question.

TAMMIE:

Again, it's a little bit about recruitment. In my experience, where the district actually provides the staffing resources for our English language learners, once the English language

learners are enrolled in a school, that's when the staffing becomes available. And it's been difficult to recruit families unless the program is already there. So just looking for suggestions for how to build that trust with the community so people know if you do enroll, yes, the services will come even if the program doesn't exist already.

DELIA:

That is a challenge. And I think it requires districts to already have established that bond, as you pointed out. So it really speaks to the larger responsibility of the district beyond charter schools of having parents feel like they're partners.

One of the things I didn't talk about is that a number of the charters in our network are sort of the mom-and-pop, the independent, charters, and so [they] begin the process of recruitment, I think, from a different point of view. They're in the community and are looking at serving the community in a different way. So the issue of recruitment and trust doesn't exist in the same way.

PEGGIE:

That's an important point. Thank you.

So to diverge a little bit from the engaging family and community piece, you mentioned training all teachers, which I think is important. So oftentimes people will refer to the ELL specialist in the school. But I think what you're implying is that actually it's the responsibility of all teachers in the school to serve ELLs well. But they will need some training in language acquisition, theory, and how to serve ELLs appropriately. So I'm wondering if you have some examples of schools in your network that have done a good job in providing effective professional development for all of the teachers in the charter school.

DELIA:

Yes. There actually are some of our high schools who recently undertook a school improvement process, where

the instructional leadership was assigned to groups of teachers rather than just the principal. And so the teachers formed their own coaching process and supported each other in the classroom and designed their own professional development.

I think one of the issues you face when you have a charter school is you have a much smaller faculty. And in many—if not most—cases in our charter schools, there's not an ESL specialist. Every teacher is sort of responsible for that because the faculty size is so limited. So what our schools have done is to take the responsibility for learning these strategies, take it on themselves and to do peer observation and designing of their own professional development programs.

Feliza, you might want to talk about the PUC [Partnerships to Uplift Communities] Schools and what they're doing with their teacher training.

FELIZA:

As part of the teacher effectiveness training?

DELIA:

Yes.

FELIZA:

The PUC Schools—They're actually a CMO [charter management organization]. They have a charter management organization that has about 15 schools. And they are doing a teacher effectiveness, where they're actually piloting teacher evaluation, and one of the strands that they're looking at is how well ELL students perform. So that really makes the ELL achievement gains a responsibility of all teachers.

One of the things that they're doing in supporting teachers with their bilingual cross-cultural language and academic development certification, [Inaudible] that there is individual learning plans for their ELL students, and there's also team

meetings, vertical and horizontal articulation of plans so that people are meeting together and trying to develop plans for individualizing instruction for ELL students. El Sol does the same thing; that was highlighted in the report. And we have several schools that have very effective dual-language programs, and schools without the dual-language program that obviously have a substantial ELL population, and they understand that it's in their vested interest to address the needs of this subgroup.

PEGGIE:

Great. Thank you. So we have about four minutes left in our Q and A. If people have questions, you can enter them in the chat or speak up over the phone. If I muted you, you can push star six to unmute yourself. But I think Tammie has a follow-up.

TAMMIE:

I would just like to ask if you guys have any particular recommendations for either principals or teachers that are on the line—resources to help them become better teachers for their ELL students.

DELIA:

That is a good question. There aren't, unfortunately, a lot of training programs for administrators. We talk about administrators/principals being the instructional leaders, but when it comes to serving ELLs, unless the principal was a former ESL or bilingual teacher, many of them come into the position not knowing anything about English language learners. I don't know of any formal program for addressing that. NCLR has started some of these efforts, but I don't know of any large-scale program.

I would have two suggestions. One is to identify a team of teachers in your school to take on that instructional leadership and to learn from them. The other is I would love to see some of these principals go back and take the coursework that's necessary to understand the needs and necessary responses to English language learners.

PEGGIE:

I have one last question about expanded learning time. You talked about the importance of using expanded learning time to increase the time that ELLs have during the school day and also to expose them to other opportunities for language acquisition. So I was wondering if you might give us one or two quick examples of schools that you think are doing this particularly well.

DELIA:

Feliza, why don't you talk about the service learning schools?

FELIZA:

Sure. We recently implemented—actually we're in our third year of implementing—a service-learning program that is culturally competent and linguistically responsive. And we implement this model both outside after school and within the content areas.

So we have Lighthouse Community Charter. We have 15 schools across the country that I'm highlighting the demonstration sites. These are schools that have done a great job with it. They use a lot of the strategies that we use within the school—preteaching strategies to really pull out vocabulary words that will help bridge students, help students bridge content knowledge, and then actually implement a service-learning action. So one of the things that the Lighthouse school was doing, they're looking at immigration tells. So they went out and interviewed parents about their immigration journey to the United States—not only from Mexico or Central America but [also] Vietnam, [Inaudible], and other areas. Then they had the students go through a writing process to really polish the narrative and develop a performance script. So they did the entire writing process. Now mind you, a lot of these students are ELL students. So within the performance not only did they have an action that they presented to the community at large but [also] they went through a very intensive writing process to get to that point.

And that's just one of the examples. But, again, we have 15 schools that are actively involved, and those are the service-learning schools. But we also have community-based organizations that are part of our expanded learning network. Delia, perhaps, could mention some of the efforts they're doing there.

DELIA:

Some examples: The Raul Yzaguirre School for Success is a good example of how a charter school is handling expanded learning and extended day. Because they are part of a community-based center, the kids go right from the classroom into the community-based organization space and participate in what you would call extracurricular activities in most schools but are activities that the CBO [community-based organization] offers. So you have ropes courses, you have dance classes, and you have mentorship programs. And the kids don't really see the difference between their school and those activities because it's all in the same space. And they know the folks from the community-based center because they're around the school all day long. So that's a really good example of a kind of seamless transition for kids that is not the responsibility of the school itself in terms of a financial responsibility but is the responsibility of the community-based organization to offer to the students in the school.

PEGGIE:

Great. I think our final question is from Thomás again. Thomás are you on the phone; do you want to speak up?

THOMÁS:

It wasn't really a question as much as it was a request to be able to speak to... I wasn't sure if it was Delia or Feliza that mentioned working with LA-based charters, and I wanted to see if I might be able to communicate offline with her.

DELIA:

Feliza?

FELIZA:

Sorry, I was on mute. Absolutely. Are you hoping to petition for LAUSD [Los Angeles Unified School District]?

THOMÁS:

Yes. We have a petition that's pretty much ready to go, and we do have some support with the LA Unified school board and some additional helps with attorneys and educators that are ready to move on this. But we wanted to make sure that we're approaching this right, and I just had some questions that I'd like to maybe get together and discuss, if that's possible.

DELIA:

Peggie, can you provide Feliza's address to Thomás?

PEGGIE:

Absolutely. I will make that connection.

DELIA:

Okay. Thank you.

PEGGIE:

So I'd like to thank both Delia and Feliza for a very informative and thoughtful webinar. This is really a wonderful opportunity for us to learn more about what you've learned through your important work and how we might be able to apply that in charter schools throughout the country.

Thank you for participating.

- Learn more about future webinars in the ELL series hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center: <http://registration.airprojects.org/NCSRCELL/register.aspx>
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We will have one more webinar in our charter school series. You can register at the address that appears on your screen.

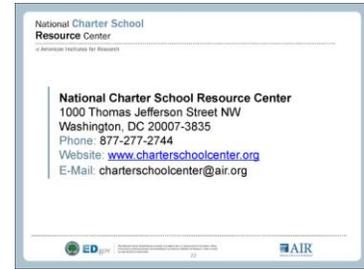
This webinar is being recorded and will be archived at www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars within three business days. And I'm going to send you to an evaluation in a moment. It would be great if you could share your feedback with us. So, again, thank you to all of the presenters and thank you to Delia and Feliza for joining us today. Enjoy the rest of your afternoon.

DELIA:

Thank you.

FELIZA:

Thank you.



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