

Please note that this is a working version of the conference program. Additions and changes are made until the time of publication, usually the week before the conference. We are making this document available to you as a general guide. Please make sure to check this page regularly for the latest information. Updates will be posted as they occur. (10/31/25)

TUESDAY

10:15A-11:15A

South Pavilion 1

Differentiation and Scaffolding for MLs

In this session, we will explore a variety of scaffolding techniques in support of Multilingual Learners that are applicable across content areas and grade levels. Teachers will receive a list of strategic grouping considerations to support differentiated instruction for MLs and practical scaffolding methods that are research-based.

Presenter:

Vanessa Figueroa, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

Biliteracy Mapping through the Cross-Linguistic Co-Planning Process

Dual language teachers are expected to provide language arts instruction through both program languages, but they aren't given twice as much time to do it. This session introduces a cross-linguistic co-planning process to help teachers align instruction, distribute content, and build cross-linguistic connections. Walk away with tools for biliteracy mapping and co-planning across all subjects.

Presenters:

Elizabeth Howard and Shera Simpson, Dual Language Connections, LLC, Storrs Mansfield, CT

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Equitable Identification: Navigating Special Education for Multilingual Learners

Concerns have persisted for decades in the U.S. that multilingual learners are being wrongly identified with disabilities. This is often because educators struggle to tell the difference between typical second-language development and a genuine learning disability. This presentation will provide many resources to consider from debunking myths, data collection, the MTSS process, special education process, IEPs, and parent participation.

Presenter:

Veronica Diaz, Mannheim School District 83, Northlake

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

The World is Your Library: Selecting International Spanish Literature

This presentation offers a practical guide for sourcing and selecting authentic Spanish literature from international publishers. We will provide a clear framework for building a curated collection that goes beyond simple translation, helping you acquire high quality, culturally rich books to foster bi-literacy, bilingualism, and sociocultural competence. You will learn how to transform your school library into a dynamic curriculum tool.

Presenters:

Carolina Duque and Heather Robertson-Devine, Books Del Sur, Antioch

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

The Language Link Framework: Building Bridges for Biliteracy

This session centers on the Language Link Framework, a systematic approach to fostering biliteracy in dual language settings. Participants will apply the framework across linguistic subsystems—phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics—to strengthen cross-linguistic transfer while fostering metalinguistic awareness, building bilingual confidence, and celebrating multilingual identities.

Presenter:

Rocio Del Castillo, Freeport School District 145

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary, Middle School

Sam Tinley Room

Newcomers at a Glance

This session will go over some of the newcomer resources available on our ISBE website along with our newly created Newcomer at a Glance guidance document.

Presenters:

Michelle Lopez, Seng Naolhu and Randi Sucic, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

Holistic Approaches to ESL Placement: Honoring Students' Full Linguistic Repertoires

This session highlights a whole-child approach to ESL placement. We will explore strategies for collaborating with teachers, administrators, parents, and IEP case managers. The goal is to ensure multilingual learners have equitable access to rigorous, content-rich instruction while receiving the scaffolds and supports that honor who they are as learners and individuals.

Presenters:

Gloria Verástegui and Araceli Welsh, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

More than Words: Weaving WIDA ELD into Instruction

This presentation will explore the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the Key Language Uses of Narrate, Inform, Explain, and Argue. We will show how to collaboratively embed WIDA standards into existing ELA units to create equitable, language-rich instruction for multilingual learners, ensuring they have access to grade-level content while developing their English proficiency.

Presenters:

Shurook Abdeljaber, Barbara Dziatkowicz, Zain Fakhoury, Jasmine Hakawati, and Lizet Sibaja, North Palos School District 117, Palos Hills

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Multilingual and EL Learners in Birth-5: Identification, Assessment, and Supports

Key lessons from the PDG Project to Identify Multilingual and English Learners outside school-district settings inform a new project with expanded goals, participants, and research. Identification and assessment tools will be discussed, introducing a new open-source professional development designed to help EC providers serve multilingual learners and their families. Research findings center insights from key stakeholders and center staff.

Presenters:

Raisa Blazquez, Illinois Workforce and Education, Research Collaborative (WERC), Chicago, Tammy King, Early Childhood Professional Learning, Arlington Heights, and Lindsay Meeker, Senior Policy Consultant for Latino Policy Forum, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

North Pavilion 6

AI Strategies for Culturally Relevant Classrooms

Discover how artificial intelligence can support culturally relevant pedagogy by affirming student identities, valuing multilingualism, and creating inclusive learning experiences. In this interactive session, participants will explore practical AI tools, analyze issues of bias and equity, and design classroom activities that amplify student voices while bridging culture, language, and technology.

Presenter:

Rebecca Morales, Elmhurst School District 205

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Listening to Parents: What Families Facing Homelessness Need from Schools

This presentation lifts up the voices of parents experiencing homelessness as they share perspectives on how schools can better support their children's education. By centering lived experiences, we highlight barriers families face, strategies for fostering stability, and actionable steps schools can take to help students succeed despite housing insecurity.

Presenter:

Alyssa Phillips, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Keeping Students Engaged by Using Interactive Learning Strategies

This presentation will offer discussion strategies and activities to support student learning. Participants will explore educational strategies, games, and technological resources and build their repertoire of discussion strategies for ELLs, including those with disabilities, through interactive practice of discussion strategies.

Presenters:

Maricruz Gonzalez and Maria Ovalle, Chicago School District #299

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Strategies for Engaging Long-term/Experienced Multilinguals

This session explores effective instructional approaches for Long-term/Experienced Multilingual learners (MLs). Participants will discover research-based strategies to build on multilingual students' linguistic assets, address fossilized errors, maintain motivation, and support continued language development while accessing grade-level content across subject areas.

Presenter:

Jacinta Thomas, College of Lake County, Grayslake

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Math is More than Just Numbers

Although math is made up of numbers, there are a lot of linguistic supports necessary for all students to be successful in a math class. Explore different ways to support students in math classes by building up their academic language to support their mathematical achievements.

Presenters:

Crystal Jimenez and Kathleen Meyer, Addison School District 4

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

11:30A-12:30P

South Pavilion 1

Encontrando el Camino del Laberinto de los Estándares de Artes del Lenguaje

En la sesión los asistentes se familiarizan con los Estándares de Artes del Lenguaje, por dónde empezar y el camino paulatino a seguir concentrándose en la secuencia de instrucción de los estándares que aplican al español. Es una inmersión profunda con la meta de aumentar el conocimiento de los estándares.

Presenter:

Norma Monsivais Diers, University of Illinois at Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

South Pavilion 2

Beyond Scaffolds: Reimagining How We Serve Newcomers

This session will push us to move beyond surface-level supports and consider the deeper work of creating systems, relationships, and environments where newcomers truly thrive. Attendees will leave with practical insights, resources, and a broadened perspective on how to serve newcomers in ways that foster belonging, growth, and long-term success.

Presenters:

Laura Heneghan and Kelly Zimmerman, Berkeley School District 87

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Effective Scaffolding Instructional Practices for Dually Identified Students

Learn from our experience as we've implemented effective scaffolding practices in Dual Language Co-Teaching settings to support oracy and language skills to prepare students to read, write, and achieve academic goals ¡en dos idiomas!

Presenters:

DeLisa Contreras and Guadalupe Gallardo-Escobedo, Valley View Community School District 365-U

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 5 and 6

English Learners and State Testing Supports

This session will cover supports available to English Learners on Illinois State assessments

Presenter:

Barry Pedersen, Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Bremen Room

You Just Need a Juicy Sentence for Great tasting Comprehension!

Students can access grade level texts with the right supports! We can scaffold up and not change the text! This session will offer participants ways that they can utilize mentor sentences to support students with comprehending complex texts and learn writing. This will be a hands-on presentation that will require participants to complete a language dive with a mentor sentence.

Presenter:

Sarah Said, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Sam Tinley Room

Are Students Learning Enough Spanish? Authentic Spanish Proficiency Assessment in Dual Language Programs

Kildeer District 96 has been working to build clarity and consistency in Spanish language proficiency development across grades K-8. In this session, participants will learn how to implement a process for designing and implementing an embedded proficiency assessment model, calibrate collaborative scoring practices related to language proficiency, and connect data to both instructional planning and meaningful family communication.

Presenters:

Meghan Bird and Reyna Sandoval, Kildeer District 96 and Sonia Esquivel and Danette Meyer, With Partners Education, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

North Pavilion 1

Establishing Holistic Support Systems for Multilingual Learners at the High School Level

This presentation will look at a variety of practical strategies that improve the overall experience for English Learners at the high school level. Taking a "holistic" perspective, attention will be paid to instructional, institutional, and interpersonal strategies that work together to create a welcome and academically rigorous environment for multilingual students.

Presenter:

Nicholas Dilley, Monmouth-Roseville Community Unit School District 238

Grade Level: High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Language Lessons: Integrating Effective Grammar Instruction into Content

This presentation considers appropriate grammar instruction for learning English at all ages and how to best integrate grammar into content-based lessons to help teaching in the different language modalities. To give ideas of what to focus on, the presentation will separate easy and difficult English grammar areas for learners and give guidelines for effective embedded grammar instruction.

Presenter:

John Evar Strid, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 4 and 5

So Many Initiatives, So Many Reforms: So. Little. Time.

Each initiative, each reform carries promises for students, families, and practitioners. With limited time, how can we effectively prioritize learners who are multilingual, learners with exceptional needs, curriculum, instruction, and assessment? During this interactive session, we will discuss techniques, strategies, and resources to create a system to do more with less and sustain outcomes for students, educators, and administrators.

Presenter:

Antoinette Taylor, A.T. Exceptional Consulting, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

North Pavilion 6

From Boomers to Zoomers: Generational Culture Competency

This presentation explores the unique traits, values, and communication styles of Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Learn practical strategies to bridge generational gaps, improve collaboration, and create inclusive environments where every voice is heard. Whether you're leading a team, working with students, parents, administrators or staff, you'll walk away with tools to turn generational differences into strengths.

Presenters:

Sherese Johnson and Patrick Rice, Black Educational Advocacy Coalition, Mt Vernon

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

The Effects of Dual Language Program on FRL (Free/Reduced Lunch) Students

A dissertation study done on the effects of dual language programs on both EL and non-EL students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and their IAR math and reading scores over the course of a three to four year period. This study was done using Illinois schools with Spanish dual language programs.

Presenter:

James Robinette, Bensenville School District 2

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Dialogue in Math

Are you looking to get all students have to more productive conversations in math? We paired up to find the best strategies that work for all students. Students are having respectful discussions about whether they agree or disagree with each other. Students have also been able to analyze others work to see their thoughts. This is all done with appropriate supports for all language learners.

Presenters:

Brianna DeSilvia and Lauren Dobben, Community Consolidated School District 59, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Student Voice and Identity in Dual Language Assessment Practices

This session highlights how the CPS Dual Language Team partnered with schools to use assessment data as a tool for elevating student voice and affirming identity. By examining both qualitative and quantitative practices, educators will learn how to interpret data through a culturally responsive lens and design instructional practices that foster belonging, affirm students' linguistic identities, and advance biliteracy development.

Presenters:

Sarah Cohen, Almudena Coloma Luque and Massiel Zaragoza, Chicago School District 299

Grade Level: All Levels

01:45P-04:00P

North Pavilion 6

English Learners Advocacy Council in Higher Education (ELACHE) Annual Meeting

This session will provide our annual update from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Presenters:

James Cohen, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb and Sonia Soltero, DePaul University, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

01:45P-02:45P

South Pavilion 1

Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education: Updating for Authenticity and Innovation

Dual language education stakeholders! It's been 7+ years since Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education edition 3 was published, time for an update! Join CAL for a feedback session to share your experience using the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education and help shape the next edition. Reflect on what needs updating and what should be included for the next generation of dual language bilingual education programs.

Presenters:

Analleli Hernández and Diep Nguyen, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

Triple Threat: A Framework for Extraordinary ML Growth

Triple growth is not only possible, it's achievable! This session examines the mindsets, strategies, and systems that more than tripled multilingual learner exit rates over four years, alongside significant gains in literacy and mathematics. By combining high expectations with systems of care and support, we as educators can (and do) make the extraordinary happen!

Presenters:

Madison Gillofo, Jackie Griffin and Hal Schmeisser, East Prairie School District 73, Skokie

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Talk, Listen, and Learn: Practical Oracy Strategies for ML Success

As AI advances, strong listening and speaking skills become even more crucial for effective communication. This interactive session explores oracy strategies for multilingual learners. We will discuss best practices that empower students to enhance their communication skills across diverse contexts. Participants will leave with practical, adaptable strategies for any classroom setting.

Presenter:

Jill Bruellman, College of Lake County, Grayslake

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 5 and 6

MTSS: Doing it Right - Right Now!

MTSS (MultiTiered System of Support) is a popular concept in education but many schools are still grappling with how to build an effective MTSS structure at their schools. This session will help educators gain the necessary tools to build strong MTSS practices to meet the needs of every student. They will learn how to develop classroom, teacher team, and leadership team MTSS practices to yield results for students.

Presenter:

Femi Skanes, Leadership EDGE, LLC, Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Bremen Room

Resilience Tips for Teachers, Parents and Students

Resilience for the EL student participating in special and regular school programs is enhanced by the student's sense of belonging in the school environment. Parents and teachers are vehicle to develop resilience in students of all ages. Resilient students are successful in school and later in life. Suggestions will be offered for increasing resilience.

Presenter:

Julieta Rosales Pasko, Retired Bilingual School Psychologist, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Sam Tinley Room

Centering Language in Secondary Content and Literacy Learning

This interactive session spotlights how secondary dual language programs in CPS advanced student biliteracy development by allowing for access to rigorous, grade-level content in both languages. Presenters will share examples of academic discourse, complex texts, and assessments in English and Spanish, offering adaptable strategies for school teams to embed intentional language development into Professional Learning Plans and learning cycles.

Presenters:

Sarah Cohen, Almudena Coloma Luque, and Massiel Zaragoza, Chicago School District 299

Grade Level: Middle School

North Pavilion 1

How to Avoid Overidentification of English Learners (ELs) for Special Education (SPED) Services

This presentation will discuss strategies that will help avoid overidentification of English Learners for SPED services.

Presenter:

Stephanie Díaz, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Bilingual Special Education Teacher and SLP: The Benefits of Collaboration

We will explore collaborative partnerships between bilingual special education teachers and speech-language pathologists in elementary settings. Topics include push-in models integrating speech and language services within instruction, coordinated IEP goal development, and practical frameworks for effective collaboration that enhances academic and communication outcomes for bilingual students with special needs.

Presenters:

Elspeth Alvarado and Alexandra Cordoba-Lee, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Teaching with Care: Trauma-Informed Strategies for Language Learners

This one-hour session introduces trauma-informed practices tailored for multilingual learners. Participants will explore how trauma impacts language development, learning, and behavior, while gaining practical strategies to build safe, inclusive classrooms. With a focus on cultural and linguistic responsiveness, educators will leave with tools to recognize trauma, foster resilience, and support meaningful engagement for all students.

Presenter:

Jaymie Lopez, Waukegan Public School District 60

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Cultivating Multilingual Mindsets: Growing Schoolwide Practices for Learning and Motivation

A multilingual mindset transforms schools—boosting student learning, strengthening belonging, and motivating staff. Discover how teachers, resource personnel, and administrators can collaborate through MTSS, celebrations, academic supports, and community partnerships. Learn ways to engage families, honor identity, and create sustainable systems that empower students and re-energize educators.

Presenters:

Karen Cano and Ashley Whitaker, Waukegan Community Unit School District 60

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Empowering Multilingual Journeys through 8th-Grade Pathways to Biliteracy Award

Explore the 8th grade Pathways to Biliteracy Award, a district initiative that honors multilingual students and connects to the high school Seal of Biliteracy. Learn about the award's structure, requirements, and examples of success implementation. Gain practical strategies for integrating into curriculum, engaging families, motivating students, and ensuring equitable access so all learners can celebrate and develop their language skills.

Presenters:

Ben Camehl and Sylvia Gorski Duarte, Glenview School District 34

Grade Level: Middle School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Accessing the ACCESS: Applying Accommodations and Improving Accessibility

Overview of the Accommodations Manual for WIDA Assessments and scenarios for use.

Presenters:

Lauren Ligammari and Randi Sucic, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

03:00P-04:00P

South Pavilion 2

FEATURED SESSION: Reimagining Classroom Libraries: Must-Have Books for Multilingual Learners

Transform your classroom library into a powerful tool for language development and cultural connection with curated book lists designed specifically for multilingual learners across grade levels. From wordless picture books that spark storytelling to rich chapter books that celebrate diverse voices, discover high-impact titles—both fiction and nonfiction—that support literacy, identity, and engagement.

Presenters:

Maggie Essig, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

WEDNESDAY

10:15A-11:15A

South Pavilion 1

Accessible and Equitable Mathematics Instruction

Join us to do some fun math - and to think about and discuss how to open-up a lesson so it is accessible to all students in your classroom. Our conversation and resources will be focused on students in special education, but can benefit EL and other students as well.

Presenter:

Matt McLeod, Education Development Center Inc., Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary

South Pavilion 2

Shhh...Let the students talk!

This hands-on workshop focuses on strategies to enhance student discussion, foster academic language development, and support overall language growth. Participants will engage in activities designed to improve students' expressive communication skills. This workshop is ideal for both new educators and experienced teachers seeking fresh, engaging strategies to increase student interaction and active participation.

Presenter:

Lindsey Lurie, Glenview Community Consolidated School District 34

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

ACCESS Test Success: Data Doesn't Lie, and Neither Will Your Prep

In this presentation, we'll explore effective testing settings for MLs and focus on best practices for logistics, including student goal setting based on ACCESS results and engaging students in the process. Learn how our district improved from 14 to 51 students exiting the program. Classroom visits to support MLs, managing student passes, and utilizing ACCESS data to track progress will also be discussed.

Presenters:

Leigh Ann Mondrawickas-Boncher and Sandra Moran, Warren Township High School District 121

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Strengthening Multilingual Voices: Transfer and Contrastive Analysis in ML/DL Classrooms

Learn how U-46 has progressed in providing guidance for an effective implementation of transfer, contrastive analysis between languages, and the Bridge implementation at the secondary level in classes taught in either Spanish or English. Participants will learn examples of U-46's implementation for transfer language, constructive analysis and the Bridge, including students who speak languages other than Spanish and English.

Presenters:

Noris Castro and Nohelia Cruz Alcocer, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Bremen Room

Building Multilingual School University Partnerships in Rural Illinois: ¡Si Se Puede!

Rural Districts often experience difficulties retaining qualified teachers. This situation is magnified when we add the layer of serving multilingual students in rural communities. This presentation will highlight some of our strategies in building strong rural school-university partnerships, emphasizing rural cultural wealth to address the needs of teachers in rural school districts and creating pathways for rural youth to attend college.

Presenters:

Julia Albarracin, Gloria Delany-Barmann, and Carla Paciotto, Western Illinois University, Macomb and Tammee Petersen, Beardstown Community Unit School District 15

Grade Level: All Levels

Sam Tinley Room

But They Talk at Home! Understanding Selective Mutism

Selective Mutism is a childhood anxiety disorder where a child can speak at home and in places they are comfortable, but struggle to speak in other situations, including childcare and school. Attend this session to learn about this confusing condition, which can be overcome with appropriate treatment and family and school support. You will leave this session with information and resources to support children who struggle with Selective Mutism.

Presenters:

Megan Carlson and Kathy Slattery, STAR NET Regions II & VI/The Center

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

North Pavilion 1

From Plans to Practice: Schoolwide Success for Multilingual Learners

At Elk Grove High School, supporting multilingual learners is a schoolwide commitment. This session shows how multilingual learners are integrated into the School Improvement Plan, Academic Support Plan (MTSS), and teacher professional development. Participants will learn how shared responsibility, aligned goals, and intentional practices drive collective success and help learners excel across classrooms.

Presenters:

Mary Kemp and Lisa Pokorny, Township High School District 214, Elk Grove High School

Grade Level: High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

From Plan to Progress: MTSS + IEP/504 in Action for Bilingual and SPED Students

This presentation equips administrators, student-connected support staff, and parents to accelerate outcomes for special education and bilingual learners. It delivers a stepwise agenda, district-specific checklists, and ready-to-use scripts. Teams learn to align MTSS and IEP/504 supports with language access, routines, and monitor progress driving safer classrooms, stronger family partnerships, and measurable gains in engagement and achievement.

Presenters:

Lirio Ramirez and Melinda Thompson, East Aurora School District 131

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Buzzing with Brilliance: Fueling Growth through Talk for Young MLs

Explore practices and strategies to build language skills through meaningful talk in the primary classrooms. Consider ways to give your multilingual students entry points to interaction with content, through fun and engaging, science of reading-aligned activities. Loud classrooms lead to language growth... come see why and how! Leave with ready-to-use tools and templates that you can use right away!

Presenter:

Michele Yanong, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

North Pavilion 6

Shifting Teaching to Learning: High Leverage Practices Boost Student Outcomes

Join us as we shift the focus from teaching to learning. Discover how to set meaningful school goals, strengthen MTSS frameworks with the right team structures, and harness high-leverage practices—assessments, PLCs, and walkthroughs—to inspire collaboration and maximize student outcomes.

Presenters:

Tabitha Schweer and Kelly Zoellner, Jacksonville School District 117

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Bridging the Gaps: Scaffolding a Pre-packaged Spanish Program for All Learners

Students come to our classrooms with varied Spanish levels. Pre-packaged programs may contain scaffolds that do not support students' unique language development needs. This session will provide ideas and examples of how to use pre-packaged curricula to support students on their Spanish language journey.

Presenters:

Rachel Owens and Jessica Valverde, LaGrange SD #102

Grade Level: Elementary

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Building Metalinguistic Awareness of Russian Multilingual Students

Metalinguistic awareness creates multiple opportunities for my Russian bilingual students to engage in the contrastive analysis of the two languages. The ability to identify the similarities and differences between Russian and English helps my students to build connection between the languages and facilitates the acquisition of English literacy skills.

Presenter:

Tatyana Ruditskaya, Wheeling Community Consolidated School District 21

Grade Level: Elementary

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Teaching English and Content Simultaneously

How do I teach language and content at the same time? This hands-on workshop helps multilingual program teachers integrate English language development with academic instruction. Participants will explore WIDA-aligned strategies, Illinois State Standards connections, and engage in interactive, hands-on activities they can immediately apply in their classrooms.

Presenter:

Michelle Vargas, Evanston Township High School District 202

Grade Level: High School

11:30A-12:30P

South Pavilion 1

Side by Side Structures to Support Literacy in Grades 6-12

During this session, we will explore how Side by Side structures can support literacy practices by stretching across genre, register, and mode! We will co-construct samples together and you will have time to play with the tools. Everyone will leave with a resource bank!

Presenter:

Carly Spina, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 2

AI as Your Co-Planner: Designing Accessible Lessons for Multilingual Learners

Planning with multilingual learners in mind can feel overwhelming. This session demonstrates how AI can act as a co-planner, generating scaffolds, objectives, and strategies that save time while improving accessibility. Participants will explore ready-to-use prompts and examples tailored for MLs, leaving with practical tools to boost teacher efficiency and ensure all students receive equitable support.

Presenter:

Anne Paonessa, National Louis University

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

From Rhymes to Readers: Cultivating Literacy in Dual-Language Preschool

This presentation outlines a framework for cultivating early literacy in dual-language preschools. We will explore key components and provide practical strategies for small-group instruction, transitions, and daily routines. We'll also highlight how to create a classroom environment that promotes literacy growth for all learners, ensuring a seamless transition to kindergarten.

Presenter:

Berenice Díaz, East Maine School District 63

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Empowering Parents to Succeed: How Liaisons Equip Parents to Thrive

In this session, you will discover strategies to serve as a trusted point of contact for families, offering guidance, resources, and support. Together, we will explore how to strengthen partnerships with families and the community, all while grounding our work in equity and access. By removing barriers outside the classroom, we create the conditions for every student to succeed inside the classroom.

Presenters:

Vanessa Deaton, Guadalupe Delreal, and Malorie Farrington, Lagrange School District 102

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

The Teacher's Guerrilla Lucio Cabañas in Mexico in the 1960s

What Mexico's official history has concealed. The army's repression in the 1960s and 1970s against children, young people, women, and men who fought alongside Lucio Cabañas in Guerrero for freedom of expression, freedom of association, human rights, gender equality, and democracy. Based on the novel I wrote.

Presenter:

Juan Carlos González Alarcón, Author, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Sam Tinley Room

ISBE EL Compliance Monitoring

This session will guide multilingual classroom teachers (and administrators) through the Illinois State Board of Education's compliance monitoring process. Participants will gain insight into its purpose, key components under review, and the supports ISBE offers to ensure effective program implementation. Empowering educators with this knowledge will foster better compliance and program quality for multilingual students.

Presenters:

John Crosley-Corcoran, Michelle Lopez, and Emily Mizera, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

New and Continuing Multilingual Directors' Alliance

Mindful of current events and their ramifications, developing personal and organizational skill in agility and flexibility is essential at the moment. Given shifting infrastructure and student needs: budgets, staffing, mandates and priorities, plan to protect and support student learning outcomes. Join us for collaborative conversation with your colleagues that will expand your vantage point and bolster your skillset in this area.

Presenters:

Barbara Marler, Marler Consulting & Advisory LLC and Danette Meyer, With Partners Education

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Integrating and Enhancing Oracy for ALL

Oracy is more than speaking! In this interactive workshop, secondary educators will explore the importance of oracy in supporting literacy and student engagement. This session will provide actionable strategies to build students' academic language skills, boost their confidence, and enhance learning in every classroom. Join us to equip your students with the language skills they need to succeed!

Presenters:

Mallory Fuessle and Amy Mosquera, Adelante Educational Specialists Group

Grade Level: Middle School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Writing Linguistically and Culturally Appropriate IEPs

It is important to ensure that student IEPs reflect the whole student, not just the disability. This session will address the writing of Individualized Education Plans for multilingual students with exceptional needs, explaining the sections of IEPs that require specific linguistic and cultural information. Topics will include goal setting for multilingual learners with disabilities and including parents in the IEP process.

Presenters:

Violeta Bosworth, Summit School District 104, Retired, Elizabeth Campos Hamilton, Illinois Advisory Council for Bilingual Education, Amy Harder, Arlington Heights School District 25, Jasmine Myalil, Northbrook School District 28 and Besset Sabourin, Mannheim School District 83, Franklin Park

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 6

Navigating Equity Work in Uncertain Times: A Panel Discussion

This panel session will explore the realities equity leaders currently face in Illinois school districts as they work to uphold inclusive pedagogy and practices during a time of increasing political pressure and shifting federal/state policy landscapes. Through both the panel and audience members, there will be a focus on solutions and strategies.

Presenters:

Eric Junco and Jason Klein, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, and Kristal Shelvin, McLean County Unit School District 5, Normal

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Embodied Teaching: Somatic Practices for Diverse Communities

This session invites educators to consider how somatic practices can create spaces of equity, inclusion, and belonging. Participants will learn how breathing, movement, and sensory activities can support both students and teachers in diverse communities. Together we will reflect on how to integrate these practices into classrooms and additional ways that honor culture, language, and identity.

Presenter:

Kimmy Schuelke, Plainfield Consolidated School District 202

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Building a Team: A Path to Excellence!

This highly interactive session takes participants on the journey of building a multilingual program from scratch to high student growth in two years. We'll laugh, reflect, and learn as we move from "resources taped together" to a thriving system, exploring how WIDA standards, intentional coaching, and culturally responsive practices drove exponential gains.

Presenter:

Nichole Seal, KIPP Indy. Indianapolis, IN

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

The Dictado: Practical Implementation for Multilingual Learners

This presentation will focus on how teachers can easily implement *The Dictado* method with any subject or curriculum. The Dictado method addresses multilingual learner needs by increasing their understanding of the target language, their engagement and their ability to make cross-linguistic connections.

Presenters:

Kathryn Frank, Janet Mathe and Cristina Youtsey, Mundelein Elementary School District 75

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Wrap Around Cohorts to Support the Multilingual Teacher Pipeline

This session presents a replicable, higher-ed school-community partnership empowering multilingual and income diverse parents and paraeducators to become cross qualified (ESL/SPED/Early Childhood) teachers. Through mentoring, financial aid, Adult ESL, and flexible pathways, participants--97% retained and 85% of graduates now lead teachers--advance their careers. Participants receive an Educator Workforce Development Toolkit.

Presenters:

Lindsay Meeker, Latino Policy Forum, Chicago, Laurel Mateyka, Early Childhood Professional Learning/StarNet, Arlington Heights

Gloria Delany-Barmann, Carla Paciotto, and Gricelda Garcia, Western Illinois University, Moline

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

01:45P-02:45P

South Pavilion 1

From Chaos to Clarity: Guiding Newcomers from Day One

Stop scrambling! Discover the game-changing guidebook one district created to transform support for multilingual newcomers. The team will share essential components and immediate resources for all staff. We will reveal clear protocols for intake, instructional strategies, and social-emotional support, giving you a unified model to ensure equity and clarity the minute new students arrive!

Presenters:

Michele Yanong, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights and Erica Beth Brady, Joanna Christopoulos, Stephanie Ulloa, and Ruth Young, Skokie School District 65

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 2

Safety and Well-being Workshop

This workshop creates a supportive space to learn about challenges facing immigrant communities and resources available to help. Participants will explore community impacts, protections at local, state, and federal levels, and how immigration status connect to health and wellness. The session also covers family safety plans, uplifting messages, and ways to connect with trusted support systems.

Presenter:

Brian Herrera, Latino Policy Forum, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Getting MTSS "Just Right" for Multilingual Learners

Explore essential concepts for aligning MTSS with multilingual learners' needs. Gain insights on avoiding misrepresentation, interpreting performance data, and addressing seven key factors that influence achievement. Learn guiding questions and intervention considerations to ensure balanced, effective support at every tier, helping your school or district find the "Goldilocks" point in MTSS implementation.

Presenter:

Barbara Marler, Marler Consulting & Advisory LLC

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

New Migrant Education Program (MEP) Liaison and More

Discover how the new role of Migrant Education Program (MEP) Liaison in the consolidated application and the Illinois Migrant Education Services team can help connect statewide resources, summer and regular-term programs, recruitment strategies, and best practices for supporting migratory families.

Presenters:

Reina Olivares and Melina Wright, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

Collaborative Assessment Design using Colleague AI

This session examines how 47 teachers used Colleague AI to co-create standards-aligned formative assessments. Participants will explore the practices, potentials, and challenges of these experiences and gain practical strategies for writing effective prompts to design assessments that are aligned with curriculum standards, learning goals, and diverse learner needs.

Presenters:

Virak Chan, Chen Li, and Wayne Wright, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 2 and 3

3L Play and Inquiry Triangle - Loose Parts, Language, and Literacy

Discover how play sparks powerful learning! This session models playful, developmentally informed scaffolds that nurture language, literacy, and collaboration in early childhood classrooms. Participants will explore high-impact strategies to engage young learners through meaningful play and discussions that make language come alive. Special attention will be given to PreK-K ELs with a disability (dual identified children).

Presenters:

Tammy King, Early Childhood Professional Learning, Arlington Heights and Lindsay Meeker, Latino Policy Forum

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Every Story Teaches: Building Best Practices through Shared Voices

Through shared bilingual stories from staff and community members, our district highlighted the powerful connection between lived experience and teaching practice. Guided by The 6 Principles of Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (TESOL), we explored how educators can translate personal narratives into best practices that foster equity, engagement, and success for English learners.

Presenters:

Michaela Faust, Elzbieta Mulica, and Kristin Welsh, Burbank School District 111

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 6

MTSS in Action: Improving Attendance through Tiered Supports

Our team of six Behavior Interventionists, including three bilingual staff, works one-on-one with students and families to build consistent attendance. Many of our students face barriers such as mental health challenges, academic struggles, or family concerns. Through the MTSS framework, we use creative strategies to engage families, support schools, and help at-risk students improve attendance.

Presenters:

Keri Esparza, Noemi Gálvez, and Erika Martínez, DuPage Regional Office of Education, Wheaton

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Global Competency in Bilingual Classrooms: From Argentina to Virtual Exchanges

How a cultural immersion trip to Argentina for teacher leaders inspired global competency in bilingual classrooms. A Fulbright Scholar and World Learning Global Ambassador shares international virtual exchanges, student civic action (SDGs, Springfield advocacy), and resources for teacher travel and grants, with strategies for cross-curricular implementation.

Presenter:

Sofia Gonzalez, J. Sterling Morton High School District 201, Cicero

Grade Level: High School

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

To the Seal of Biliteracy...and Beyond!

Discover how the Seal of Biliteracy honors English Learners, Dual Language, and Bilingual students. Learn how to involve World Language and Community-Based Heritage Language and Culture programs. This session explores how the Seal validates multilingual achievement, celebrates cultural identity, and promotes equity for students mastering two or more languages in diverse educational pathways.

Presenter:

Emily Mizera, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Strengthening School Communities

This session explores practical strategies for fostering authentic partnerships, acquiring meaningful resources, and amplifying student success through community engagement. Learn how to expand your impact beyond classrooms and cultivate a culture of collaboration, equity, and shared growth.

Presenters:

Erin Fagan and Nydia Valle-Cabrera, J. Sterling Morton High School District 201, Cicero

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Their Voices - Our Lessons

Through the voices of students, this session shares how District U-46 provides caring, culturally responsive support for families under the McKinney-Vento Act. We highlight stories of resilience alongside data showing how wraparound services and empathetic relationships transformed educational journeys, affirming that equitable, inclusive systems can change lives.

Presenters:

Patricia Briones, Lisa Jackson, and Portia Ransom, Elgin School District U-46

Grade Level: All Levels

03:00P-04:00P

South Pavilion 2

FEATURED SESSION: The Journey of a Monarch Butterfly: Mi Testimonio Como Maestro Bilingüe de STEM

In this session, Mr. Gomez shares his journey toward becoming a bilingual science educator, using la mariposa monarca as a powerful metaphor for the stories of his parents and students, which inspired him in his pedagogy and practice. He focuses on how the bilingual experiences of himself, his parents, and his students, have shaped his vocation to create relevant science curricula that empower multilingual learners to see themselves as STEM professionals. From launching bilingual STEM programs to mentoring future Latino educators and creating opportunities for bilingual students to gain university experiences, this shared journey highlights the urgent need to center language and culture in education. Like the monarchs that migrate across continents, our stories chart paths of opportunity, perseverance, and flight to reach our dreams.

Presenter:

Victor Gómez, Leyden High School District 212

Grade Level: All Levels

THURSDAY

10:15A-11:15A

South Pavilion 1

Cheap Thrills: Novelty Items to Boost Engagement in Your Instruction!

This session will feature FUN, tactile items that you can utilize in your instruction to boost JOY, ENGAGEMENT, and LANGUAGE throughout various content areas and grade levels! Come ready to play!

Presenter:

Carly Spina, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

Supporting Newcomer Youth Wellness in Schools: A Tier I Approach

Share trauma-informed practices for working with refugee/immigrant students that build on newcomer's internal strengths and outside supports, and promote student coping skills and resilience. Strategies for creating safe, welcoming environments, building connectedness, and supporting emotion regulation will be reviewed.

Presenters:

Yvita Bustos and Catherine Zhou, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Empowering Multilingual Futures: Exploring Early Childhood Services and Supports

Discover how STAR NET's professional learning opportunities, events, and resources can support your efforts in fostering culturally responsive and inclusive early childhood environments, as well as creating authentic family partnerships.

Presenters:

Adelicia Brienzo, STAR NET Region II and VI, Arlington Heights and Tareema Jean-Baptiste, STAR NET Region V, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Effective ELL Strategies and Language Proficiency Growth in Four Domains

In this session, we will discuss how teaching methods that respect students' cultures and adjust lessons for individual needs can create a supportive classroom. Developing all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is key to becoming a better communicator and learner. These methods focus on building strong academic language skills through practical, real-world activities essential for school success.

Presenters:

Nisrin Al-Takriti and Fabiola Huerta, Mokena School District 159

Grade Level: Elementary

Bremen Room

The Equity Journey Continuum - A Tool for Educational Equity

ISBE staff will share an overview of the Equity Journey Continuum, a tool in the Illinois Report Card that displays where school districts land in supporting Student Learning, Learning Conditions, and Elevating Educators

Presenter:

Sergio Hernández, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Sam Tinley Room

Rooted in Community: Advancing Equity for Marginalized Students

This session centers community in schools, dual language education, and bilingual special education through family and school partnerships, wraparound services, and academic support. We will address barriers faced by undocumented students, and those impacted by the justice system, highlighting strategies to create equitable, thriving school communities.

Presenters:

Mayra Figueroa, Fairmont School District 89, Lockport and Esmeralda Elvir Guzman, Louise Igoe, Sheri Lucas, and Vanessa Reyes, Lewis University, Romeoville

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

High School Experiences of English Learners

This presentation explores the course-taking patterns, experiences, and the school context of high school English learners in Chicago Public Schools. We present the differences in those areas for different groups of current and former English learners compared to their peers and the relation of these with high school graduation and college outcomes.

Presenters:

Marisa De La Torre, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, Chicago and Jorge Macías, Latino Policy Forum, Chicago
Grade Level: High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

From Barriers to Bridges: Supporting Multilingual Learners with MAP Reading Fluency = Coach

Creating an MLL program that supports the needs of all students is difficult and can have many barriers. Discover how to break down barriers in multilingual learner support using MAP Reading Fluency and Coach. This session explores common challenges and delivers practical, data-driven solutions to help every student thrive—no matter their language background.

Presenters:

Heather Cella, and Heather Connolly, HMH/NWEA Division, Chicago
Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary, Middle School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

History Unlocked: Engaging ELs in the Classroom

This session will showcase practical strategies for making World History meaningful and accessible for English Learners. Participants will explore how theme days, interactive games, and scaffolded supports can build content knowledge while strengthening academic language. Attendees will gain ideas that foster engagement, comprehension, and confidence, ensuring multilingual learners thrive in the secondary social studies classroom.

Presenters:

Jennifer Alarcon and Emily Risner, Lake Park High School District 108, Roselle
Grade Level: High School

North Pavilion 6

Advancing Sentence Complexity

In order for Multilingual Learners to become proficient readers, speakers, and writers in English, they must advance their level of sentence complexity. While it is common for teachers to focus on vocabulary, many instructors are unsure as to how to help students make progress at the sentence level. This session will explore activities and routines that help students make significant gains in their understanding and use of sentence complexity.

Presenters:

Rachel Burrell and Anna Sanan, Wheaton Community Unit School District 200
Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Tracing Shifts in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: U.S.–Indonesia Insights

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) affirms cultural identities, addresses inequities, and supports diverse learners. Tracking U.S. practices of CRP reveal both progress and challenges in fostering inclusivity and equity. As a global model, American education influences policy and pedagogy in Indonesia. Practitioners who come to this session will learn the recent research on CRP and its impact on both U.S. and Indonesian public schools.

Presenter:

Tabita Christiana, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Building Word Power: Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Multilingual Learners across the Content Areas

Robust vocabulary instruction is key to success for multilingual learners. This session shares practical, research-based strategies for teaching vocabulary across content areas. Learn to select high-utility words, scaffold effectively, and use visuals, sentence frames, and home languages to boost word learning from early childhood to secondary.

Presenters:

Karen Barkley and Elizabeth Buglio, Sauk Village Community Consolidated School District 168
Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary, Middle School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Flight Path to Proficiency: Boost EL Writing with WINGS + AI

Do your ELs plateau at Levels 3 & 4 due to lower writing scores on ACCESS? This session demonstrates how to pair WINGS (WIDA Intelligent Grading System) with AI-tools such as ChatGPT or MagicSchool AI to generate short, personalized exercises targeting specific writing gaps. Participants will leave with classroom-ready tasks to accelerate writing growth and help ELs move toward ACCESS proficiency.

Presenter:

Cheryl Allaire, River Forest School District 90

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Relationships First: Academic and Social-Emotional Success in the Multilingual Classroom

Establishing a safe, positive and productive learning environment within the classroom is crucial for students' academic, emotional and social success, as well as teachers' well-being. This presentation will provide classroom activities, restorative practices and strategies to create an environment characterized by a climate of safety, where interactions are highly respectful and individuals' background and differences are celebrated.

Presenters:

María Barragán Ortiz, University of Seville, Elgin

Grade Level: All Levels

11:30A-12:30P

South Pavilion 1

De la teoría a la práctica: Implementación de los Estándares de Artes del Lenguaje

En la sesión los asistentes aprenden a implementar en la práctica los Estándares de Artes del Lenguaje explorando estrategias de enseñanza bilingüe aplicadas a la lectoescritura. Además, se preparan para promover la transferencia entre el inglés y el español a través de las prácticas de “bridging” y fortalecen el repertorio con actividades interactivas y culturalmente relevantes.

Presenters:

Sylvia Ibarra Delgado and P. Zitlali Morales, University of Illinois, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

South Pavilion 2

Using the WIDA Language Charts for Instruction and Assessment

Systematic documentation of multilingual learners' language development leads to effective planning of classroom instruction and assessment. WIDA's new tool, the Interpretive and Expressive Language Charts, does just that- helps teachers design learning targets and interpret student performance for units of learning. Come join us in exploring the charts, examining a writing sample, and planning instructional next steps.

Presenters:

Margo Gottlieb, WIDA Consortium, Bonita Springs, FL

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

The Power of Two: Navigating EL Resource and Special Education Services

Students dually identified as English Learners receiving Special Education services have needs requiring intentional, collaborative support. This session explores how EL resource and SPED services ensure equitable access to instruction. Participants gain deeper understanding of legal considerations and service models promoting student success.

Presenters:

Janet Diaz and Crystal Jimenez, Addison School District 4

Grade Level: Elementary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Maximize the Biliterate Brain: Pathways to a Foundational Skills Sequence

No single resource is perfect, but that didn't stop multilingual coaches in U-46! Discover how they enhanced district frameworks to maximize cross-language transfer and built a shared, intentional sequence for biliterate foundational skills.

Presenters:

Sara Pletcher and Marty Rentería, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

Bremen Room

Empowering Biliteracy Instruction with Technology

Boost biliteracy with tech! Explore the 4 + 1 language domains through hands-on strategies—thinking maps, student recordings, and active learning—that spark cross-linguistic transfer, power small-group differentiation, and showcase authentic student work in dual language classrooms.

Presenter:

Douglas Smithenry, North Shore School District 112, Highwood

Grade Level: Elementary

Sam Tinley Room

What Pre-service Teachers Really See: Inclusive Practices for Multilingual Students

This study followed 25 pre-service teachers as they documented "inclusive teaching" through photos during field experiences with multilingual students. While they identified strategies like visual supports, peer collaboration, and cultural celebrations, many still viewed multilingual abilities as temporary problems rather than permanent strengths. Learn what these findings mean for mentoring new teachers and creating truly welcoming classrooms.

Presenter:

Hae Min Yu, Lewis University, Romeoville

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

North Pavilion 1

AI 101 and the High School Classroom

This presentation is an introduction to what AI (artificial intelligence) is, what it is not, and how a secondary ML teacher in the English classroom uses AI to boost efficiency, assist in the ML classroom, and even leverage what AI CAN'T do to help students understand what they CAN do.

Presenter:

Jerry Kim, Niles Township High Schools District 219

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

ISBE's Dual Language Guidance Document: Strengthening Dual Language Education in Illinois

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is developing comprehensive guidance for dual language programming statewide, modeled after the successful Literacy and Numeracy plans. Join us to learn about the project's vision, goals, and timeline, and more importantly, to contribute your ideas and expertise as we shape this critical work together. Your input is essential as Illinois strengthens multilingual education for all students.

Presenters:

Joanne Clyde and Cynthia Elisa Martinez, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Actionable Ways to Leverage School Improvement Plans to Enhance Practices

School District U-46 has continued to refine their School Improvement Plans and related resources aimed at enhancing the practices of the adults in the schools. Learn about the processes they underwent, resources developed, implementation, and current roadmap.

Presenters:

Matt Raimondi and Brian Tonnison, Elgin School District U46

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 6

Supporting Successful Integration of SLIFE Multilingual Learners

In this presentation, we take a closer look at what a non-parallel education can mean for multilingual learners who arrive in the United States having a limited or interrupted education. Years after integrating into an American school, effects of educational discrepancies are still evident. We discuss what supports an American school system can provide to address limited primary educational experiences.

Presenters:

Muloko Delphin, Susan Griffeth, Melissa Lawson and Sarah Logemann, Rockford School District 205

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Translanguaging in War-torn Burma: A Kachin Principal's Perspective

Power within the language of instruction is omnipresent. In this paper presentation, through the narrative of the school principal, the audience is introduced to a K-12 school in northern Burma where the use of translanguaging is the primary medium of instruction as a response to the conflict created by the Burmese government. Participants will learn the benefits of translanguaging.

Presenters:

James Cohen, EeNwe Saung, and May Hnin Yee Swe Oo, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

MTSS through Language Domains: Elevating Oracy for Multilingual Learners

Discover how to strengthen multilingual learners' success by centering oracy within the MTSS framework. This interactive session will focus on the speaking domain, its proficiency levels, and its impact across all language domains. Participants will explore targeted small-group speaking instruction and intervention strategies designed to amplify student voice, foster engagement, and build equitable systems of support.

Presenter:

Margarita Lachica, ACERO Charter Schools Network, Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Empowering Student Voices: Creating a Multilingual Student Publication

Multilingual students have a voice and are empowered when heard. Publications offer this forum for expression. In this presentation, attendees will learn practical strategies and tools to guide students in developing a student publication (newsletter, magazine, blog, or anthology). By creating a publication, students strengthen their writing, collaboration, and communication skills while building pride in their linguistic and cultural identities.

Presenter:

Angela Kosmas, Maine Township High School District 207, Park Ridge

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Accelerating EL Students for AP Courses

This session explores strategies to increase participation and achievement for multilingual learners in AP courses. Through sheltered sections as well as targeted supports in all sections, educators will learn how to harness students' unique skills and potential. Though often broadly mischaracterized as academically deficient, ML students have the tools to thrive in AP's rigor and access the opportunities it provides with the right supports.

Presenters:

Brandon Cardenas and JJ Edwards, Zion-Benton Township High School District 126

Grade Level: High School

01:45P-02:45P

South Pavilion 1

Incorporate Language Domains into Activities

This session will present lessons, activities, games, and assessments that explicitly incorporate the different language domains and culture into the multilingual classroom.

Presenter:

Brandon Tucker, Glenbrook High School District 225

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

UDL and Translanguaging: Where These Worlds Meet

What do the Universal Design for Learning framework and translanguaging pedagogy have in common? A lot! Come explore the fundamentals of UDL and translanguaging and how this combo can help us create more supportive, responsive, powerful learning ecologies for our multilingual students.

Presenter:

Olivia Mulcahy, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Putting Math Language Routines into Practice

Let's explore how Mathematical Language Routines (MLRs) structure language exchanges in ways that highlight important mathematical ideas while supporting multilingual students' language development. These routines help everyone; come see their power!
Presenter:

Anne Agostinelli, Chicago School District 299

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

South Pavilion 5 and 6

History's Second Draft: Reconsidering Everything

Revisionist history challenges censored narrative by restoring silenced truths. This session will explore historical and current U.S. censorship/book banning, its targets, and affected communities. We'll examine multicultural perspectives, banned texts, and diverse historians' contributions. Through multilingual lens, we advocate for inclusive historical frameworks that resist one-dimensional storytelling and empower learners with inclusive histories

Presenters:

Jeanette Jones, Annie Murray, Drew Troppito, and Anne Walsh, Lewis University, Romeoville

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

IAR Data that Works: Supporting English Learners in Every Classroom

Utilize the recently developed IAR Performance Level Descriptors (PLD) and Samples to Success to connect your IAR data to the classroom. Using these tools, we will consider strategies for supporting English language learners by combining the Illinois Learning Standards and the WIDA Can Do Descriptors, moving beyond test scores to identify student strengths and create equitable instruction that builds academic English skills.

Presenters:

Nisrin Al-Takriti, Mokena School District 159, Angela Foxall, Illinois State Board of Education and Kavita Mahendra, Yorkville Community Unit School District 115

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

Sam Tinley Room

Building an Inclusive System: Engaging Multilingual Families to Strengthen Early Childhood

Learn about how Birth to Five Illinois partners with multilingual families to ensure their experiences and needs are at the center of early childhood policy. We will share our strategies for authentic engagement and discuss how this valuable input is used to create a more equitable and inclusive system across the entire state of Illinois.

Presenter:

David Quiroz, Birth to Five Illinois, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

North Pavilion 1

Empowering English Learners with AI: Practical Tools for Middle and High School Classrooms

AI is rapidly becoming a powerful tool in education, but many teachers are still wondering how it can be used to meaningfully support ELs. This session will explore practical ways AI can enhance instruction for multilingual learners in grades 6-12. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies and resources they can immediately apply in their own classrooms.

Presenter:

Dina Salem, Lincoln Way High School District 210

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

From Invisible to Invincible: Helping Multilingual Learners Belong, Thrive, and Achieve

Multilingual learners often feel unseen, navigating both language and belonging. This session explores how authentic relationships transform students from invisible to invincible. Educators will gain practical, culturally responsive strategies to build trust, affirm identity, and foster belonging, empowering multilingual learners to thrive academically and socially in classrooms where they are valued, challenged, and celebrated.

Presenters:

Don Parker, Buena Vista University and Valerie Peña-Hernandez, WholeED Systems, LLC

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 6

Unlocking Language: Teaching Vocabulary in Every Classroom

Participants will explore the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction across all content areas to support multilingual learners. The session will clarify the three tiers of vocabulary and their impact on comprehension and engagement. Educators will leave with research-based strategies to teach vocabulary at each level, promoting deeper understanding and equitable access to academic language across disciplines.

Presenters:

Lindsay Blackburn, Kyle Boyd, Sarah Fromius-Hough, and Diana Martinez, JS Morton High School District 201

Grade Level: High School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

From PD to Practice: Coaching Strategies that Elevate Multilingual Learning

This session highlights how East Aurora D131 principals and coaches plan, coach, and provide feedback to dual language teachers with intentional linguistic support. Through consultant-led professional development, leaders internalize key strategies to guide teachers. Participants will examine the ripple effect of effective coaching and leave with practical tools to strengthen their own coaching and support multilingual learners.

Presenters:

Vivian Pratts, Sandra Mercuri Educational Consultants and Lauren Linares and Lirio Ramirez, East Aurora School District 131

Grade Level: Elementary

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Screens vs Learning: What Screens Are Doing and How to Fight It

This is a presentation dedicated to exploring the impact of "technology addiction" on K-12 learners. Participants will learn about the signs and symptoms of technology overuse, its effects on mental health, and practical strategies to manage and reduce screen time. The session will also discuss solutions such as setting healthy boundaries and promoting digital wellness.

Presenter:

José Burgos, Rock Island-Milan School District 41

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Rolling the Dice: Equitable Games for Multilingual Learners

Discover classroom games where luck, not speed, drives the fun. In this interactive session, teachers will demonstrate a variety of games that level the playing field for multilingual learners. These low-prep games promote language practice and give every student an equal chance to participate, succeed, and enjoy learning. Leave with ready-to-use ideas that build language skills while keeping competition low and engagement high.

Presenters:

Monica Reyes and Kendra Smetters, Lake Park District 108, Roselle

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

IAMME Membership Meeting: Advocating for Multilingual Learners

All are invited to the IAMME Membership Meeting. Four topics will be discussed: 1) NABE's national conference taking place in Chicago in Feb 2026; 2) IAMME's recent budget testimony to ISBE and IDEC including concerns regarding federal funding; 3) Update on the Incentivizing Dual Language Education and Instruction in Schools report; and 4) Upcoming IAMME Board Elections.

Presenters:

Elizabeth Campos Hamilton, Angelo Chávez, James Cohen, Eva Corona, Francela López Amanda Montes, Jane Montes, Mike Murguia, and Josie Yanguas, Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education

Grade Level: All Levels

03:00P-04:00P

South Pavilion 2

FEATURED SESSION: Presenting an Integrated Mexican music and Culture Curriculum in Spanish

Juan Días, ethnomusicologist and co-founder of two-time Grammy nominated Sones de México Ensemble, will present a curriculum developed for The Mexican Music School™, combining five levels of guitar and violin music instruction with lessons about Mexican culture, history and geography. This integrated curriculum provides a cultural context for the music and strengthens identity development in children and adult heritage speakers.

Presenters:

Mónica Colfax and Juan Días, Sones de México Ensemble, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels