

Secondary Schools' Bilingual Gap: Promising Practices and a Path Forward

We will be starting shortly. Please hold.



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Secondary Schools' Bilingual Gap: Promising Practices and a Path Forward

August 25, 2026 | MPI Webinar



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Today's Webinar

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Meet Our Speakers



Margarita Machado-Casas, Professor, Department of Dual Language and English Learner Education, San Diego State University; President, National Association for Bilingual Education



Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Strategic Advisor, Californians Together



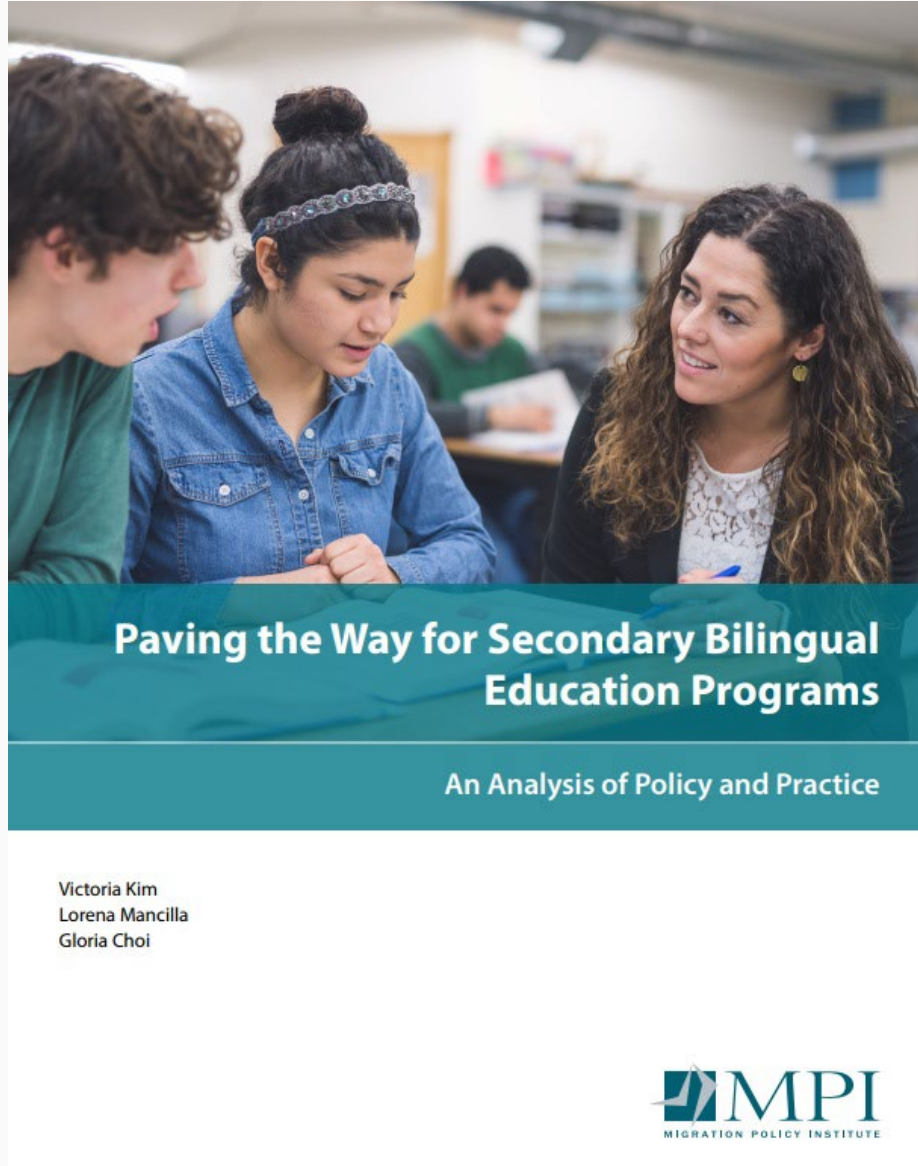
Lorena Mancilla, Associate Director for K-12 Partnerships and Policy, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, MPI



Victoria Kim, Associate Policy Analyst, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, MPI

Moderated by **Delia Pompa**, Senior Fellow for Education Policy, MPI





Related New Report

Paving the Way for Secondary Bilingual Education Programs: An Analysis of Policy and Practice

bit.ly/sbe825



Research Overview

The Background

- Bilingual education supports English Learners' cultural identities and long-term academic outcomes
- Programs have remained concentrated in the elementary grades

The Need

- Over 2.3 million ELs enrolled in U.S. secondary schools
- Unique environment that creates implementation challenges

The Project

- Key characteristics of bilingual education programs in secondary schools in California, Illinois, New York, and New Mexico
- 29 interviews with policy experts, teacher preparation faculty, and district leaders



Research Findings

Policy, Capacity, and Perseverance

- Clear, actionable policies
- Dedicated funding streams
- Strong leaders with expertise in bilingual education

Planning and Partnerships

- Coordination for managing transitions
- Mitigating teacher shortages
- Tailored family and student engagement

Pathways and Pipelines

- Student pathways to, through, and beyond secondary school
- Building bilingual educator pipelines
- Access to high-quality instructional materials



Recommendations for the Path Forward

- Invest strategically in the secondary bilingual system
- Scaffold the translation of policy into practice
- Recognize the potential of secondary contexts
- Take a pipeline-plus approach



Recommendations for the Path Forward

Invest Strategically in the Secondary Bilingual System:

- Develop and enact state-level policy that is clear and actionable
- Establish comprehensive district-level policies
- Appropriate stable funding
- Establish competitive grants

Scaffold the Translation of Policy into Practice:

- Conduct analysis of existing policies to identify barriers and inequities
- Build internal capacity
- Publish guidance to support program implementation



Recommendations for the Path Forward

Recognize the Potential of Secondary Contexts:

- Apply an equity lens to student pathways
- Prioritize collaborative opportunities for bilingual staff
- Plan for student transitions
- Align course offerings with postsecondary pathways
- Pursue creative partnerships to recruit and retain educators
- Conduct outreach in the early grades

Take a Pipeline-Plus Approach:

- Strengthen the full ecosystem of bilingual program staff
- Develop pathways that prepare educators for leadership roles
- Collaborate to redesign teacher preparation and credentialing programs
- Offer alternative certification pathways
- Invest in incentives for pre-service teachers



Final Thought

Growing and sustaining secondary bilingual programs that can support successful education trajectories for a range of multilingual learners requires coordinated, system-wide action grounded in a deep understanding of the secondary context.

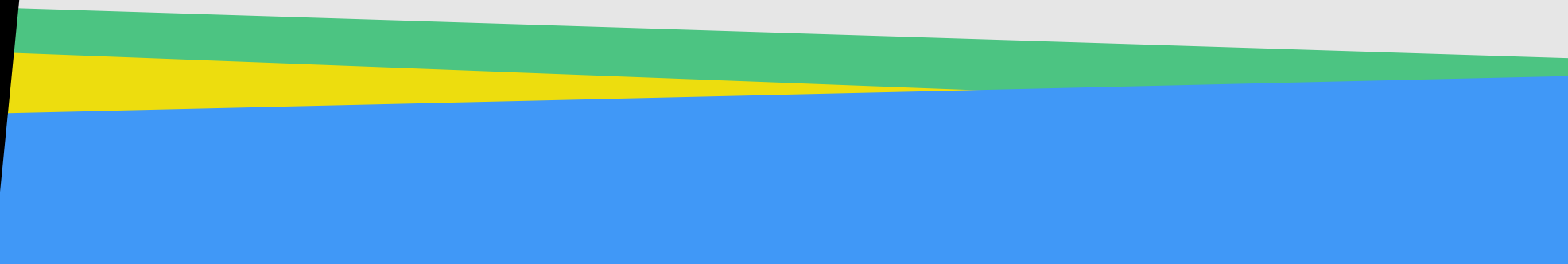




Secondary Bilingual Programs

**CALIFORNIANS
TOGETHER**

CHAMPIONING THE SUCCESS
OF ENGLISH LEARNERS



Policy

- Develop Structure and Commitment to a TK-12 program at the beginning
- Have the board of education adopt the program design and commitment to a TK-12 program
- Form a design committee of educators and community to help design the program
- Identify your middle school and high school sites and content area teachers early
- Build support for academic language to teach in target language



Build Awareness and Demand

- Take elementary students and parents on tour of a middle and high school program
- Take middle and high school teachers on a tour of programs and make time for them to interact with staff
- Take school board members on a tour of a district with TK-12 program and view schools at all three levels
- Starting in TK/K let parents know that their students will be working to earn State Bilingual Pathway and Seal of Biliteracy awards
- Have award ceremonies for each level of attainment



Implementation

- **BIG ISSUE** - Limited opportunities for elective classes. Be creative.
 - Middle School - 7 period day with elective wheel
 - High School - CTE Education program
 - Content classes taught in the target language
- While students are in elementary school, determine with school board support
 - Staffing
 - Master schedule
 - Curriculum and Instructional material
 - Professional development
 - Budget
- Build upon current initiatives: Graduate Profile, CTE programs
- Braid together other funds to support implementation:
 - Community Schools
 - CTE for translators, bilingual teachers
 - Dual enrollment
 - After school funds: mariachi group, folklórico dancers, Korean drum corp etc.



Global Language & Leadership Program

Course Progression Pathways (effective 2026-27, Class of 2029)

Spanish Pathway (7-course requirement)

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Spanish Speakers 6/6H	Spanish 7/8H	AP Spanish Language	Spanish 9/10H OR AP Spanish Literature
Global Studies (Spanish)		Teatro en Español	Community & Global Leadership

Mandarin Pathway (7-course requirement)

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Mandarin 5/6C OR Mandarin 5/6H	Mandarin 5/6H OR Mandarin 7/8H	Mandarin 7/8H OR AP Chinese Language	AP Chinese Language OR -----
Global Studies (Mandarin)		Asian Cultures	Mandarin 9/10H & Community & Global Leadership



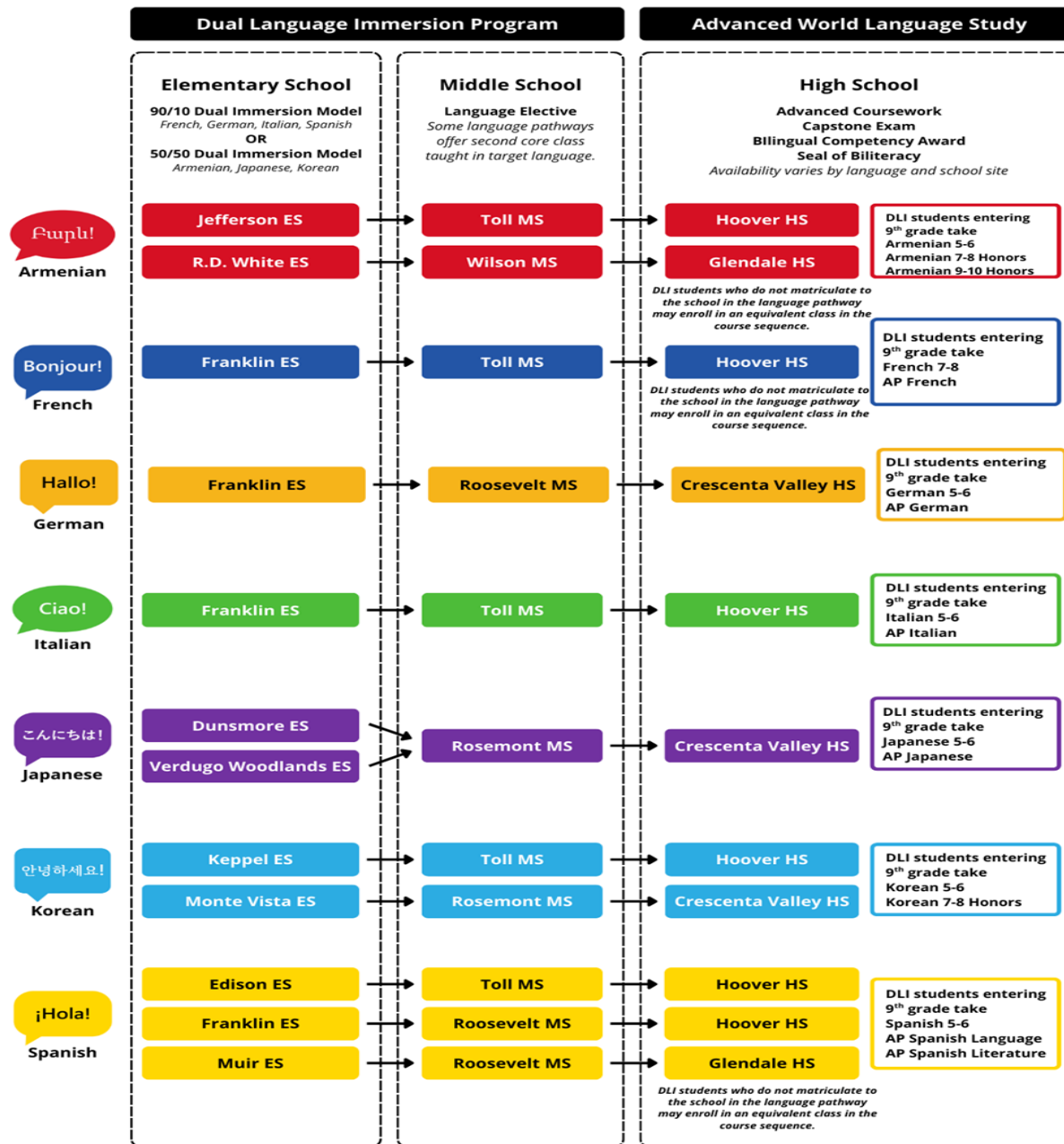
Spanish Triliteracy Pathway (10-course requirement)

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Spanish Speakers 5/6H	Spanish 7/8H	AP Spanish Language	Spanish 9/10H OR AP Spanish Literature
Global Studies (Spanish)			Community & Global Leadership
Mandarin 1/2	Mandarin 3/4	Mandarin 5/6C	Mandarin 5/6H

Mandarin Triliteracy Pathway (10-course requirement)

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Mandarin 5/6C OR Mandarin 5/6H	Mandarin 5/6H OR Mandarin 7/8H	Mandarin 7/8H OR AP Chinese Language	AP Chinese Language OR -----
Global Studies (Mandarin)			Mandarin 9/10H & Community & Global Leadership
Spanish 1/2	Spanish 3/4	Spanish 5/6	Spanish 7/8 (or AP)





Q & A

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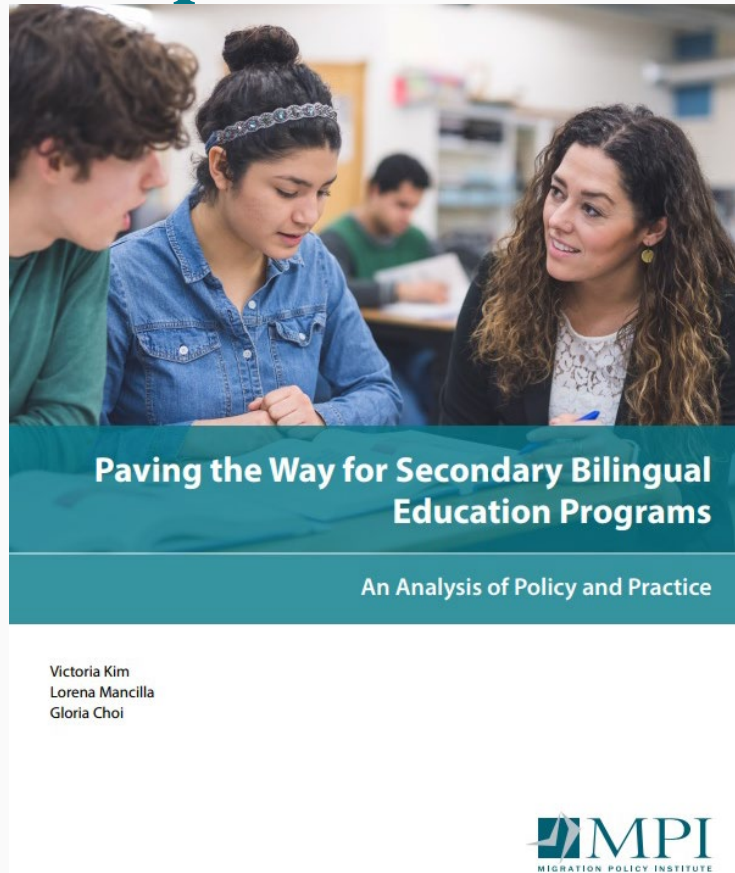


Thank you for joining us

Related New Report

By Victoria Kim, Lorena Mancilla, Gloria Choi

bit.ly/sbe825



Reporters can contact Michelle Mittelstadt at mmittelstadt@migrationpolicy.org or 202 266 1910

Today's video will be available at: bit.ly/bilingual825

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