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 Presenters: for the latest information. Updates will be posted as they occur. (11/6/26)

TUESDAY

10:15A-11:15A

South Pavilion 1

Unlock the Potential of Wordless Books

Wordless books can be used with multilingual learners at any age to develop language skills and teach content. Participants in this session will collaboratively explore wordless books using strategies they can bring back to their district and share with colleagues.

Presenter:

Maggie Essig, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

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, Amy Harder, Arlington Heights School District #25, Jasmine Myalil, Northbrook School District 28 and Juanita Rodriguez, Chicago Public Schools District 299

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Illinois Biliteracy Pathway Recognitions

The Illinois State Board of Education will be unveiling Illinois Biliteracy Pathway Recognitions for students in July 2027. Participants in this session will help pave the way by providing feedback on these recognitions, ensuring that students in kindergarten, 5th grade, and 8th grade are celebrated at key checkpoints along their biliteracy journey.

Presenter:

Karen Skinner, Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield

Grade Level: Elementary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Two Languages, One Biliteracy Vision: Intentionally Connecting SLA and ELA

In dual language classrooms, Spanish and English literacy often run on parallel tracks, repeating lessons instead of building on each other. This session shares a practical framework for coordinating SLA and ELA: sort skills into shared learning, Language Links, and language-specific instruction, then plan with an Integrated Biliteracy Curriculum Map. Participants leave with routines that connect literacy, content, and both languages.

Presenters:

Angelica Brifcani, Community Consolidated School District 15, Palatine and Rocío del Castillo, Freeport School District 145

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

Biliteracy by Design: Intentionally Planning for Cross-Linguistic Transfer and Translanguaging

Biliteracy does not happen by accident. This interactive session explores how educators can intentionally plan for cross-linguistic transfer and translanguaging while maintaining the language of instruction. Participants will gain practical strategies to make connections across languages visible and leverage students' full linguistic repertoires as assets for learning.

Presenters:

Fonsy Jimenez and Betty Moreno-Paz, Cicero School District 99

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Sam Tinley Room

Lonche y Chisme as a Translanguaging Tool

This session explores how informal oracy—lonche and chisme—functions as a dynamic third space that moves bi/multilingual students from disconnected to engaged. Participants will learn relational, culturally sustaining practices that strengthen teacher–student relationships and honor students' full linguistic repertoires through intentional, everyday classroom talk.

Presenters:
Katherinne Bardales Sardena and Erick Hernandez Montanez, New Mexico State University
Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

From Scaffolding to Learning Strategy

This interactive workshop explores how educators can design and gradually remove scaffolds to provide multilingual learners with equitable access to grade-level content. Participants will learn practical ways to transform teacher-provided support into student-owned learning strategies that promote academic language development, confidence, and independence across content areas.

Presenter:
Jacinta Thomas, College of Lake County, Grayslake
Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Shared Responsibility, Shared Success: Leading Districtwide MTSS Implementation for Multilingual Learners

Learn how a school district designed and implemented an ML-specific MTSS process to ensure multilingual learners receive appropriate interventions while preventing over-identification for special education. Participants will explore the ML Pre-Referral Checklist, True Peer Comparison process, decision-making flowcharts, and the use of nonverbal assessments.

Presenters:
Martha Fuentes and Maricela Guzman Luna, Oak Lawn-Hometown School District 123
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Mirrors, Windows and Sliding doors, a Culturally Responsive Teaching

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop conceptualized books as mirrors, windows, and sliding doors--essential tools for identity affirmation, deep comprehension, and language growth among multilingual learners. Attendees will analyze their classroom environments, book collections, and deep culture to evaluate student representation. Participants will gain practical strategies to audit spaces, honor student identities, and leverage full linguistic repertoires.

Presenter:
Carmina Veytia, Chicago Public Schools District 299
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 6

Purpose First, Activity Second: Language-Rich Learning for Multilingual Young Children

Early childhood educators create meaningful experiences every day, but opportunities for multilingual children to communicate and participate should not be left to chance. In this interactive session, educators serving children birth through five will use a simple planning framework to strengthen routines, play, and learning experiences by planning for purpose, communication opportunities, participation supports, and what to notice next.

Presenter:
RaChe' Russell-Van, RaChe' Step by Step ECE Consulting, Markham
Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Raciolinguistics, Linguistic Competence, and Monolingualism

Flores & Rosa (2015, 2017) described the imposition of White language norms onto racialized populations. Recently they (2023) criticized Applied Linguistics and linguistic competence to further question academic language. This presentation will argue that competence allows language usage and that all forms of linguistic competence should be respected in education.

Presenter:
John Evar Strid, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Beyond Language: Understanding and Supporting Arab Students in U.S. Public Schools

This session explores the cultural, social, and educational experiences of Arab students in U.S. public schools. Participants will gain practical strategies for fostering inclusive learning environments, addressing identity and belonging, strengthening family engagement, and supporting academic success beyond language acquisition.

Presenter:

Hanan Matari, The Empowered Educator, Justice

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

NOT Another Study Hall: Best Practices for ELL Resource Hours

This session explores "Resource Hour" design as essential for multilingual programs. Participants will examine diverse strategies for prioritizing assignments, monitoring progress, collaborating with teachers, and building student independence while also supporting community and language development. The session helps build purposeful structures that transform "Resource Hour "beyond "homework time."

Presenters:

Nicholas Dilley and Elisa Jennings, Monmouth-Roseville Community Unit School District 238

Grade Level: High School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Beyond the Standard: Planning for Language, Discourse & Assessment

Planning for 100% of the standard goes beyond identifying what students need to know. Through backwards planning, educators will examine language demands, determine how students will demonstrate mastery, and intentionally plan for discourse and assessment. Participants will explore how aligning content, language, discourse, and assessment creates pathways for all students to engage in grade-level learning and demonstrate mastery of standards.

Presenters:

Yesenia Arteaga, Marisol Flores, Naomi Irizarry, and Guadalupe Rivera, East Aurora School District 131

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

11:30A-12:30P

South Pavilion 1

Navigating the Illinois Numeracy Plan to Support Multilingual Learners

Join fellow educators to unpack the Illinois Comprehensive Numeracy Plan through the lens of Multilingual Learners. Learn how to leverage the plan's framework to enhance mathematical communication and conceptual understanding for all students. Walk away with practical insights and ready-to-use strategies for your classroom.

Presenters:

Rachell Plote and Michele Yanong, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: Middle School through High School

South Pavilion 2

Bridges, Not Barriers: ISBE Guidance on Multilingual Learners and MTSS

Recent guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education requires that families of students who are multilingual learners receive multitiered system of supports (MTSS) documentation of culturally and linguistically appropriate practices as part of the specialized services referral and evaluation process. Participants will engage in interactive reflection on the role of language, culture, and building a comprehensive system of supports.

Presenter:

Antoinette Taylor, A.T. Exceptional Consulting, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary, Elementary

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Newcomer Students at a Glance

This session examine some of the newcomer resources available on the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) website along with our Newcomer at a Glance guidance document.

Presenters:

Lauren Ligammari and Michelle López, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Construyendo puentes lingüísticos: los estándares de Illinois y la instrucción en español

La presentación interactiva ayuda a los docentes a entender lo estándares de Artes del Lenguaje en Español (SLA) de Illinois. Los participantes podrán a desglosar los estándares, examinar la alineación vertical y el rigor cognitivo, y diseñar una enseñanza alineada con ellos. También explorarán las conexiones interlingüísticas y las prácticas de puente lingüístico que reafirman el multilingüismo y promueven la justicia lingüística.

Presenters:

Guadalupe Hernandez-Lopez, University of Illinois, Chicago and Sylvia Ibarra Delgado, University of Illinois, Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

Bremen Room

Beyond Borderline Communities: Educator Resources for Multilingual Learners

This interactive presentation defines borderland communities, emphasizing that they are not necessarily located directly on a border. It explores how bilingual identities and language practices can enrich classrooms. Presenters will share classroom activities that draw on students' linguistic and cultural experiences as meaningful resources for English learning, providing practical strategies for inclusive, culturally responsive instruction.

Presenters:

Jill Bruellman, College of Lake County, Grayslake and Cindy Cardona Osorio, Loyola University, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Sam Tinley Room

Built for This: Practical Leadership in the Toughest Schools

School improvement is demanding work, especially where academic, attendance, staffing, behavior, and community challenges collide. This session unpacks the practical leadership, systems, collective efficacy, and consistency needed to move schools forward. Participants will leave with strategies to navigate challenges, strengthen their schools, and create sustainable success for students and staff.

Presenters:

Kristen Bailey and Devon Hawks, Peoria Public Schools

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

North Pavilion 1

Understanding and Supporting Children with Selective Mutism

Selective Mutism is an often-misunderstood childhood anxiety disorder where children can talk at home and in places where they are comfortable, but cannot speak or struggle to speak in school and other group settings. Attend this session to learn more about this condition and gain strategies to support children with SM, which can be overcome with the right interventions.

Presenters:

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

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary through Middle School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Beyond Compliance: Accelerating Multilingual Learner Growth with Real-Time Data

Attendees will gain practical strategies to bridge the gap between annual proficiency data and daily classroom instruction. The session focuses on using real-time language growth insights across reading, writing, listening, and speaking to guide timely instructional adjustments, support targeted teacher feedback, and accelerate outcomes for Multilingual Learners

Presenters:

Adam Altobelli, Becky Breetz, Deanna Delaney, De'Andrea Harrington, Melissa Himes, Ellevation

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Languaging, Transculturalism, and Identity in Dual Language EducationY

How do we leverage students' full linguistic repertoires to deepen content learning and strengthen their biliteracy trajectory? This session examines classroom scenarios where intentional languaging practices support language development, metalinguistic awareness and transculturalism. Designed for dual language teachers, coaches, and administrators, this session directly addresses the three pillars of dual language education.

Presenter:

Analleli Hernández, Center for Applied Linguistics, Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School

North Pavilion 6

Beyond the Moon: Diverse Picturebooks for Multilingual Science Sensemaking

This hands-on workshop explores how culturally diverse picturebooks—using the Moon as a central theme—serve as springboards for multilingual learners' science sensemaking. Participants will learn to integrate rich narratives and visual literacy to build background knowledge, activate language(s), and explore the nature of science. Attendees will walk away with practical strategies and picturebook recommendations for inclusive science learning.

Presenters:
Xiaoning Chen and Eun Kyung Ko, National Louis University
Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary through Middle School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

AI and Neuroscience: Personalizing Spanish Instruction and ACTFL Feedback

This session details a practical workflow integrating neuroscience research and AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini) into middle and high school Spanish classes. Participants will learn how to scan student work, process performance data against ACTFL standards, and deliver personalized feedback. Discover actionable strategies to automate data analysis and optimize language instruction based on cognitive science.

Presenter:
Javier Reyes, Geneseo Community Unit School District 228
Grade Level: Middle School through High School

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Chemistry Speaks: Learning Language through Science

Chemistry is everywhere! How can teachers design activities that help multilingual learners build their academic language to be successful in class and the ACCESS test? This workshop will focus on developing writing and speaking structures that enable multilingual learners to develop their language and skills. We will demonstrate strategies that introduce chemistry and stir curiosity through a simple experiment and other strategies.

Presenters:
Ana Castellanos and Angela Kosmas, Maine Township High School District 207
Grade Level: Middle School through High School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Game On! Developing Oracy through Games

This session explores how games can be used as powerful tools to strengthen students' oracy skills. Learn how games can support multilingual learners through meaningful conversations, active listening, collaboration, and academic content. Participants will leave with practical discussion structures and resources to promote language development, student engagement, and confidence with all diverse learners.

Presenters:
Cole Thornton and Stephanie Trueblood, Urbana School District 116
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

01:45P-03:15P

Sam Tinley Room

ELACHE Annual Meeting for Higher Education Faculty

In this session, we will discuss the current state of multilingual education in Illinois, including ISBE updates related to rules, regulations, and policies affecting K-12 and higher education, as well as developments in the state and national educational landscapes.

Presenters:
James Cohen, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb and Sonia Soltero, DePaul University, Chicago
Grade Level: All Levels

01:45P-02:45P

South Pavilion 1

When Family Engagement Becomes a System of Support

This session invites participants to reimagine family engagement through the lens of MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports), helping consider ways in which schools can create welcoming universal supports while responding thoughtfully to families with greater needs.

Presenter:
Adelicia Brienzo, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights
Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

Mitigating Language Challenges in the Math Classroom

Math is about numbers and numeracy and calculations for sure. But it's also about vocabulary and reading and communicating and word problems (ugh!). How do you help students who are learning the mathematics at the same time they are learning the language? We will work through some FUN! math, discuss the language involved, and brainstorm some strategies to support students through any language (and other) challenges.

Presenter:

Matt McLeod, Education Development Center Inc.

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Beyond Tech: Coding as a Tool for Language Learning

What if robotics and coding were tools for language and collaboration rather than just tech? Participants will explore hands-on, screen-free, and developmentally appropriate coding experiences for young children. Discover how playful challenges encourage multilingual learners to communicate using their full linguistic repertoire, develop their social emotional skills, and solve problems together. Inclusive strategies are woven throughout.

Presenter:

Tammy King, Early Childhood Professional Learning, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

The WIDA Journey: Beginning to Today and Beyond

Spend an hour with WIDA Founders Tim Boals and Margo Gottlieb as they recount the WIDA journey from the beginnings in 2002 to today and beyond. They will talk about trends in our field and how far we have come despite the ups and downs educators of multilingual learners face.

Presenters:

Tim Boals and Margo Gottlieb, WIDA Consortium

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

Collaborative Co-Teaching Instruction: Roles, Strategies and Resources

Maximize the impact of secondary co-teaching partnerships in multilingual and inclusive settings. This presentation clarifies teacher roles and highlights evidence-based practices for co-planning, instruction, and assessment in high school content areas. Participants will gain practical strategies to streamline collaboration.

Presenters:

Amanda Melgar and Claudia Parra-Carrillo, Consolidated High School District230

Grade Level: Middle School through High School

North Pavilion 1

Cómo trabajar la dimensión sociocultural a través de los juegos tradicionales

This session explores using traditional Hispanic games to teach sociocultural competence and linguistic diversity in the classroom. Educators examine how games foster social integration, cognitive skills, and community connections. Through hands-on gameplay—such as La Papa caliente and card games—and collaborative design activities, teachers gain practical strategies to integrate culture into their curriculum.

Presenters:

Miguel Ongay and Ricardo Ruiz Mesa, Chicago Public Schools 299

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Maximizing the Bilingual Superpower in District 54's Dual Language/Immersion Program

Unlock the secrets to maximizing students' "bilingual superpowers"! Learn how District 54's Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese Dual Language and Immersion Program uses a guaranteed and viable writing curriculum to accelerate language proficiency across writing and speaking.

Presenters:

Rosie Hernandez, Seika Kobari, and Laura Rutigliano, Schaumburg School District 54

Grade Level: Elementary

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Special Education Considerations for Multilingual Learners

Participants will examine legal foundations for serving multilingual learners, distinguish language acquisition from disability, and apply culturally and linguistically responsive assessment practices. They will use multiple data sources to inform eligibility, recognize bias and disproportionality, and apply a case study process to develop recommendations and next steps.

Presenters:

Gina Gordey and Gina Robuck, Oswego Community Unit School District 308

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 6

From Blueprint to Breakthrough: A District's Journey of Continuous Improvement

Every district faces the challenge of turning good intentions into lasting impact. From Blueprint to Breakthrough shares one district's journey to build a continuous improvement system where curriculum, data, PLCs, feedback, school improvement, and professional learning work together creating clarity, momentum, sustainability, and measurable impact for every scholar.

Presenters:

Laura Heneghan, Sunilkumar Mody, Patricia Salzmann, and Kelly Zimmerman, Berkeley School District 87

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Supporting Students with Academic Discourse

This session is focused toward middle and high school teachers, and will provide examples specific to the math classroom. That said, all subject areas are welcome, and the strategies explored will be applicable to any teacher supporting ML students. In this session, we will discuss targeted vocabulary and discourse-level language supports that engage students in authentic language learning while practicing content.

Presenter:

Lauren Morley, Glenbrook North High School, Glenbrook

Grade Level: Middle School, High School

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Bringing Beauty to Multilingual Learners Using Art, Music and Poetry

In this session, you will see examples of and practice how to use various art forms to engage your learners. Through art, music, and poetry, you can facilitate listening, speaking, reading, and writing to support your students' language acquisition. Examples are from a middle school classroom but can apply to all levels.

Presenters:

Amanda Armstrong and Christina Culbertson, McLean County Unified School District 5

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Their Stories, Our Lessons: Youth Panel

This presentation features a student panel sharing experiences navigating school while unhoused or experiencing housing instability. Students will highlight barriers to enrollment, transportation, learning, and support, while emphasizing safe, supportive environments. Educators will gain insight into removing barriers, honoring students' humanity, maintaining high expectations, and empowering every student to reach their full potential.

Presenters:

Patricia Briones and Portia Ransom, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

New Migrant Education Program (MEP) Liaison and More

Discover how the new role of MEP Liaison in the consolidated application and IMES can help connect statewide resources, summer and regular-term programs, recruitment strategies, and best practices for supporting migratory families.

Presenters:

Tammee Petersen, Beardstown Community Unit School District 15 and Melina Wright, Northern Illinois University

Grade Level: All Levels

03:00P-04:00P

South Pavilion 1

FEATURED SESSION: Building Background Knowledge Via Exploration Stations

Do your instructional units assume specific pieces of background knowledge and lived experiences? This session will explore ways for us to build background knowledge for ALL students, prior to a new unit starting. We will explore how to create Exploration Stations and accompanying protocols!

Presenter:

Carly Spina, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

WEDNESDAY

10:15A-11:15A

South Pavilion 1

Strategies for Using Mirror and Window Texts for Biliteracy Instruction (English-Spanish)

In this session, we will explore strategies for using window texts in support of bilingual students. Teachers will explore texts in English and Spanish that can be utilized in thematic text sets in unit planning. This session is intended to support language, literacy and cultural identity within the ELA and SLA curriculum. We will also explore excerpts from multiple texts within and across identities in English and Spanish.

Presenter:

Vanessa Figueroa, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

The Times are a Changing: Introducing Academic Languaging

Multilingual learners hold the superpower of their languages. However, to what extent do they have voice and choice in their use? Let's transform current conceptualizations of academic language to a more dynamic, actionable vision of academic languaging. Using content area model texts, we highlight strength-based instructional strategies for valuing and supporting academic languaging in classrooms to center our multilingual learners.

Presenter:

Margo Gottlieb, WIDA Consortium

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Building Bridges not Barriers: Smart Scaffolding for Multilingual Learners

Ensuring multilingual learners access grade-level content is vital for success. Join this interactive session to experience effective scaffolding strategies that leverage student strengths, meet language and content needs, and foster independence. We will explore the variety of ways to scaffold that move beyond the traditional use of sentence frames. Walk away with practical tools to help your students thrive.

Presenters:

Mallory Fuessle and Amy Mosquera, Adelante Educational Specialists Group

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

South Pavilion 5 and 6

EL Exit Criteria Policy Recommendations: Reflection, Feedback, and Next Steps

Join us for a review of the EL Exit Criteria Policy Working Group's recommendations and emerging policy considerations. The session will summarize the group's process, key themes, and proposed changes while inviting reactions from educators, administrators, and stakeholders. Participants will have opportunities to provide feedback that will inform ongoing refinement and future policy recommendations.

Presenters:

Rae Clementz, Joanne Clyde, and Angela Foxall, Illinois State Board of Education

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

Bremen Room

Language and Life Skills: Fostering Communication with a Community and Environment-based Approach

This session highlights how multilingual educators & special education providers can collaborate to embed meaningful communication practice into life skills programming. Participants will explore practical, community-based, & environment-based strategies that support student independence and authentic communication while strengthening meaningful multidisciplinary collaboration.

Presenter:
Aurora Joaquin, Glenview District 34
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Sam Tinley Room

Making EL Requirements Meaningful: Using Self-Assessment for Reflection and Monitoring

It can be difficult to understand how state EL program requirements connect to one another—and to daily practice. ISBE consultants will unpack the components of the LEA EL Self-Assessment Tool through practical questions that help educators see what each component means within their own programs and services. The session will provide a framework for using the self-assessment as an ongoing tool for reflection, monitoring, and compliance.

Presenters:
John Crosley-Corcoran and Cynthia Martinez, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago
Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

Making Language Visible: Targets, Markers, Agreements, and Linguistic Spaces in Action

Participants will explore how visible, intentional language structures enhance learning in DL classrooms. Educators will examine how aligned language targets, language markers, language agreements, and linguistic spaces promote purposeful language use, equitable participation, and meaningful academic conversations. Examples will be shared.

Presenters:
Noris Castro, Nohelia Cruz Alcocer, and Mario Pestaña, Elgin U-46
Grade Level: Elementary through High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

School Improvement in Action: The Leadership Team's Roadmap to Commendable

Explore how our junior high school, serving a diverse student population, moved from Comprehensive to Commendable in one year through a focused school improvement plan. This session highlights the leadership team's collaborative work, purposeful changes to school structures, and partnership with our state coordinator. Learn how shared ownership and intentional planning translated improvement goals into meaningful action and measurable progress.

Presenters:
Shwkar Abousweilem and Susan Turner, Burbank School District #111
Grade Level: Middle School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Academic Language: The Key to ACCESS Growth and Increased Exits

What happens when WIDA language expectations move from the rubric to the classroom? Explore how District 73's Multilingual PLC used collaborative learning, intentional writing instruction, student work analysis, and new strategies to strengthen academic language. The result? ACCESS proficiency nearly doubled—from 9% in 2024 to 19% in 2026.

Presenters:
Nicole Merryfield Coy, Hawthorn School District 73, and Danette Meyer and Sonia Esquivel, With Partners Education
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 6

Refocus Your Coaches: Clear Roles That Move SIP and MTSS

Already have instructional coaches? Learn how Elgin U-46 refocused existing coaching roles to drive both school improvement and MTSS. One coach interprets SIP data on adult practice and student outcomes; another uses those takeaways to guide tiered problem-solving and interventions. Leave with role guidelines, a handoff protocol, and partner agreements you can adapt for any school or district with coaches.

Presenter:
Angela Ryg, Elgin U-46
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Make Improvement Easier to Do: Design Around the People

Even well-designed improvement efforts can become hard to carry out once they meet the realities of daily work. In this interactive session, participants will examine a current improvement effort, identify implementation challenges for the people carrying out the work, and consider what is making the work harder or easier to do. Participants will leave with one evidence-informed change to improve implementation.

Presenter:

Michael Czerniawski, West 40 Intermediate Service Center #2, Maywood

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Partnering with a Community Organization to Engage Students in Relevant and Hands-On Water Quality Monitoring

To help inspire teachers to connect with community resources to make complex topics relevant to students. This activity connects directly to climate change by having students assess the biological health of the river in response to climate stressors. Students collect macroinvertebrates and also carry out chemical tests (e.g. nitrate, phosphate, pH) in order to calculate biological and chemical water quality indices.

Presenters:

Christopher Hetrea, Fenton Community High School District 100, Bensenville and Mark Hauser, Friends of the Chicago River

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Bridging Languages, Building Communities and Supporting Bilingual Families

This presentation will highlight our work as Community Coordinators in a district. The audience will learn how, as coordinators we build engagement and trust with our multilingual families. We will share a typical day for a coordinator and the various resources and organizations we partner with in order to provide the best care and information to the multilingual families in our district.

Presenters:

Zaya Gantumur, Raquel Kim and Florrie Riera-Chapa, Glenview School District 34

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

How SIOP® Supports Asset-Based Instruction for Multilingual Learners

This session will focus on how SIOP® promotes an asset-based learning approach. Participants will examine current language often used in schools and classrooms to describe multi-lingual learners and learn techniques and strategies to change the mindset to a more positive one. Participants will analyze and connect specific SIOP® practices to multilingual learner assets in order to promote equitable, asset-based instruction and more!

Presenters:

Wayne Eichen and Jennifer Mostowski, Savvas Learning

Grade Level: All Levels

11:30A-12:30P

South Pavilion 1

English Learners and State Testing Supports

January 2027 begins the assessment cycle in Illinois. This session guides practitioners to prepare English learners (ELs) for the upcoming WIDA ACCESS that measures English language growth. The appropriate accommodations for ELs in the content area assessments of IAR, ISA and ACT will be presented. Additionally, dually identified student participation in WIDA Alternate ACCESS and Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment will be discussed.

Presenter:

Trevor Cottle, Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

South Pavilion 2

Computational Thinking (CT): Try It. Tinker With It. Teach It!

In this hands-on CSEL session, participants will explore computational thinking activities that engage multilingual learners in problem solving and purposeful learning. We will consider how these activities support language, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity—and why integrating CT into content-area learning matters for multilingual learners.

Presenters:

Susan Garr and Diana Silvas, CSEL Project (Computer Science for Every Learner), Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Exploring Illinois' Comprehensive Numeracy Plan through an Equity Lens

Explore the Illinois Comprehensive Numeracy Plan through an equity lens. This session highlights features that expand access to grade-level mathematics, strengthen student identity and agency, and support multilingual learners. Participants will identify practical entry points for translating the plan's equity commitments into classroom and systemwide action.

Presenter:

Anne Paonessa, West 40 Intermediate Service Center, Maywood

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

South Pavilion 5 and 6

How English Learners CanThrive in High School

This session translates research on English learner attainment into actionable ways educators can support these students in high schools. We will examine the role of attendance, grades, rigorous coursework, and advising in shaping high school graduation and college enrollment with distinct considerations for newcomers and long-term English learners with and without Individualized Education Plans.

Presenters:

Elaine Allensworth and Marisa de la Torre, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research and Jorge Macías, Latino Policy Forum, Chicago

Grade Level: High School

Bremen Room

A Collaborative Approach to Dual Language Program Improvement

Berwyn North School District 98's Multilingual Director and Language Learner Instructional Specialist share how they collaborate to strengthen Dual Language instruction. Participants will explore what to look for in Dual Language classrooms, including linguistic spaces, student discourse, and best biliteracy practices, so they can use their walkthrough evidence to support coaching, professional development, resources, and program implementation.

Presenters:

Francela López and Emily Szymczak, Berwyn North School District 98

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Sam Tinley Room

Intelligent School Improvement Design (SIP)

Join this session to learn how U-46 is leading and updating their systems for school improvement. Topics will cover how the SIP template has designed leverage points to improve practices in the classroom, custom tools, and staffing structures to support school improvement.

Presenter:

Matt Raimondi, Elgin U46

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

Real Talk: Navigating Sensitive Family Conversations with Care and Compassion

Navigate difficult family conversations with confidence and care. This training empowers educational staff to reframe discussions on behavior, screenings, referrals, and IEP meetings. Through interactive role-play and motivational interviewing, you will master collaborative communication, honor cultural differences, and partner with families to address their unique needs.

Presenter:

Tareema Jean-Baptiste, STAR NET Region V, Chicago

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

North Pavilion 2 and 3

From Emerging to Empowered: Supporting English Language Development

Explore practical strategies for helping emerging multilingual learners develop academic language while engaging meaningfully with grade-level content and foundational skills.

Presenters:

Shurook Abdullah, Barbara Dziatkowiec, Zain Fakhoury, Jasmine Hakawati, Nikki McDougal and Jessica Torres, North Palos School District 117

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

WIDA ELD Made Practical: Moving From Framework to Classroom

In this session, participants will explore practical strategies for integrating language development into content instruction, identify language functions and features, and apply WIDA ELD principles to strengthen planning, instruction, and student learning.

Presenter:
Shadia Salem, North Palos School District #117
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 6

Making the DREAM WORK: Teams Unite, Multilinguals Ignite!

This session equips educators with research-based teamwork strategies to support multilingual learners. Participants will explore co-planning, co-ownership, and co-responsibility while strengthening communication, data use, shared accountability, and collaboration among teachers, bilingual and ESL staff, specialists, support staff, and administrators to advance language-rich instruction and student success.

Presenter:
Laura Hodge, Marquardt School District 15, Glendale Heights
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Multilingual Learning by Design

What happens when available tools don't meet your language learners' needs? Explore how Barrington 220 educators are using AI to develop custom dual language resources to differentiate and contextualize learning for students of all levels. Hear our story and learn practical steps you can take to make tools for your district.

Presenters:
Sara Pletcher and Joe Robinson, Barrington School District 220
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Bilingual Special Education 1979-2026

The 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226 describes qualifications: Bilingual School Psychologists, Social Workers, Speech Pathologists, Counselors and Teachers (3 to 22). These professionals are mandated by law to complete a full individual evaluation of an EL student and design the IEP. A parent is require to consent and participate in the entire process. Districts are mandated to provide the parent a certified bilingual language interpreter.

Presenter:
Julieta Rosales Pasko, Retired Bilingual School Psychologist
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Language Detectives: Developing Metalinguistic Awareness in MLs

Why do we say a herd of elephants but a pack of wolves, while both are una manada in Spanish? Discover how intentional language noticing develops metalinguistic awareness. Through practical ESL and dual language examples, participants will explore strategies that encourage students to investigate language patterns, make cross-language connections, and strengthen their linguistic knowledge.

Presenters:
Mayra Balderas and Kaitlynd Firek, Queen Bee School District 16, Glendale Heights and Sara Knigge, Read en Español, Inc., Aurora
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

AI in the High School Multilingual (ML) Classroom

This session will cover a variety of topics ranging from an overview of some AI tools a high school ML teacher uses in his classroom for his advanced level ML students to sharing how others are using AI. Academic dishonesty and AI detectors? "AI-proofing" (as best you can) assignments? Integrating AI into assignments? Let's talk and share!

Presenter:
Jerry Kim, Niles Township High School District 219
Grade Level: High School

01:45P-02:45P

South Pavilion 1

Intentionality in the Speaking Domain

Give your student's speaking domain a BOOST this year by leveraging student-facing speaking rubrics to use all year long! This session will also explore a teacher-facing tool to reflect on the time, task type, and feedback process related to content-based speaking opportunities. Everyone will leave with a digital tool bank of resources to bring back to your system.

Presenter:

Carly Spina, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

Building a Biliteracy Curriculum and Assessment Framework

This session presents two complementary frameworks that support biliteracy curriculum and assessment within dual language programs. Administrator and practitioners can use the frameworks to re-envision the role of language in their own programs. We share accompanying tools useful for the simultaneous building and assessing of language proficiency and language arts within and across languages.

Presenters:

Margo Gottlieb, WIDA Consortium and Cristina Sánchez-López, Paridad Education Consulting

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Utilizing Community Resources for Multilingual Families

Many multilingual households are newcomers. These families come alone, with no support system. Registering their student into schools is their first introduction to public institutions and community resources. This presentation will go over resources available in the state for families of all backgrounds. What they do, how to maintain contacts and how to present this information to families in an appropriate and non-overwhelming manner.

Presenters:

José Perez, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Empowering Multilingual Families for College and Career Success

This session explores how educators can partner with multilingual families to support college journeys. Grounded in University of Chicago research and the Latino College Landscape, participants will learn culturally responsive, language-accessible strategies for communicating postsecondary options, financial aid, and milestones while building family confidence and school-home partnerships.

Presenter:

Brian Herrera, Latino Policy Forum, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

Engage and Empower: Active Learning Strategies for the Classroom

Elevate engagement and empower student communication through collaborative learning games, interactive discussion techniques, and edtech tools. Designed around inclusive support for Multilingual Learners, including those with disabilities, this hands-on workshop lets you practice new methods for immediate implementation in your classroom.

Presenters:

Maricruz González and Maria Ovalle, Chicago Public Schools District 299

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

Sam Tinley Room

Shifting Sands, Steady Hands: Leadership that bends without Breaking

New TBE/TPI directors step into a field defined by disequilibrium, where certainty is scarce and the ground keeps shifting. Drawing on adaptive leadership and resilience research, this session explores the skill sets leaders need when the old playbook no longer applies, steady judgment, honest communication, and the capacity to hold a team together through change. Leave better equipped to lead, not just manage.

Presenters:

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

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

National Board Certification: Elevating Practice, Empowering Educators, Impacting Students

Discover how National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification can strengthen your teaching practice, enhance student learning, and support your professional growth. This session provides an overview of what National Board Certification is, why educators pursue this nationally recognized credential, and how the certification process promotes reflection, continuous improvement, and accomplished teaching.

Presenters:

Bianca Espinosa-Speta and Elizabeth Hiler, Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Navigating Immigration Enforcement: Tools and Resources for Educators

Educators often face the impacts of immigration enforcement with minimal guidance. This session highlights three key strategies from the Elgin Area Immigrant Alliance to support immigrant students and families: creating a school observer program, launching a YouTube resource channel, and hosting a book study webinar featuring three national authors sharing best practices for school communities.

Presenters:

Patricia Chamberlain, Elgin Area Immigrant Alliance and Sara Pletcher, Barrington School District 220

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 4 and 5

One Model, More Access: Moving Beyond One- and Two-Way Dual Language

This session highlights our district's shift from one-way and two-way programs to a unified dual language model that expands access within students' home schools. Participants will explore behind-the-scenes planning, stakeholder communication, a defined biliteracy trajectory, and an in-house system for identifying and supporting simultaneous bilinguals.

Presenters:

Patricia Makishima and Griselda Pirtle, Elgin U-46

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary through, Middle School

North Pavilion 6

ISBE and School Partnership = Sustainable School Improvement

School improvement process with a clear cycle of goal setting, implementation, monitoring & evaluation. Leadership Teams use data and IQFSR evidence to identify priorities, set measurable goals, strategies & success criteria. Through shared & distributive leadership, teams engage staff, monitor progress, evaluate impact & make evidence-based adjustments to improve student outcomes.

Presenters:

Tom Schlaudraff and Caleb Valentin, Chicago Heights School District #170 -

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Amplifying Student Voice: A Six-Week Podcast Project for WIDA-Aligned Language Development

Explore a six-week podcast project that supported multilingual high school students' language acquisition through storytelling, interviews, and media production. Presenters will share WIDA-aligned strategies, instructional supports, and student growth, offering practical ways to build language skills, confidence, and student voice.

Presenters:

Karen Anderson, Jason Clark, Marco Gaska, and Leticia Medina, Thornton School District 205

Grade Level: Middle School through High School

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Small Town, Big Belonging: Cultivating Family Trust in Rural Districts

Building strong connections with multilingual families in a small district requires creative, hands-on strategies. This session shares how a small town moved past formal, compliance-heavy notices toward personal, welcoming outreach. We will break down our honest successes and missteps in earning family trust, simplifying daily communication, and creating parent gatherings that foster genuine belonging in a tight-knit community.

Presenter:

Oraia Jaramillo, Momence Community Unit School District 1

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Creating a Welcoming, Trauma-Informed, Culturally Responsive Classroom for Newcomers and SLIFE (PreK-12)

This workshop offers practical strategies for creating welcoming, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive classrooms for newcomer and SLIFE students. Explore ways to build belonging, use visuals and routines, honor students' languages and cultures, and leave with strategies they can immediately use across PreK–12 settings.

Presenter:

Sandra Santiago, Acero Schools, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Empowering Multilingual Journeys through an 8th grade Pathways to Biliteracy Award

Ready to move biliteracy beyond the high school diploma? Discover how one district built an 8th grade Pathways to Biliteracy Award to celebrate heritage speakers, multilingual learners, and world language students while building a bridge to the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy. Walk away with a replicable framework, practical tools, implementation lessons, and ideas for building staff and administrator buy-in in your own school or district.

Presenters:

Ben Carnhel and Sylvia Górski Duarte, Glenview School District 34

Grade Level: Middle School

3:00P-04:00P

South Pavilion 1

FEATURED SESSION: Play, Prompt, Produce: Content Previews through Language Experience Approach

Experience the Language Experience Approach (LEA) through high-energy, "minute-to-win-it" games! Learn to make content comprehensible, to bridge from experiments to academic writing around WIDA key uses, to differentiate for WIDA levels, and to leave space for translanguaging. Leave with a toolkit of game ideas and templates to stretch student language from words to discourse.

Presenter:

Michele Yanong, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

THURSDAY

10:15A-11:15A

South Pavilion 1

Understanding Identification of English Learners

This session will cover the Home Language Survey (HLS), screening procedures, and initial assessment requirements districts are responsible for overseeing in relation to the new ISBE Guidance for English learner students.

Presenters:

Lauren Ligammari and Michelle López, Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

South Pavilion 2

A Picture is Worth 1000 Words: Creating and Finding Visuals to Support Multilingual Learners

Visuals are a key linguistic support for multilingual learners, but educators don't have unlimited time to search the internet for the perfect visual! This session focuses entirely on where and how educators can create or find quality visuals to use in a range of contexts and content areas. Participants will leave with a resource list of tools, all free to educators, that you can implement tomorrow.

Presenter:

Maggie Essig, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 3 and 4

From ACCESS to Achievement: Building a Culture of English Learner Success

This session explores how schools can leverage ACCESS results to advance English Learners academic proficiency and achievement. Participants will examine the assessment's purpose, interpret results to measure language growth, and establish structures for teachers to develop annual language goals using ACCESS and local data. The session will include strategies for embedding English Learner achievement into professional planning.

Presenters:

Jorge Macías, Latino Policy Forum and Barbara Marler, Marler Consulting & Advisory LLC

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Stop Asking, "Can They Speak English?" Start Asking, "Do They Feel They Belong?"

Too often, multilingual learners are measured by what they cannot yet say instead of valued for who they are. This "must attend" session by belonging expert Dr. Don Parker equips you with three powerful strategies you can use immediately to foster a sense of pride and belonging. Stop measuring language alone and start building the belonging that unlocks learning.

Presenter:

Don Parker, DPCP Professional Development and Transformation

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

Exploring Writing Through Inquiry and Language

Participants will explore writing strategies that support all learners through inquiry and structured language experiences. Strategies include I See/I Wonder, the Picture Word Inductive Model, Sentence Patterning, RAFT Writing, and the Language Experience Approach. Educators will leave with practical tools to build vocabulary, strengthen writing, connect oral language to print, and foster meaningful language development.

Presenters:

Tania Alcala and Lana Briggs, Plano CUSD 88

Grade Level: Elementary

Sam Tinley Room

Centering Multilingual Learners: Aligning Curriculum, Instruction, and Unit Internalization

This session explores how Proviso 209 is placing multilingual learners at the center of school improvement. Multilingual learners make up 27.6% of Proviso 209's students in a district that is 60.1% Hispanic, 33.9% Black, and 3.9% White. Presenters will show how curriculum, the Proviso Instructional Framework, and a unit internalization protocol align to support rigorous learning and purposeful language use.

Presenters:

Olimpia Bahena and Dimitrios Kallieris, Proviso Township High School District 209, Forest Park

Grade Level: High School

North Pavilion 1

Math Language Routines - Critical for Some, Beneficial for All

Math Language Routines are critical for multilingual learners and beneficial for all—because while some students are learning English, every student is learning the language of mathematics. Through an interactive, problem-based experience, explore how purposeful routines and discussion build understanding, amplify student voice, and connect mathematics to students' lives.

Presenter:

Thomas Stricklin, Imagine Learning LLC

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Lectoescritura en español y translingüismo: Beyond Translated Phonics

Often, dual language classrooms teach Spanish reading using routines borrowed from English phonics, and treat translanguaging as either forbidden or accidental. This session examines what transfers across Spanish and English and what doesn't, to then model planned translanguaging routines that move students from oral language to Spanish reading and writing.

Presenter:

David Nieto, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Save M'SEAT: Authentic Collaboration For Dually Identified Students

Participants will learn how Bloomington D87 provides authentic collaboration with a seat for all to meet the needs of multilingual students with a range of disabilities. Members of D87's Multilingual Special Education Advisory Team will share the development of the team and the work that they do. Participants will leave with an outline and resources to start their own advisory team to support a unique and valuable group of students!

Presenters:

Edson Castrejon, Hannah Matthews, Kimberly Taber and Anne Taylor, Bloomington School District 87

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Critical Experiential Learning in Multilingual Teacher Education

Drawing on 127 teacher reflections, this presentation explores how unfamiliar language experiences reveal barriers to participation and belonging. It frames these experiences as critical approximations and examines how structured reflection can move teachers from linguistic empathy toward inclusive practices in multilingual classrooms.

Presenters:

Miguel Fernández Álvarez, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and Amanda Montes, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

SNAP Changes and the Impact of McKinney-Vento Families

In this session, we will explore recent changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and their impact on families and students experiencing homelessness. Participants will learn about updated eligibility requirements, potential barriers to accessing benefits, and the challenges facing McKinney-Vento families. Discuss available resources and strategies to help families maintain access to critical food assistance and support services.

Presenter:

Alyssa Phillips, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Belonging at Every Level: Responding to Phone Bans and Building Community

As states require schools to limit student phone use, how can schools address students' needs for social connection? The loneliness epidemic threatens the well-being of students and educators, and those with diverse identities may feel especially isolated. Leave this session with tools to identify signs of non-belonging among students and staff, along with systemic, interpersonal, and individual strategies to build belonging at every level.

Presenters:

Adrian Harries and Sydney Osborn, Community Unit School District, Algonquin

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

The Neuroscience of Instruction: Teaching Multilingual Lingual Learners (MLLs)

This presentation explores how neuroscience, culturally responsive teaching, and language development intersect to support Multilingual Learners. Participants will examine how attention, memory, emotion, identity, and prior knowledge influence learning. Through research-based strategies and classroom examples, educators will learn to leverage students' linguistic and cultural assets that support meaningful academic and language growth.

Presenter:

Alexandra Correa, National Louis University, Oswego

Grade Level: All Levels

11:30A-12:30P

South Pavilion 1

Operationalizing Equity: Using the EJC for School Improvement

ISBE's Equity Journey Continuum (EJC) helps districts examine gaps in achievement and opportunities. This session shares how this concept is operationalized in three ways: a) state-level goals and measures; b) how state partner AIR has measured EJC practices in schools; and c) an administrator will share ways they put these concepts into practice to support student success and outcomes.

Presenters:

Sergio Hernández, Illinois State Board of Education and Alicia Espinoza and Matthew Welch, American Institutes for Research

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 2

Supporting Students Close to Exit

This session will explore ways to target support for students who are very close to exiting on the ACCESS test. All participants will receive a digital tool bank of resources to bring back to their districts.

Presenter:

Carly Spina, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

Grade Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Interdisciplinary Literacy for Littles: Loose Parts, Play, and Inquiry

Explore how multilingual text sets and interdisciplinary play can spark literacy, biliteracy, oracy, inquiry, and play in PK–2 Dual Immersion and Inclusive Blended classrooms. Experience the 3L Triangle—Language, Loose Parts, and Literacy—across five centers, explore translanguaging and family contributions, and design a standards-aligned experience. Receive a free Playful Literacy Guide for Multilingual Learners.

Presenters:

Tammy King, Early Childhood Professional Learning, Arlington Heights, Lindsay Meeker, STAR NET Regions I and III, Moline and Eduardo Pérez, STAR NET Regions I and IV, Moline

Grade Level: Early Childhood/Primary

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Building Language-Rich Classrooms: Lessons From a Book Study

This presentation details a yearlong PD book study on The 7 Steps to a Language-Rich, Interactive Classroom. Partnering with Danette Meyer and Sonia Esquivel (With Partners), Glenview Middle School coaches Jen King and Amy Linn guided staff through PD sessions. This initiative boosted daily academic discussions, student engagement, and scaffolds for diverse learners. District assessments showed high growth and a record number of ACCESS exits.

Presenters:

Karla Hawley, Jen King, Blanca Leal, and Amy Linn, East Moline School District 37, and Sonia Esquivel and Danette Meyer, With Partners Education

Grade Level: Middle School

Bremen Room

Supporting All Students - Serving Multiliterate Students in the High School

With the success of dual language programming, high schools increasingly face the exciting challenge of continued growth with students' linguistic and literacy skills after students have exited dual language programs that formally end in eighth grade. In this session, participants will share their schools' successes, and together, we'll brainstorm strategies that ensure all students continue building their knowledge and skills.

Presenters:

Jason Klein, Michelle Rodríguez and Lorenzo Rubio, Fenton Community High School District 100

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

Sam Tinley Room

Elevating Voices, Empowering Learners: A District's Journey to Success

Join Joshua Perdomo, Director of Multilingual Programs at Community Consolidated School District 59 (CCSD59), as he shares the district's journey of success through innovative programs and a commitment to elevating multilingual learner voices. Discover how CCSD59 centered the experiences of multilingual learners and their educators, creating a culture where students and teachers feel supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Presenters:

Eydie Kubitschek and Joshua Perdomo, Community Consolidated School District 59, Elk Grove

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 1

Can You 4C It? Creating Your Own English Language Development (ELD) Framework (K-5)

Do you have clarity around the role of ELD instruction? Do you struggle to connect ELD to classroom learning or create consistency across your district? Discover how one district used the WIDA Key Language Uses (KLUs) to build a comprehensive ELD Framework and leave with ideas and tools to begin designing your own.

Presenters:

Maureen Cassidy and Megan Waxler, McHenry School District 15

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Empowering Student Agency: Inclusive Formative Assessment for Diverse Classrooms

Explore how writing instruction can honor multilingual learners' identities, languages, and lived experiences while strengthening literacy. Through research-based practices, student writing samples, mentor texts, and a Cycle of Writing for Voice framework, participants will learn to leverage translanguaging, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and collaboration to amplify voice, agency, and meaningful writing.

Presenter:

Yvonne Williams, Summitk12

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 4 and 5

Developing Bilingual Sound Walls with Bilingual SOR

How can research on the Science of the Bilingual Reading Brain help us understand which is better - word walls or sound walls? In this session, participants will understand how dual language students can build stronger connections between English and Spanish graphemes and phonemes. Participants will learn how to use and create bilingual sound walls to connect the sounds of both languages and to how words are written in both languages.

Presenter:
Alexandra Guilamo, TaJu Educational Solutions, LLC
Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 6

Better, Not Perfect: Building Self-Efficacy in Teachers and Leaders

Great educators and leaders never stop growing. This workshop explores how self-efficacy shapes confidence, resilience, reflection, and the willingness to improve. Participants will examine how feedback, practice, collaboration, and small wins fuel continuous growth—and why becoming better, not perfect, is essential to increasing our impact on students, colleagues, and school communities.

Presenter:
Patrick Rice, Black Educational Advocacy Coalition, Mt Vernon
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

Changing the Day, Changing the Narrative: Our ACCESS Journey

This presentation explores how Elgin High School transformed the ACCESS assessment from a misunderstood testing requirement into a meaningful schoolwide experience. We will share strategies for demystifying ACCESS, engaging students, families, and staff, restructuring the testing day, and creating opportunities for celebration. We will also highlight the impact of these efforts and the growing enthusiasm to continue and expand the experience.

Presenters:
Jeremy Burnham, Keleigh Foreman, and Veronica Ryan, Elgin U-46
Grade Level: High School

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Numbers plus Words Equals Math

Linguistic demands continue to increase for students taking high-stakes tests, particularly in mathematics. This presentation will explore strategies that support students as they learn both the concepts in math and the language of math. Participants will examine practical strategies for strengthening language development across the four domains that can also be applied to other content areas.

Presenter:
Kathleen Meyer, Addison School District 4
Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Cuando hablar diferente duele: acoso y pertenencia en estudiantes multilingües

Las burlas por el acento, el idioma o el origen pueden silenciar a un estudiante multilingüe y afectar su identidad, sus relaciones familiares y su aprendizaje. Desde una perspectiva del desarrollo infantil, exploraremos cómo reconocer señales de vergüenza lingüística y exclusión, escuchar al estudiante y colaborar con su familia para fortalecer su seguridad emocional, su sentido de pertenencia y su participación escolar.

Presenter:
Giselle Jimenez, Experiencias de la Vida LLC
Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Schools with fewer than 50 English learners (Els) in the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Program.

Supporting TBE programs with less than fifty students requires proven culturally responsive approaches that involve building an inclusive community, incorporating students' native languages, highlighting Hispanic culture, and providing focused, high-quality instruction.

Presenters:
Luis Narváez and Mirtha Quintana-Toomey, Multilingual Chicago
Grade Level: All Levels

01:45P-02:45P

South Pavilion 1

Del sonido al sentido: Addressing Comprehension Alongside Decoding in Primary Bilingual Classrooms

Because Spanish features high syllabic consistency, primary readers often decode rapidly without processing meaning. In this interactive session geared towards primary bilingual/dual language teachers, we will explore Spanish phonics development while embedding language comprehension. Discover practical visual scaffolds, syntactic strategies, and hands-on tools to move young bilingual learners beyond "word calling" and into true sense-making.

Presenter:

Rachell Plote, Illinois Resource Center, Arlington Heights

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

South Pavilion 2

That's Why I'm Here: Autobiographical Photography by Multilingual Students

Everyone has a story to tell. Due to trauma, insecurity, and language limitations, many students don't have the words to express their experiences. This exhibit empowers young people to share deeply personal stories through images and text. After a brief explanation of this project's origins and how you can implement it in your classroom, participants will be free to browse the photo exhibit.

Presenter:

Mark Poulterer, West Chicago Community High School District #94

Grade Level: Middle School through High School

South Pavilion 3 and 4

Metaphors Can Boost or Impair Language Teaching and Learning

The unseen metaphors students--and teachers--have about ourselves and our world hold a powerful unseen influence on our identities, our teaching and learning, and messages teachers convey to our learners. We explore, in an interactive format, how metaphors form, how we can recognize their presence and shape them, and how they can contribute to a growth mindset.

Presenters:

Kristin Lems and Jason Stegemoller, National Louis University, Chicago

Grade Level: All Levels

South Pavilion 5 and 6

Accessible, Relevant, Responsive: Reimagining MTSS for Multilingual Learners' Needs

Often, multilingual learners struggle differently than monolingual peers, wait for MTSS access until reaching arbitrary proficiency levels, and are squeezed, like round pegs into square holes, into predetermined interventions. Using Special Education Considerations for Multilingual Learners (2023), explore seven factors, a conversation guide, and a gap-analysis model for accessible, relevant, responsive MTSS practices, policies, and procedures.

Presenter:

Barbara Marler, Marler Consulting & Advisory LLC

Grade Level: All Levels

Bremen Room

What Do We Teach Next? Tier 1 Decisions for Multilingual Learners.

What do we teach next when a multilingual learner understands an idea but struggles to express it in English? Each student brings strengths and experiences that a score may not show. Through a guided case, we will examine evidence, plan vocabulary instruction and oral rehearsal, and identify a written response that shows learning. Leave with a completed example and reusable tool.

Presenters:

Guadalupe Gallardo-Escobedo, Leticia Gutierrez and Crystal Jimenez, Addison School District 4

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

Sam Tinley Room

How to Recognize and Support Dually Identified Students

Students with dual classification are English Learners and also qualify for special education. This presentation challenges misconceptions linking low English proficiency to low cognition and assuming students with significant disabilities cannot be multilingual. We'll review referral, evaluation, eligibility, and supports for dually identified learners.

Presenters:

Elizabeth Dejewski, Leyden Area Special Education Cooperative and Veronica Diaz, Mannheim School District 83

Grade Level: All Levels

North Pavilion 1

Can You 4C It? Creating Your Own English Language Development (ELD) Framework (6-8)

Do you have clarity around the role of ELD instruction? Do you struggle to connect ELD to classroom learning or create consistency across your district? Discover how one district used the WIDA Key Language Uses (KLUs) to build a comprehensive ELD Framework and leave with ideas and tools to begin designing your own.

Presenters:

Maureen Cassidy, Edgar De La Mora and Marisa Ruscitti, McHenry School District 15

Grade Level: Middle School

North Pavilion 2 and 3

Building Effective Dual-Language Learning Cycles: A Practical Guide

This presentation provides Dual Language PLCs with a practical roadmap to design and implement structured learning cycles. Educators will learn to map multi-phase cycles that align content and language targets across both languages, leverage cross-linguistic transfer, and analyze biliteracy data. Attendees will leave with frameworks to streamline planning and accelerate student biliteracy.

Presenters:

Claudia Hernandez and Liliana Silva, Chicago Public Schools District 299

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

North Pavilion 6

Beyond the Accommodation: Creating Schools where Students with Disabilities Belong

Providing accommodations is essential, but compliance alone does not create belonging. Through lived experience, educational leadership, research, and audience reflection, this session challenges educators to examine how students with disabilities experience school beyond their plans and services. Participants will leave with practical strategies for creating environments where students feel seen, valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Presenter:

Saundra Russell-Smith, Limitless Leaders LLC

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 1 - Even Hotel

IAMME Membership Meeting: Advocating for Multilingual Learners (MLs)

All are invited to the IAMME Membership Meeting. Topics to be discussed include : 1) IAMME's recent budget testimony to ISBE including concerns around federal funding; 2) the Dual Language Bilingual Education Guidance report to be released by December 31, 2026 by ISBE and 3) Proposed process and timeline from ISBE Assessment regarding updated Exit and Reclassification for MLs.

Presenters:

Elizabeth Campos Hamilton, Angelo Chávez, James Cohen, Eva Corona, Francela López, Amanda Montes, Jane Montes, Oriana Wilson and Josie Yanguas, Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education (IAMME)

Grade Level: All Levels

Conference Room 2 - Even Hotel

Revamp Your Math Tasks with BTC Strategies in ML/Dual Classrooms

This session helps math teachers transform familiar activities into engaging, collaborative, and meaningful Building Thinking Classrooms (BTC) experiences. Through VNPS modeling and redesigned examples, teachers will explore task shifts that deepen mathematical thinking while developing multilingual learners' speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Implying the co-development of both mathematical thinking and language acquisition.

Presenters:

Giovanni Llinas Rosa and Elizabeth Reyes, Lyons Township High School District 204, LaGrange

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

Conference Room 3 - Even Hotel

Beyond Translation: Building Meaningful Partnerships with Multilingual Families

Multilingual family engagement goes beyond translating newsletters and inviting families to events. This session explores practical ways ML educators can build trust, strengthen two-way communication, and recognize families' languages, cultures, and experiences as assets. Participants will discover strategies for creating meaningful partnerships and empowering multilingual families to become active contributors to their school communities.

Presenters:

Sandra Luna, West Northfield School District 31 and Nina Smith, LEAP Empowers

Grade Level: Elementary through High School

Conference Room 4 - Even Hotel

Elevating Student Writing with Strategic Systems and High Expectations

Unlock high-rigor writing for multilingual learners! Explore strategic systems that integrate oral language, Can-Do descriptors, and intentional graphic organizers that scaffold without lowering expectations. We'll cover vertically aligned expectations, rigorous prompts, and successful writing club models. Leave equipped with actionable tools to maintain high standards and elevate multilingual writers across all grade levels.

Presenters:

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

Grade Level: All Levels