



CODE ONTARIO PROJETS ÉDUCATIFS  
EDUCATION PROJECTS CODE-ONTARIO



# Supporting English Language Learners Policy and Program Implementation

## COEP Knowledge Mobilization and Capacity Building Project

Final Report  
August 2025

### Introduction

The COEP Knowledge Mobilization and Capacity Building Project supports the needs of English language learners through the provision of professional development and resources to educators so that students are able to achieve academically at the level expected of all learners in Ontario while learning the language of instruction, at the same time as they are learning the curriculum and developing a range of literacy skills.

The overarching objective of the Project aligns with goals as announced in [Ontario Increasing Funding to Boost Reading, Writing and Math](#).

The Project provides flexible and responsive support for school boards to continue transforming learning and teaching of English language learners in the classrooms of Ontario, enabled by technology for innovative opportunities that expand what, how, when and where they learn.

In the 2024-25 school year the project proposes to focus on:

- supporting the implementation of the [English Language Learners, ESL and ELD Programs and Services Policies and Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12](#)
- supporting educators in engaging in professional learning related to anti-oppressive, culturally responsive instruction and assessment practices to improve the progress and achievement of English language learners



- supporting educators in the continued use of Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) resource to inform responsive instruction and assessment of English language learners, in alignment with the elementary Language curriculum and Grade 9 English course, 2023.
- targeting multi-level leadership capacity building in order to strengthen implementation of project work and board improvement planning in relation to supporting English language learners Kindergarten to Grade 12

## Project Actions

The CODE Knowledge Mobilization and Capacity Building Project supports its objectives in the following key areas:

1. Fund school district projects
  - a. support equitable outcomes for English language learners
  - b. build multi-level leadership in programs and service delivery
2. Mobilize knowledge and build capacity through networking and professional learning

## Supporting School District Projects

### Background

School districts were invited to assess the needs related to supporting English language learners (ELLs), and determine areas of work that best fit their locally identified needs. With the CODE Project areas of focus at the core, school board projects were structured so that all boards continued to build multi-level leadership in relation to serving ELLs and their families as they delved into targeted areas of need. The targeted areas centered on capacity building and mobilization, within culturally responsive and relevant approach, related to

- STEP Knowledge Mobilization
- Foundational Literacy
- Supporting Cross-Curricular Success of ELLs in all grades, including de-streamed classes
- Identifying and Supporting ELLs with Special Education Needs

### Actions

- Four professional learning sessions specifically designed to support board leads/teams to implement their project plans
  - Project Launch (November 2024)
  - Network Meeting 1 (February 2025)
  - Network Meeting 2 (April 2025)
  - Project Celebration and Sharing (May 2025)



- Board leads are supported by the COEP Project Lead who continually communicates with board leads, and provides one-to-one support when needed (e.g., to problem-solve, explore options)
- Networking sessions highlight multi-level leadership, and the importance of various roles supporting the learning of ELLs
- Additional opportunities offered through the COEP Project (e.g., Speaker Series) are designed to additionally support board project work. Topics for the Speaker Series aligned with Ministry priorities, the overarching goals of the project, and with one or more of the four areas of implementation.

The project worked to support these areas through

- Supporting School District Projects
- Supporting On-Going Professional Learning – Strengthening Policy Implementation and Pedagogical Approaches
- Expanding and Maintaining VLE Professional Learning Modules
- Providing Targeted/As-Needed Supports

### Structure of the Report

This report will

- in Section A
  - describe the background, timelines and activities related to each of these areas of support;
  - provide data and evidence, and observations based on this data and evidence;
- in Section B
  - based on the observations across the areas of support, provide conclusions and recommendations related to the project moving forward.

### Use of Evidence and Data

A number of key sources of data and evidence were gathered and analysed. These sources include:

- school board project reports that are submitted at the conclusion of the project. Each report asks project leads to identify professional learning actions, key learnings, successes and challenges, number of educators directly and indirectly involved, number of students directly and indirectly impacted
- responses from online and virtual discussions during professional learning sessions, including discussions related to identifying needs (e.g., related to policy and practice)



- responses from participants (e.g., captured from collaborative discussions, participant responses and collaboratively created documents) during professional learning activities
- requests (e.g., for support) that are made from board leads/participants to the Project Lead
- number of participants attending sessions
- number of sessions offered
- number of access points to the VLE



## Section A: Areas of Support within the CODE Project

### 1. Supporting School District Projects

#### Background

At the beginning of the project, school districts were invited to assess the needs related to supporting English language learners (ELLs), and determine areas of work that best fit their locally identified needs. The focus of all projects was to continue to build multi-level leadership in relation to serving ELLs and their families. In addition, school districts delved into one or more of the following areas to continue to build capacity, mobilize knowledge and deliver supports while also taking a culturally responsive and relevant approach for ELLs in classrooms capacity building and mobilization, , related to

- **Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) Knowledge Mobilization:** supporting and maximizing the use of STEP resources to inform responsive instruction and assessment practices
- **Foundational Literacy:** exploring effective instructional and assessment practices to support the growth of foundational reading and numeracy skills of ELLs
- **Supporting Cross-curricular Success of ELLs:** responding to the emerging and ongoing learning needs and success of ELLs across the curriculum, including destreamed learning contexts
- **Identifying/Supporting ELLs/ ELLs with Possible Special Education Needs:** building capacity around effective protocols and processes to identify and support ELLs with possible special education needs

Board leads attended four virtual networking sessions, each of which provided targeted professional learning on a range of topics, including multi-level leadership capacity building, data and evidence collection, evidence analysis and on pedagogy and research. The sessions also provided board leads with time to network, share plans and actions from their projects (e.g., within common areas of identified needs) and to gain input and feedback related to ongoing work from their network peers.

#### Observations from School District Projects

Based on a number of sources of evidence, including board project reports and participant comments and feedback during sessions, these are observations taken from the project work:

- 48 school districts applied for funding and 65 project proposals were approved (this is a slight increase from the previous year where 47 school districts participated and 61 projects were approved)



- 63 projects completed project work and submitted all required documentation; 2 school district projects withdrew during the year.
- some boards needed to adjust or revise their project plans based on circumstances (see **Challenges** below). Some of these shifts meant focusing on capacity building at the system/central level rather than more directly in schools.
- All of the funds designated under the TPA were assigned to approved school district projects. Most school district projects spent the funds that were individually allotted to their project.
- In terms of the targeted area of focus, building multi-level leadership capacity was embedded across all projects, along with at least one other goal that targeted student outcomes. The following indicates the areas of focus and the number of projects that had this areas as the primary target area:
  - STEP Mobilization (21 projects)
  - Foundational Literacy (18 projects)
  - Supporting Cross-curricular Success of ELLs, including in De-streamed Courses (21 projects)
  - Supporting ELLs with possible or with special education needs (3 projects)

**Note:** Although boards may have indicated a primary area of focus in terms of student outcomes, the scope of their work overlapped into some of the other areas. For example, a school district may have focused on cross-curricular success, but there may have been elements of the project that also addressed STEP mobilization.

#### **Voices from the Field**

*The project allowed us to review “the board’s current initial assessment process (IAC) and materials and implemented necessary changes: materials of a more culturally relevant and inclusive nature and tasks that would provide a more accurate understanding of each students’ abilities and needs. [We also] created updated assessment materials that aligned with Ontario Curriculum and the STEP initial assessment continua with greater impact on student success.”*

- Based on the targeted areas of focus identified, 12 networks were configured to support the ongoing work. These networks were engaged in supporting each other during virtual sessions, and in some cases, board leads shared contact information with each other so that they could continue dialogue beyond the scheduled network sessions.
- Several boards were able to extend and expand on work from the previous year (or prior). This is a continuing trend from the previous year’s projects.
- Within board projects, a number of professional learning models were used, including



one or a combination of the following:

- small educator working teams
- focus groups
- resource development teams
- initial assessments
- instructional toolkits
- courses to support ELLs in destreamed context
- student development of resources (e.g., identity texts)
- creation of online, self-directed learning modules
- targeted professional learning (eg. various multilevel leadership PLCs)
- case study and/or development of learning profile approach
- collaborative inquiry
- leveraging systems support positions (School Based Literacy Facilitator, Learning Partners, MLL Monitors)
- The board projects collectively involved:
  - 1165 classroom teachers (elementary and secondary)
  - 709 in-school support roles (e.g., special education teacher, ML learning resource teacher)
  - 180 school and system administrators (e.g., school principals, system principles, superintendents)
  - 152 school board professional learning facilitators
  - 91 other staff
  - A few board projects also involved outside community partners and pedagogical experts
- Board leads were asked to indicate outcomes, based on evidence, as a result of their project work. These outcomes relate to building system capacity, student achievement, and supporting learners and their families. The tables below indicate those outcomes and the number of projects that reported gains in these areas.



### Building System Capacity

Project Outcomes The work of the project resulted in	Number of projects reporting gains
Enhanced Board/School Policy	4
Enhanced Board Procedures	18
Enhanced School Procedures	32
Enhanced Educator Knowledge	44
Enhanced Educator Practice	51

#### Voices from the Field

*“Students have more options to get support than they have had in previous years. Many ELLs regularly access Guidance, ILC, Student Success and SWIS. Attendance at SWIS Cafe/ELL group check-in sessions continues to grow. Every time we host an ELL info session, family attendance and participation increases. Students and families joined our secondary multicultural event, attended elementary diversity events and inclusive collaborations during Catholic Education week, increasing awareness about CRRP in our board. Parents continue to thank us for supporting their children in our schools.”*

In addition, board leads indicated the degree to which the project resulted in increased educator knowledge and practice:

- Using a five point scale (from none to all/almost all), 39 projects reported there was an **increase in educator knowledge** about supporting ELLs for **most or all of the educators involved**
- Using a five point scale (from none to all/almost all), 39 projects reported there was an **increase in educator practice** related to supporting ELLs for **most or all of the educators involved**

#### Voices from the Field

*“This project made a big difference in the pedagogy of the educators that participated in the learning. By the end of these sessions, educators had a better understanding of effective structured literacy instruction, assessment tools, and phonological awareness programs, all tailored to support students grounded in the educational guidelines and reports.”*



### Supporting Students and their Families

Project Outcomes The work of the project resulted in	Number of projects reporting gains
Increased Student Achievement	39
Increased Student Sense of Belonging	34
Increased Connection with Families	14

#### Voices from the Field

*“Evidence shows that ELLs performed better when families are involved. ELL new resources improved the communication between schools and families and added a sense of trust.”*

*“ML educators report that their MLLs have increased foundational literacy skills and note gains in students' STEP levels. Our students requiring ELD programming have Lexia Power Up licenses and the Lexia data confirms that students are making notable gains in word study, grammar, and comprehension.”*

- In districts where teachers were released to engage in job-embedded learning, board leads expressed a positive impact it had on developing a common vision and sense of collective efficacy.

#### Voices from the Field

*“Throughout the learning sessions, both educators and administrators actively participated in professional discussions. These conversations often centered around their real-world classroom experiences with Multilingual Learners (MLLs), directly connecting to the specific topics and strategies explored in our sessions.”*

### STEP Mobilization

The use of STEP continues to be a critical component of supporting ELLs when there is an explicit connection between the assessment information and classroom practice. STEP mobilization became an opportunity for cross-board work (in fact, a few boards collaborated in



developing and implementing their project this year). This joint work involved planning sessions and discussions involving educators from the collaborating boards. Some of the projects that centred on STEP created resources and platforms for digitization to support implementation.

#### **Voices from the Field**

*“I absolutely love this document [project-developed STEP resource]! It is exceptionally well-organized and thoughtfully structured. I especially appreciate the checklist approach with embedded links, which makes it both practical and user-friendly. I believe this will be a valuable resource for classroom teachers, providing not only essential guidance but also reassurance as they navigate working with MLL students for the first time.”*

*“We plan to build on this momentum and continue to co-plan and co-create additional digital tools that support equity and instructional decision making.”*

However, the implementation of STEP continues to be at various stages of implementation across the province. Although the implementation of STEP as an integrated practice was less solid in smaller boards and at the secondary level, there is growing implementation in this area, particularly at the secondary level, to support transitions from elementary to secondary, and for transitions from ESL to ENG (as indicated by 10 board projects).

School boards continued using KSTEP while also recognizing the need to revise and adapt material so that they better align with culturally appropriate practices. Board-wide K-STEP implementation was used as a key tool to support oral language development using a translanguaging approach and creating a specific tool for educators following the STEP continua. There were also questions related to how K-STEP is used alongside other assessments, including Early Screening, in primary grades.

An continued area of exploration regarding STEP is the need to understand how the STEP continuum aligns with the new Language and English Grade 9 curriculum (released in June 2023), particularly to reflect translanguaging (which is referenced in the new Language Grade 1-8 and English Grade 9 curriculum) and anti-colonial stances related to language learning.

Boards continued the process of reevaluating the STEP Initial Assessment (IAC) procedures and building educator basic capacity for language placement in elementary schools (evident in three board projects). This work included establishing procedures and building educator basic capacity, improving processes and resources within an anti-oppressive and culturally relevant



and responsive pedagogical context, and increasing accessibility to educators.

## Foundational Literacy

Boards continue to invest significant professional learning in building strong literacy supports across panels. English language learners benefit from the implementation of instructional and assessment practices, and supporting foundational literacy skills continue to support learners at word- and text-level meaning (as indicated by eleven board projects). This work included:

- Aligning new curricula with other culturally relevant and responsive practices and approaches, including the use/implementation of the STEP framework in a way that acknowledges and addresses that ELLs require additional attention to word- and text-level meaning as they receive systematic and foundational skills instruction,
- Creating inquiries around how to use and interpret data from language screening tools, how to build foundational literacy for ELLs Grades 6-12, and foundational and structured literacy for ELLs in ELD programs,
- Navigating the perceived misalignment between STEP and the Foundations of Literacy strand (Strand B) in the new Language/English curriculum.

### Voices from the Field

*“ML educators expressed a deeper understanding of how to implement the Language curriculum through a culturally responsive lens, particularly in relation to the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ML students. ML teachers expressed increased confidence in utilizing the STEP (Steps to English Proficiency) continuum more intentionally to inform instruction, assessment, and goal-setting for MLs.”*

*“This project made a big difference in the pedagogy of the educators that participated in the learning. By the end of these sessions, educators had a better understanding of effective structured literacy instruction, assessment tools, and phonological awareness programs, all tailored to support students grounded in the educational guidelines and reports. This learning also had an impact on restructuring attitudes and beliefs by replacing the deficit perspectives with asset-based perspectives through placing the students at the center of the learning to ensure equitable opportunities for all.”*



## Supporting Cross-curricular Success of ELLs

There is wide-spread recognition about the importance of educators, specifically classroom teachers, to be able to support the cross-curricular needs of ELLs and to adapt programming to improve student outcomes. In particular, there seemed to be an increasing need for classroom teachers to do this within the context of de-streamed classrooms. There were a variety of approaches within school district projects to build capacity in this area, including engaging in professional learning related to learner needs and collaboratively developing a bank of lesson plans that were specifically designed to support multilingual learners in content areas classrooms.

Many boards continued the work of previous years' projects in supporting ELLs across curriculum, including in destreaming courses in secondary, in the context of transitioning of ELLs from elementary to secondary, and in building academic language to support ELLs in various subjects (as indicated by 14 board projects). This project work included:

- Adapting instruction and assessment, and implementing UDL along with differentiation principles to centre ELLs in all curricular areas,
- Utilizing culturally responsive practices to empower ELLs,
- Using school-wide approaches to support ELLs,
- Focussing on using STEP to make effective program adaptations for ELLs
- Supporting secondary ELLs in de-streamed classes as it pertains to understanding the important role of STEP for making program adaptations as an important component to disrupt informal streaming practices, and supporting credit accumulation, particularly for older ELLs,
- Improving the multiple and various transitions for ELLs,
- Providing specific and targeted support in mathematics, including in destream Grade 9 mathematics and other destreamed courses, such as Geography,
- Providing cross-curricular supports/credit accumulation opportunities for ELLs in ELD,
- Implementing/delivering courses to support ELLs, such as utilizing the English Literacy Skills (ELS 20) in Grade 10.

### Voices from the Field

*“Team Pathway Mapping session: The school administrator involved learned that the MLLs in her school who were the focus of this mapping mini project are entitled to modifications that are different from Special Education modifications. We were able to speak about what these modifications could and would look like in a secondary class. They humbly admitted that they were not aware of this and then said that they are certain that their teachers are not really*



*aware of this either.”*

*“Teachers began to use the buddy system to support newcomer students on the ELD continua. Educators learned about the DDSB’s LAND (Literacy And Numeracy Development) pilot program and are now able to refer students/families to this opportunity. MLL Facilitator was asked to come and run a PD session to over 100 staff at a secondary school.”*

## **Supporting MLs with Special Education Needs**

Although the number of projects dedicated to ELLs with possible or identified Special Education needs is modest (three projects), these boards addressed the capacity building around two common areas: enhancing program adaptations for ELLs with a specific distinction between learning and language variability, and enhancing the reading programs for struggling readers. The work of these projects included:

- Revising and enhancing the processes of identifying ELLs with possible Special Education needs,
- Building capacity and collaboration between departments (e.g., ESL and SERTS educators working together),
- Providing additional resources for professional learning (e.g., through guest speakers),
- implementing processes, protocols and resources for identifying ELLs with possible Special Education needs.

### **Voices from the Field**

*“As a result of this project, elementary ESL/ELD teachers have been invited to an increased number of School Based Resource Team meetings (SBRTs) to discuss the strengths/needs/next steps for ELLs/MLLs with potential special education needs. The ESL/ELD consultant and multilingual services teacher have been invited to collaborate in three times more SBRTs for complex cases than the rate we were called prior to this project, as reported by the Curriculum Department. A greater number of ELLs/MLLs have IEPs this year than last, as reported by the Student Services Department.”*



## Project Challenges

A number of common challenges existed across school district projects, and although it did not prevent almost all the projects (only two school districts had to withdraw from the opportunity) from proceeding in some fashion, it meant that some project plans needed to be revised to adapt to the changing educational landscape. (It may also be noted that these challenges might have prevented some school districts from applying to be involved in project work from the outset.)

Some of the challenges were directly related to providing adequate teacher release and scheduling. These challenges include

- Although less severe than last year, the shortage of occasional teachers across the province prevented some districts from executing the planned job-embedded professional learning for classroom teachers. This resulted in the need for some projects to redirect the scope (e.g., changing their audience from classroom teachers to administrators or central board educators).
- Re-assignment of board ELL leads and/or changes in central office teams/portfolios.
- Being able to accommodate professional learning calendars within boards; that is, too few days available across board needs for professional learning.
- Lack of funding to acquire student resources & licenses (e.g., SMASH, LEXIA) or technology to fully implement it.
- Lack of human resources to carry out the work, e.g., having support staff to work on reading interventions.
- Continued disconnect and/or confusion related to aligning STEP with the Language Arts Curriculum.

### Voices from the Field

*“The biggest challenge by far was finding open days in our Central Booking calendar so that teachers could be released for the PD. We are limited to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for group sessions and to only host 10 or fewer teachers due to the difficulty in finding supply teacher coverage.”*

Finally, there are continued challenges that stem from policy and curriculum. These challenges include

- Disconnect between KSTEP and STEP, and the challenge that KSTEP is in draft presents to implementation,



- Disconnect between outdated Policy/ESL Curriculum and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (e.g., some language in the policy is not as anti-oppressive as it should be),
- There is a need to develop resources which specifically supports MLs in subject areas, including de-streamed classrooms at secondary,
- ELD courses need rethinking in light of de-streaming – resources need to be developed to provide teachers with practical support and examples on how to address learning gaps due to lack of schooling,
- Pathway planning for MLs with complex learning profiles (e.g., special education needs) in secondary schools.



## 2. Supporting On-Going Professional Learning – Strengthening Policy Implementation and Pedagogical Approaches

### Background

A number of professional learning opportunities are provided through the COEP Project, including study/discussion groups and the speaker series. Invitations to these opportunities are shared widely with school board contacts, and in many cases, board leads bring other board educators to participate in these sessions. The professional learning opportunities cover a wide range of topics and are scheduled throughout the school year. The goals of these sessions are targeted to support multi-level capacity building in order to strengthen policy implementation and pedagogical approaches and supports for ELLs. Activities also included collaboration with ERGO and ORNG, especially through professional groups of ESL and ELD teachers, assessors, consultants.

### Actions

- **Discussion Group 1: Leadership Focus: Building Multi-level Leadership to enhance MLL/ELL Success** (December 11, January 16) with the participation of 25 educators from various school districts in a two part series intended to support School District ELL Leads in their roles. Roles of participants include: Assistant Superintendent, Superintendents, MLL Leads, ELD Lead, MLL Coordinators, Early Literacy Lead, ELL Support Teachers, MLL Resource Teachers/Coaches, Classroom Teachers, Principals.  
These sessions provided opportunities for leads to discuss and network related to needs and issues of building capacity. The sessions also highlighted a range of resources to support the role/and new to the role. In addition, various materials and resources were shared and/or co-constructed.
- **Discussion Group 2: Foundational Literacy - Teaching Across Curriculum** (February 27, March 20, April 24) with the participation of 36 educators from various boards in a three-part series focussing on teaching practices and approaches to support ELLs in the new Language Arts curriculum and various content areas. Roles represented include: Math Teacher, Math Assessors, Math Instruction Coaches, Math Lead, MLL Coach, Guidance, MLL Lead/Consultant/Coordinator, ESL/ELD Resource Teachers, Destreaming Coaches, Literacy coaches.  
Some of the resources included frameworks to implement processes and monitor progress of ELLs' language progress.
- **Discussion Group 3: Supporting ELLs with Minimal or Interrupted Prior Education - ELD Programs and Supports** (May 8, June 5) with the participation of 20 educators from various school districts in a two part series intended to support School District ELL Leads



in their roles. Roles of participants include: Assistant Superintendent, Superintendents, MLL Leads, ELD Lead.

### Speaker Series

- Several webinars featuring the expertise of various leaders in supporting Multilingual Language Learners are scheduled throughout the year. Topics targeted current areas of interest and need, areas of board project focus, and emerging research related to pedagogy and ELLs. For example, a number of sessions focused on supporting the foundations of literacy to respond to needs arising from supporting ELLs within the new Language, Grades 1-8 and English De-streamed Grade 9.
- The sessions were open to all educators, and participants came from a wide range of roles, including classroom teachers, board leads and administrators.

Professional Learning Opportunities Supporting COEP Project	Date	Attendance
2024-2025 COEP Project Work		
Welcome to the Project Work Launch, Network 1	Nov. 27	68
Project work Check-In, Network 2	Feb. 12	55
Project work, Network 3	Apr. 2	59
Celebration of Learning, Network 4	May 21	76
Speakers Series: Professional Learning Webinars		
Andrea Honigsfeld, <i>Language &amp; Literacy (Grades 6 to 12). Supporting Secondary MLL in Literacy and Beyond</i>	Oct. 30	20
Bonnie Norton & Liam Flaherty, <i>Digital Multilingual Storytelling – Language and Identity</i>	Nov. 28	14
Saskia Van Viegen, <i>Plurilingualism in action – Examples from the classroom</i>	Jan 21	36
Kimiko Shibata, <i>Supporting MLL within the new Language Curriculum – Sharing Best Practices and Resources</i>	Feb 26	28
Eunice E Jang, <i>Leveraging AI for MLL</i>	March 25	33
Beth Skelton, <i>Long-term Success for Multilingual Learners</i>	April 30	31



Jim Cummins, COEP Celebration	April 17	102
VLE Mobilization		
ERGO Meeting - VLE self enrolment and new content	Nov. 20	15
New Module Exploration	Feb. 26	23
ETFO Presentation for York RDSB	May 23	20

### Emerging Trends

- Participants express the continued need to come together and to share ideas across boards. Board leads, in particular, share that they value opportunities to talk to educators in other boards to understand similarities and differences in their work and to build collective efficacy.
- Resources that have been shared from the Speaker Series are being used in local contexts. Currently, the Speaker Series module in the virtual learning environment is the most viewed content in the VLE. This level of traffic to this module has grown from previous years.
- Participants are finding the topics and speakers relevant and useful to their work. The Speaker Series sessions have become reference points for further work in boards, and there is evidence that board leads are using the resources to support their board needs, areas of focus, and project work.
- Speakers procured by COEP (Andrea Honigsfeld, Cathy Marks Krpan, Tan Huynh, Kimiko Shibata) are often subsequently invited by districts to support project work.
- The content of the Speaker Series and Study/Discussion Groups is seen as new, current and relevant as boards deepen their work to support ELLs.



### 3. Expanding and Maintaining VLE Professional Learning Modules

#### Background

The Supporting English Language Learners virtual learning environment (VLE) continued to expand and be updated. There are now fourteen modules in the e-course, each focused on various topics related to supporting Multilingual Language Learners.

#### Key Information

The VLE currently houses modules designed to address a number of topics related to supporting ELLs, including:

1. Getting Started for School Leaders
2. Assessment & Reporting
3. Supporting Kindergarten ELLs
4. Integrated Models of Support for ELLs
5. Trauma-Informed Leadership
6. MLLs with Spec. Ed. Needs, Part I
7. MLLs with Spec. Ed. Needs Part II
8. Cross-curricular Success for MLLs Supporting MLLs
9. Supporting MLLs with Remote Learning
10. Supporting MLLs with Limited Prior Schooling
11. Research Findings Implementation of ELL Policy
12. Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Practices for MLLs
13. Speaker Series: Voices from the Field
14. Supporting MLL within the New Language Curriculum (new)

Additionally, a new module, Supporting Language Success - Intermediate ELLs/MLLs, has been drafted for release in 2025/2026.

The VLE is referred to in all professional learning sessions, including to highlight how materials can help support school board project work.

#### Actions

- Facilitated sessions, including orientations for new modules, were provided for educators to support the mobilization of the resources at the district and school levels. This is an intentional step taken to support the mobilization of knowledge.
- A new module was added this year: *Supporting MLLs within the Ontario Language Curriculum* (in response to the new Language Curriculum, Grades 1-8).
- New Speaker Series videos were added (from this year's webinar Speaker Series).
- Modules continue to be maintained and problems resolved (e.g., if links are broken) and updated to ensure that the language reflects accurate and consistent information.



- The COEP Project Lead has curated lists of resources that specifically targeted areas of interest related to professional learning. This facilitated easier access to the resources that target specific areas.

### **Emerging Trends**

- All modules continue to be accessed.
- There are a total of 2037 registered users. This is an increase of almost 400 new users since August 2024.
- Some instructors of AQ courses are accessing the modules to support professional learning in their courses. Content is also being used to support the development of new AQ content courses (e.g., ESL Part 2 and Part 3)
- Specific modules are being used by some ELL Leads as a reference/resource to build the capacity of classroom teachers and ELL coaches.
- Specific modules are being used by some ELL Leads as a reference/resource to support Project Work (e.g. Integrated Models of Support Module to support the promotion of a collaborative teaching model, Supporting ELLs with Special Education Need Parts 1 and 2).
- ESL Teachers are using select content to share at staff meetings.
- The COEP Project Lead conducted a number of in-person VLE orientation sessions with some school boards to support board project work and/or to build capacity by helping educators become more familiar with the contents and navigation within the e-community.



#### 4. Providing Targeted/As-Needed Support

##### Background

In addition to the COEP Project Lead designing and implementing collaborative professional learning opportunities to support school district projects and other professional learning opportunities, such as Study Groups, the Project Lead is often called on to provide direct and one-to-one support. The Project Lead responds to requests that help board leads refine project plans, build capacity related to leadership and facilitation practices, and locate relevant resources and problem-solving next steps.

The Project Lead brings a high level of understanding related to policy and policy implementation, use of assessment and responsive instruction, and access to expertise on emerging research and approaches that support MLs at all grade levels.

Board Sessions facilitated by the COEP Project Lead				
Date	Board	Topic	Audience	Delivery Model/Details
Feb 7	Rainbow Schools	Leveraging Supports for Secondary MLLs	8 ELL elementary and secondary consultants	Virtual, ZOOM, co-presented with ERGO
April 28	Halton DSB	KSTEP - Early Identification and Placement of MLL	77 ELL/MLL in-school Support teachers, elementary	In person, co-presented with MLL Lead, Monica Churchill
May 5	Waterloo Catholic DSB	MLL Language Resources	16 ELLs/MLLs Consultants, Itinerant teachers, elementary and secondary	In person, co-presented with MLL Lead, Barbara McCourt
May 27	Waterloo RDSB	STEP - MLL Language Resources	12 ESL/ELD consultants, elementary and secondary	Virtual, Google Meets, co-presented with MLL Lead, Meenu Bakhru
May 20	Peel DSB	Supporting MLLs in	20 ELD teachers	In person, co-presented



		ELD Programs: Credit Accumulation and Graduation	(Grades 6-100 5 principals)	with ESL/ELD central team
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### **Observations on the Role of the Project Lead**

Based on evidence collected, such as anecdotal comments and requests, the COEP Project Lead

- is recognized as a highly knowledgeable educator advocating for the needs of MLs
- is open and interested in learning about and through board projects, and she has a close knowledge of school district projects
- is critical in shaping deep work within school district projects by designing and implementing professional learning that continually builds knowledge and capacity
- helps to build confidence in the capacity of board leads who work with and learn from her.



## Section B: Recommendations

This report recommends that funding for the COEP Knowledge Mobilization and Capacity Building Project continue for 2025-2026 in order to:

### 1. Support Equitable Outcomes for Multilingual Learners

1.1. Continue to support equitable outcomes for multilingual learners by building educator knowledge and capacity through professional learning, including through the funding school district projects, that explicitly links the Ministry's 2023-2024 priorities to school district project areas of focus, including

- providing equity supports
- supporting foundational literacy
- supporting mathematics pedagogy and build collaboration between school board work in mathematics and support for ELLs
- supporting mental health and well-being of multilingual learners
- ensuring continued engagement of multilingual learners, their families and community partners
- applying culturally relevant and responsive procedures to identify and support multilingual learners with special education needs
- exploring support for multilingual learners in de-streamed courses (e.g., English, Science, and Mathematics)

1.2. Support a more comprehensive mobilization of Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) within and across school districts, both in terms of using it as an assessment tool and in terms of using assessment information to inform programming, especially at the secondary level.

### 2. Build Multi-Level Leadership

2.1. Continue, through the project, to enhance school and system leaders' capacity to support multilingual learners by providing professional learning and networking opportunities for school and system leaders, including through job-embedded learning and collaborative inquiry. In an effort to assist board leads in integrating their work and engaging in meaningful partnerships within boards and across boards, a whole systems approach should be encouraged.

2.2. Continue to foster cross-board collaboration to build knowledge and practices related to supporting ELLs.



2.3. Continue to build knowledge and capacity related to using data and evidence of impact, including the capacities to determine and use data that informs next steps (at the classroom, school and system level) to support multilingual learners and that enhances how educators can disseminate findings related to what makes a difference for learners.

2.4. Continue to build awareness of current research and resources that support professional learning (both collaborative and individual), including through the content that is housed within the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Continue to refine and build resources for educators to access on an ongoing basis, and continue to mobilize the use of the content in the VLE, such as the study groups did in this past year. Determine opportunities and feasibility of offering additional moderated courses throughout the next school year.

2.4. Re-design/re-organize materials in the VLE so that they are more accessible to educators.

### **3. Strengthen Policy Implementation**

3.1. Continue to support the implementation of the [English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12](#) (and other ministry supporting documents) in ways that helps to resolve the tension that exists due to the perceived misalignment between the policy and anti-oppression approaches that serve to bring equitable outcomes for multilingual learners.

3.2. Advocate for anti-oppressive, anti-racist practices related to the current policy, and promote an interpretation and implementation of the policy through a culturally responsive and relevant pedagogical lens (and identify and disrupt colonial language that is currently embedded in the wording of the policy) and that supports practices, such as translanguaging, that fosters and sustains students' identities, including their multilingual identities.

3.3. Update the current policy so that it more fully embraces equity and inclusion and incorporates the role of multilingualism, thereby affirming the assets and identities of multilingual learners. In addition, align procedures and practices with a revised policy, including

- practices related to identifying and supporting multilingual learners who may also have special education needs, and developing further supports for educators, especially at the secondary level, to meet those needs;
- practices related to STEP by revising STEP Grades 1-12 so that it honours the multilingual repertoire of students, and revisit and formally release KSTEP (currently in draft) so that educators can use it with greater confidence.