
Strategic and Economic Analysis of English Learner Programs in California

Project Context, Goals, and Methods

Welcome

This slide deck is part of a series of slide decks summarizing the Strategic and Economic Analysis of English Learner Programs in California project.

There are five slide decks available, listed to the right. You are currently reviewing the [Project Context, Goals, and Methods](#).

This slide deck provides a closer look at the project's goals, major activities, and the approach to identifying final recommendations.

- I. Executive Summary
- II. [Project Context, Goals, and Methods](#)
- III. Recommendations: Improve the Design of English Learner Programs
- IV. Recommendations: Expand Access to Integrated Care
- V. Recommendations: Transition to a Multilingual Workforce

Overview

In 2024, WestEd partnered with Sobrato Philanthropies to conduct a strategic and economic analysis of English Learner programs in the state of California.

The study sought to define the scale of economic challenges and explore underlying conditions impacting the costs of implementing English Learner programs in California in alignment with best practice.

Based on the study's conclusions, WestEd identified recommendations related to the following three overarching areas of focus, grounded in the long-term goal of bringing multilingual programs for English Learners to scale in California:

- A. improve the design of English Learner programs,**
- B. expand access to integrated care, and**
- C. transition to a multilingual workforce.**

Strategic and Economic Analysis of English Learner Programs in California

Slide Deck Summary

Slide Deck Summary

What are the key topics covered in this slide deck?



Slide Deck Summary

What are the key takeaways for each topic?

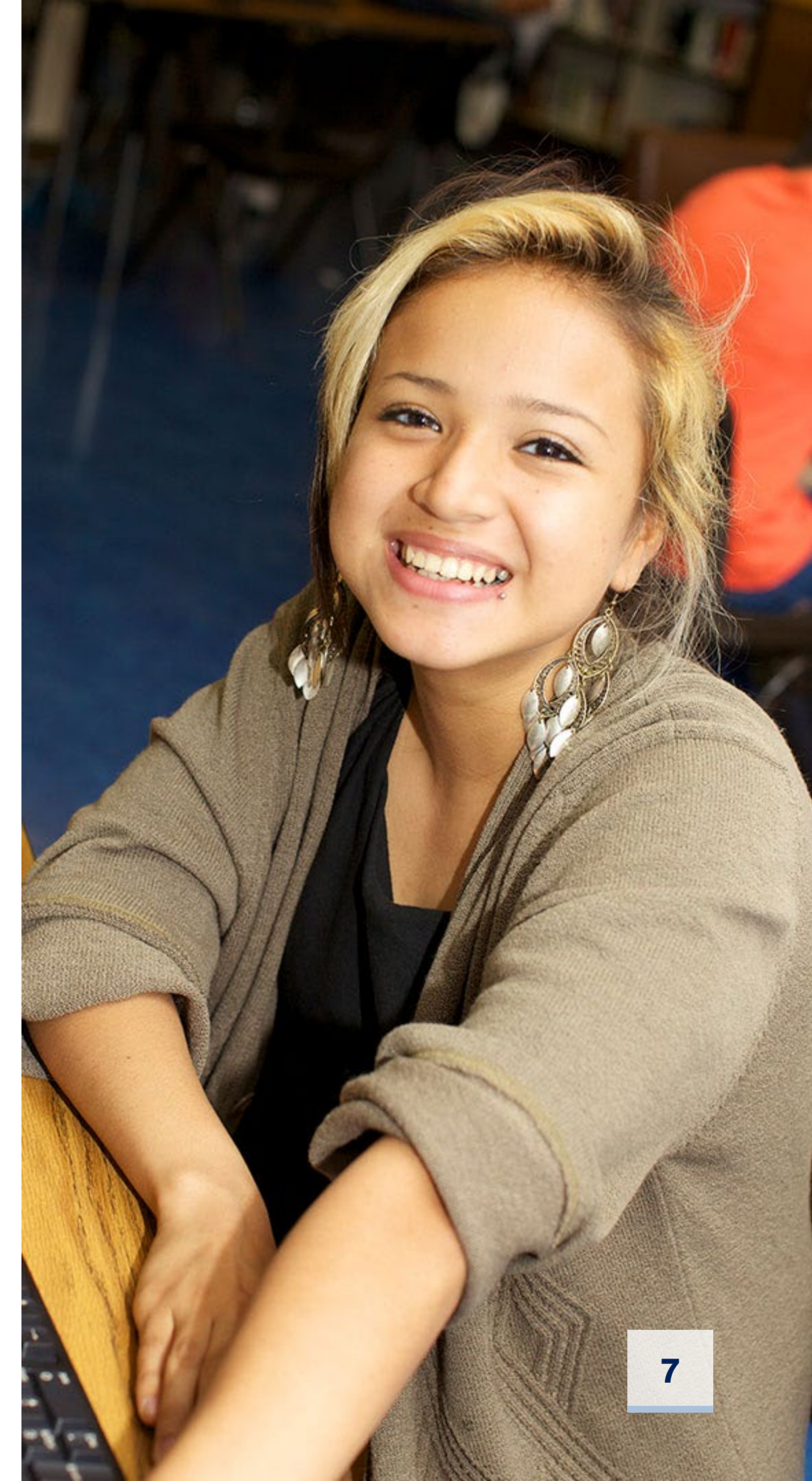
Let's start with the project context.



What is the context for this project in California?

Key Takeaways

- California schools enroll a large and very diverse population of students classified as English Learners.
- California has a robust education policy infrastructure for English Learner students.
- Momentum has been growing around the goal of expanding multilingual instructional programs for English Learners in California.
- This project uses an economic lens to assess English Learner programs in California and identify strategic opportunities to advance bringing multilingual programs to scale.



Slide Deck Summary

What are the key takeaways for each topic?

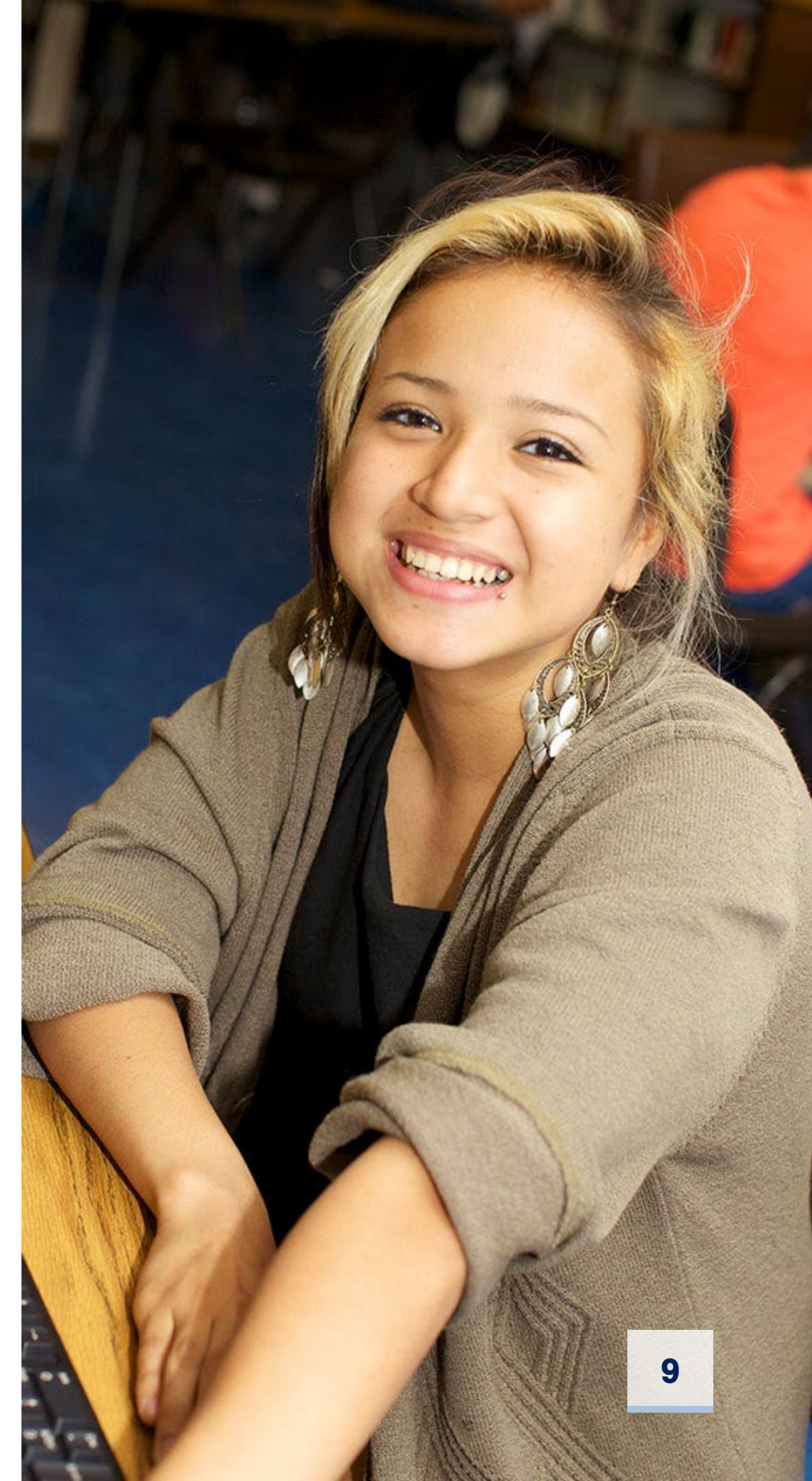
Next let's look at the project goals and methods.



What are the project goals and methods?

Key Takeaways

- The goals of this project are to define the scale of economic challenges of implementing English Learner programs in California and identify opportunities to improve these programs.
- To accomplish this first goal, the project team applied a range of research and analysis techniques.
- To address goal two, the project team identified recommendations to support bringing multilingual programs for English Learners to scale in California.
- Throughout the project the study team engaged with senior advisors from a range of organizations.



Slide Deck Summary

What are the key takeaways for each topic?

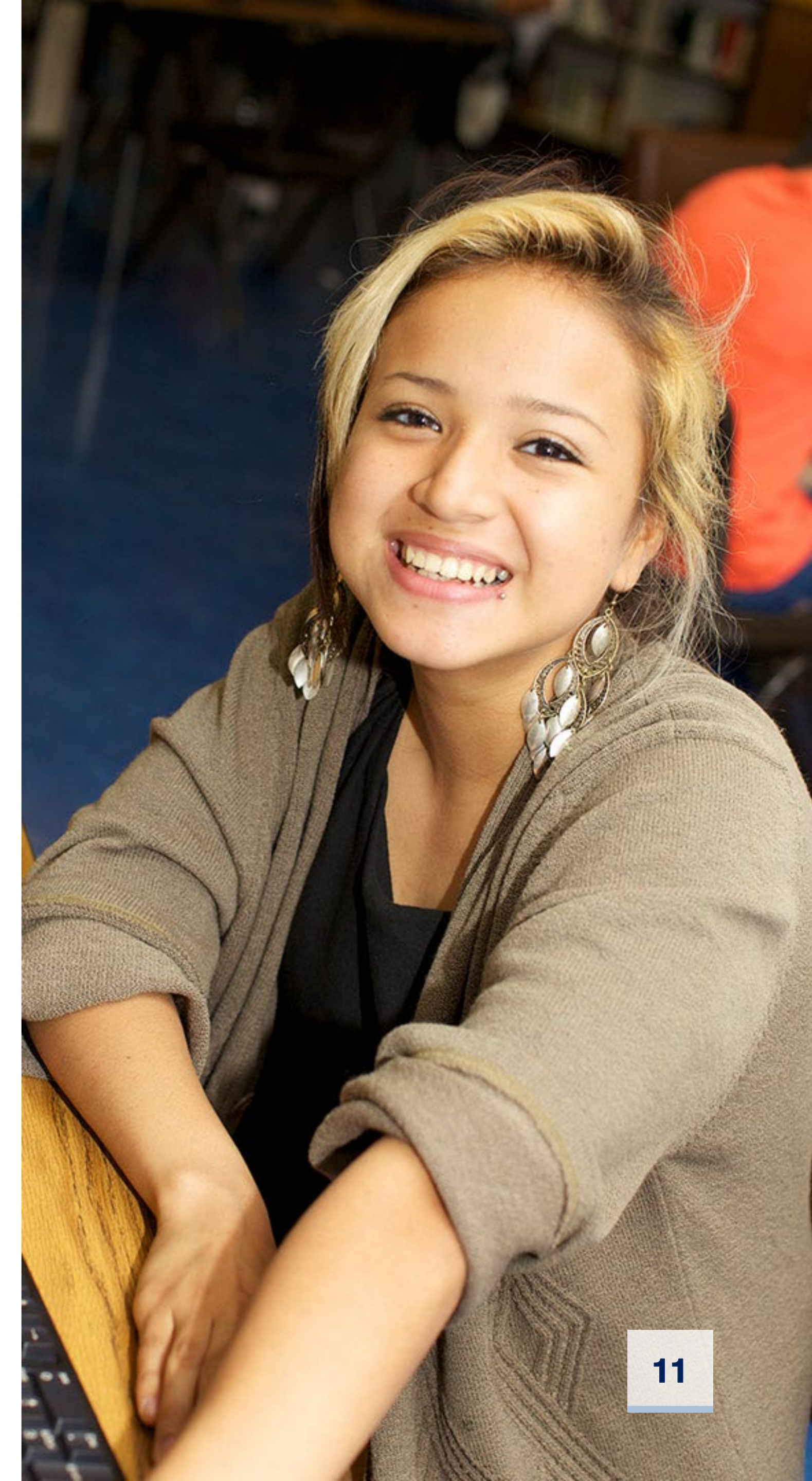
Next let's look at how we identified the project recommendations.



How did we identify recommendations?

Key Takeaways

- **Project recommendations were guided by three broad considerations—they should ideally be:**
 - **Strategic** – Adding Value Today
 - **Aspirational** – Preparing for Tomorrow
 - **Feasible** – Practical in Today’s System
- **Further, the study team considered the following key audiences who can take action to support these recommendations: (1) State and Local Policymakers, (2) Regional and Local Practitioners, (3) Statewide and Community Organizations, and Philanthropy**



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[Additional Detailed Slides](#)

What is the context for this project in California?



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California schools enroll over one million students classified as English Learners, the highest number of any state. These students are incredibly diverse, as are the contexts within which they learn.

- The majority of California's English Learners report Spanish as their home language, but nearly 130 languages other than English are spoken by the English Learner population.
- About 16% of California's English Learners have been classified as English Learners for seven or more years.
- About 19% of California's English Learners are reported to be enrolled in a multilingual educational program, with roughly 10% in a dual immersion program, and 9% in a transitional bilingual program.
- There are documented opportunity gaps between California's English Learner and non-English Learner student populations.

What is the context for this project in California?

California has a robust education policy infrastructure for English Learner students, with key policies that include:

- The **California English Learner Roadmap (2017)** outlining guidance for supporting English Learner students
- The **California ELA/ELD Framework (2014)** which guides the integrated implementation of state ELA and ELD standards
- Requirements that English Learners receive both **integrated and designated English language development**

These policies represent a shift from a previously very restrictive English Learner policy environment shaped by Proposition 227 (1998), which all but banned bilingual education programs in California and was repealed by **Proposition 58 (2016)**.

What is the context for this project in California?

Momentum has been growing around the goal of expanding multilingual instructional programs for English Learners in California, including the following activities:

- The state committed to expanding these programs in its **Global California 2030 Initiative** goals.
- A recent **Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles** report made recommendations on achieving universal access to these programs in California.
- An ongoing partnership of philanthropic foundations, called the **Emerging Bilingual Collaborative**, was launched to focus on this goal.
- **Media attention** focused on the disparities in access to these programs compared to other states with large English Learner populations such as Texas.

What is the context for this project in California?

The California Department of Education (CDE) Communications and English Learner Support Divisions developed the California Global 2030 Initiative, a call to action to expand access to world language classes, programs, and experiences; train more bilingual teachers; and improve the quality and availability of advanced language classes. State goals include the following by 2030:

- Triple the number of students who earn the **State Seal of Biliteracy** to 175,000 per year.
- Have 1,600 **dual language immersion programs** statewide.
- Double the number of **teachers authorized to teach in two languages**.
- Grow the number of **state-approved bilingual teacher programs** to 100.

You can access more information about California Global 2030 at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/documents/globalca2030.pdf>.

What is the context for this project in California?

The **Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles** commissioned a report, *Meeting its Potential: A Call and Guide for Universal Access to Bilingual Education in California* (Williams et al., 2024) that summarized evidence and policy opportunities regarding multilingual education. The authors recommend action in three key areas:

- **Expand bilingual instruction in the state**, including creating high-quality programs across the state, and supporting the growth and expansion of programs that already exist.
- **Invest in efforts to grow the state's bilingual teacher pipelines** in both the long and short term by revitalizing bilingual teacher credentialing programs and creating/strengthening alternative pathways into the profession through grow-your-own and other programs.
- **Prioritize access, quality, and relevance for the state's English Learners**, while also expanding access for other multilingual students and English-only speakers.

You can access this report at https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/language-minority-students/meeting-its-potential-a-call-and-guide-for-universal-access-to-bilingual-education-in-california/CA-bilingual-expansion_CRP_120224-No-Foreword.pdf.

What is the context for this project in California?

The **Emerging Bilingual Collaborative** is a group of philanthropic organizations that engages in the following areas:

- **Educator Preparation:** Supporting local educator preparation pathways focused on building a diverse, multilingual educator workforce and preparing all educator candidates to serve young multilingual learners.
- **Educator Development:** Supporting coherent and sustainable professional development for PreK–3rd grade educators and administrators focused on high-quality instruction for multilingual learners in environments that value them.
- **Educator Mobilization:** Mobilizing PreK–3 educators to advocate on behalf of their multilingual learners.

You can access more information about the Emerging Bilingual Collaborative at <https://emergingbilingualcollaborative.org/>.

What is the context for this project in California?

Complementing these other activities, this project uses an economic lens to assess the design, implementation, and improvement of English Learner programs.

This project also identifies strategic opportunities to advance the long-term goal of bringing multilingual programs for English Learners to scale in California.

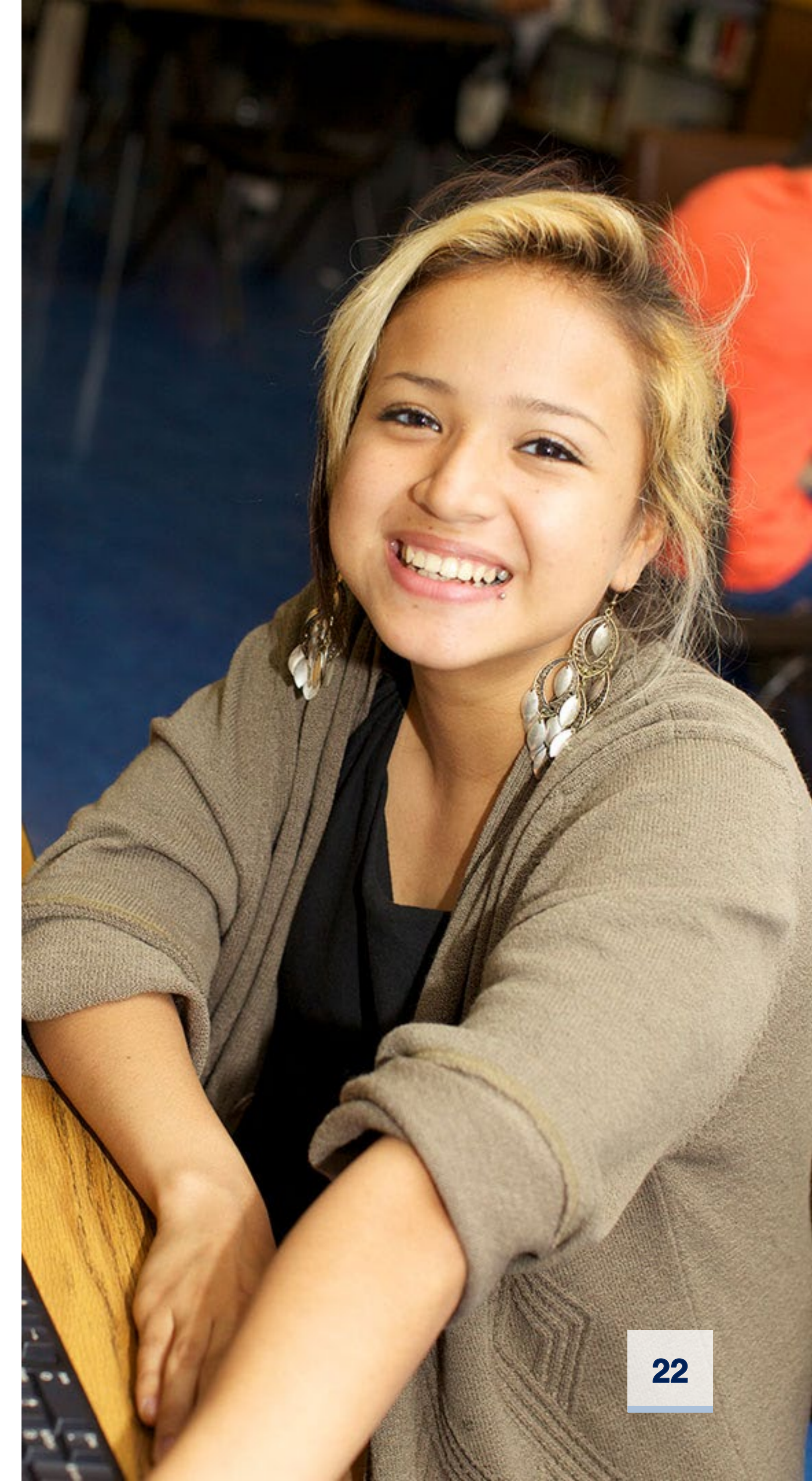


What are the project's goals and methods?

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The goals of this project, commissioned by Sobrato Philanthropies, are to

- define the scale of economic challenges and explore underlying conditions impacting the costs of implementing English Learner programs in California in alignment with best practice, and
- identify opportunities for philanthropy and education leaders over the next 5–10 years to improve programs for English Learners in California.



What are the project's goals and methods?

GOAL 1: Define the scale of economic challenges and explore underlying conditions impacting the costs of implementing English Learner programs in California in alignment with best practice.

To accomplish this first goal, the project team applied a range of research techniques, including **Economic Evaluation:**

- This category of methods includes different types of economic evaluation such as cost analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and benefit-cost analysis.
- All are grounded in a review of resource quantities allocated to a program, the value to these resources or their price (i.e., personnel compensation, etc.), and the estimation of the cost of the program based on these quantities and prices.
- In this project we applied this method to estimate the current investment in English Learner programs in six case study school districts in California.

What are the project's goals and methods?

GOAL 1: Define the scale of economic challenges and explore underlying conditions impacting the costs of implementing English Learner programs in California in alignment with best practice.

To accomplish this first goal, the project team applied a range of research techniques, including **Cluster Analysis**:

- Cluster analysis refers to a set of methods used to group something based on a set of available data measures. The goal is to maximize the similarity of those in the group and minimize their similarity with those not in the group with respect to the data included.
- In this project, we applied a particular category of this method, **k-means clustering**, to group school districts in California based on their concentration of English Learners, the characteristics of English Learners, and the characteristics of teachers.

What are the project's goals and methods?

GOAL 1: Define the scale of economic challenges and explore underlying conditions impacting the costs of implementing English Learner programs in California in alignment with best practice.

To accomplish this first goal, the project team applied a range of research techniques, including Confirmatory Factor Analysis:

- Factor analysis in general is a method that is used to test whether a set of data measures are interrelated in a particular way and can be grouped into a smaller set of consolidated measures.
- In this project, we applied this method to data maintained in the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality Social Determinants of Health Database group in alignment with the Center for Disease Control's Social Determinants of Health five domains.

What are the project's goals and methods?

GOAL 1: Define the scale of economic challenges and explore underlying conditions impacting the costs of implementing English Learner programs in California in alignment with best practice.

To accomplish this first goal, the project team applied a range of research techniques, including Logistic Regression Analysis:

- Regression analysis is a general method used to estimate relationships between an outcome of interest and a set of measures thought to predict the given outcome. Logistic regression analysis is typically used when the outcome is a binary variable (i.e., yes or no).
- In this project we applied this method to assess whether the Social Determinants of Health domains are significantly associated with being found in a specific type of English Learner program setting.

What are the project's goals and methods?

GOAL 2: Identify opportunities for philanthropy and education leaders to build on the successes to date and make greater progress over the next 5–10 years.

Informed by this analysis and formative strategic conversations with policy advisors, the project team identified recommendations in the following three areas of focus:

- A. Improve English Learner program design
- B. Expand access to integrated care
- C. Transition to a multilingual workforce

All of these areas of focus are grounded in the long-term goal of bringing multilingual programs for English Learners to scale in California.

What are the project's goals and methods?

Throughout the project timeline the study team engaged with an **Advisory Committee** made up of (1) state education leaders, (2) practitioners, (3) technical assistance/service providers, and (4) community leaders.

Advisors involved in the process were asked to do the following:

- Provide input** on key decision points arising around project milestones throughout the timeline.
- Provide feedback** on project materials including, for example, analysis planning and procedures, data collection materials, and analysis results.
- Support dissemination** of project activities and outcomes to interest group members.

How did we identify recommendations?

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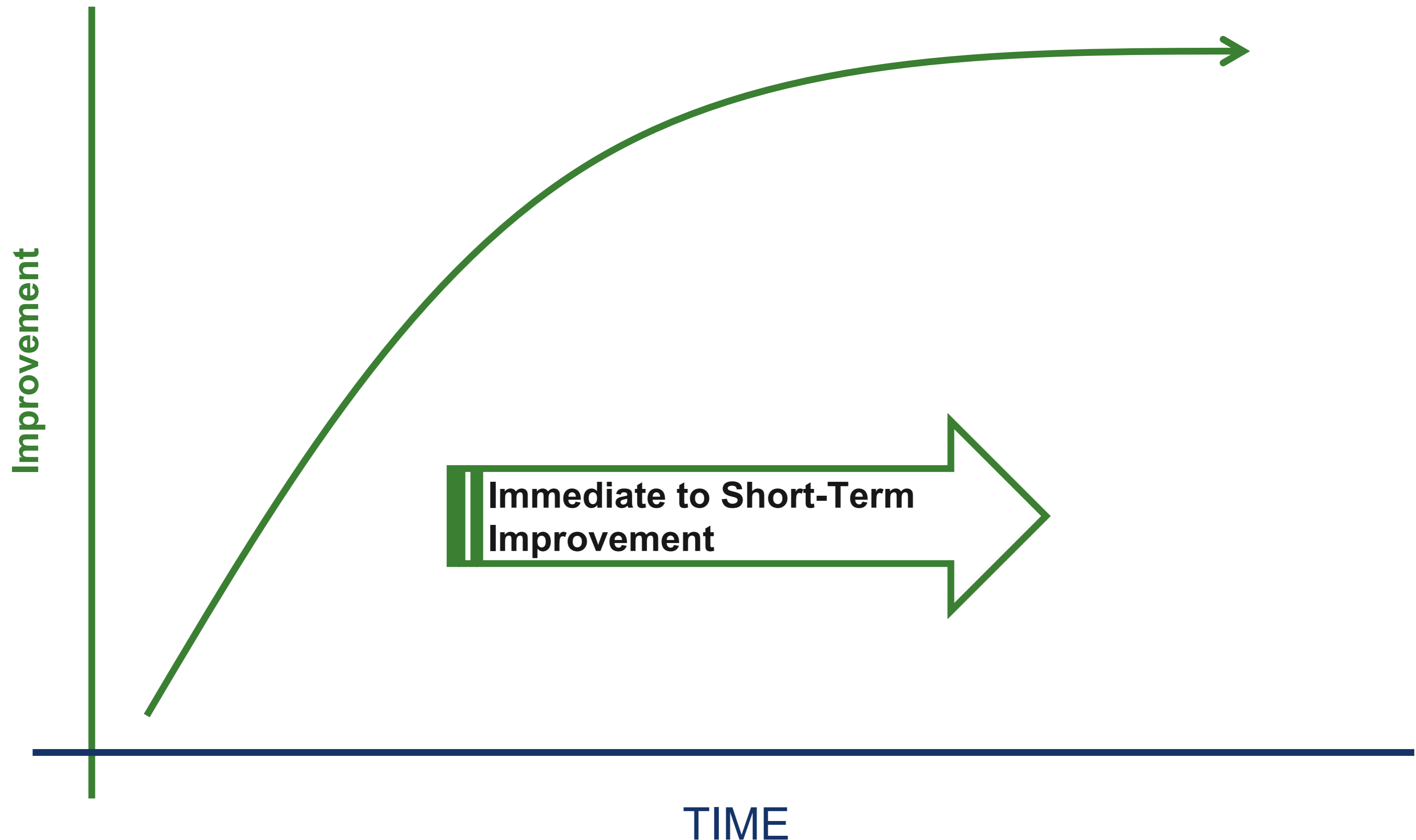
Project recommendations were guided by three broad considerations:

- ❑ **Strategic – Adding Value Today:** Strategic actions in the near term should add immediate value.
- ❑ **Aspirational – Preparing for Tomorrow:** While daunting, multilingual instruction at scale is a goal worthy of practical and strategic planning. Thus, recommendations should support a long-term transition to multilingual instruction at scale.
- ❑ **Feasible – Practical in Today’s System:** Actions in the near term should be feasible in the current system or represent a feasible step toward transitioning the system.

How did we identify recommendations?

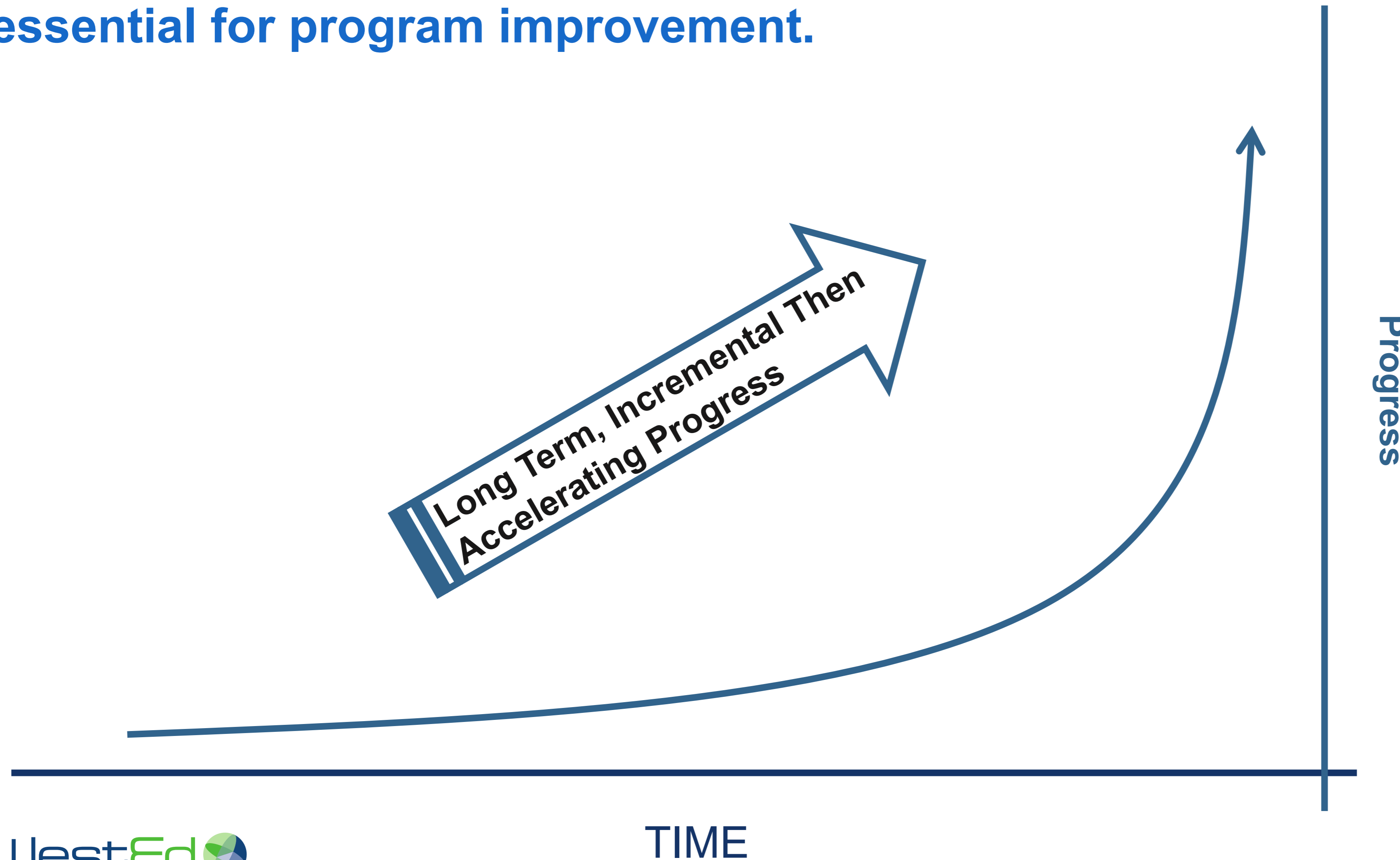
We considered long-term progress to multilingual programs for English Learners essential for program improvement.

Improvement of current program models can be substantial in the short term but will gradually diminish without making progress toward a new program model.



How did we identify recommendations?

We considered long-term progress to multilingual programs for English Learners essential for program improvement.



In the short term, progress toward multilingual programs will be gradual, but these investments will accumulate, allowing for accelerated progress in the long term.

How did we identify recommendations?

Further, the study team considered the following key audiences who can take action to support these recommendations:

State and Local Policymakers

Regional and Local Practitioners

Statewide and Community Organizations

Philanthropy

How did we identify recommendations?

Further, the study team considered the following key audiences who can take action to support these recommendations:

State and Local Policymakers

- State: Governor, legislative leaders, state agencies (CDE, DSS, DHCS, HCAI)
- Local: County supervisors, School board members

Regional and Local Practitioners

- School Districts: Central Office leadership, principals, teachers, and other key staff (paras, coaches, etc.)
- County Agencies leadership: education, social services, public health, behavioral health, basic health care

How did we identify recommendations?

Further, the study team considered the following key audiences who can take action to support these recommendations:

Statewide and Community Organizations

- Statewide organizations (CalTog, EdTrust-West, Parent Org Network, etc.)
- Community organizations (Partnership for LA Schools, GO Fresno, etc.)

Philanthropy

- Philanthropic organizations focused on English Learners, economic mobility, health, immigration and community outcomes.

How did we identify recommendations?

Informed by this analysis, and determined through formative strategic conversations with policy advisors, the project team identified recommendations in the following three areas of focus:

A. IMPROVE the DESIGN of ENGLISH LEARNER PROGRAMS

B. EXPAND ACCESS to INTEGRATED CARE

C. TRANSITION to a MULTILINGUAL WORKFORCE

Keep digging!

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This project was made possible by the generosity of **Sobrato Philanthropies**, and the WestEd team would like to thank them for their financial support and thought partnership on this project.

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We are grateful for the donation of their time and the thoughtful input and feedback they provided on the project work throughout the process.

That said, the work of this project is entirely that of the **WestEd team**. All errors are our own.