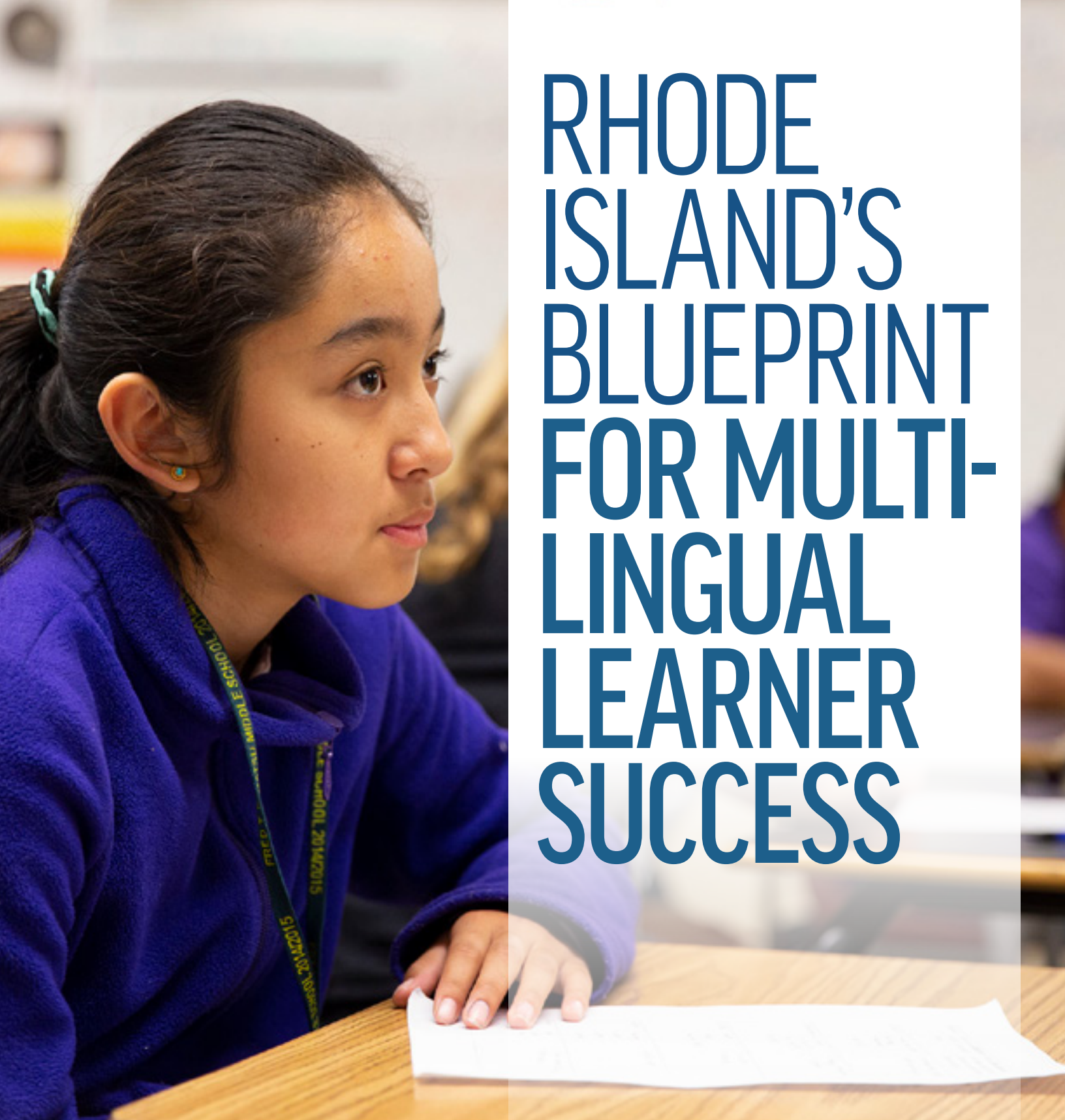




**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

# RHODE ISLAND'S BLUEPRINT FOR MULTI- LINGUAL LEARNER SUCCESS



# INTRO- DUCTION



Rhode Island is home to 23,931 current and former multilingual learner (MLL) students<sup>1</sup> who collectively speak more than 100 languages. They comprise 16 percent of Rhode Island's student population. All Rhode Island educators<sup>2</sup> are tasked with providing high-quality instruction so MLLs succeed in learning English and grade-level content and graduate ready for college, career, and life. MLLs must be supported every day in every classroom with instruction that draws on their cultural and language assets, engages them in rigorous academic instruction and discourse, integrates academic language and content, and provides ongoing assessment and feedback.

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<sup>1</sup> All data is based on RI public school enrollment from the end of the 2018–2019 school year.

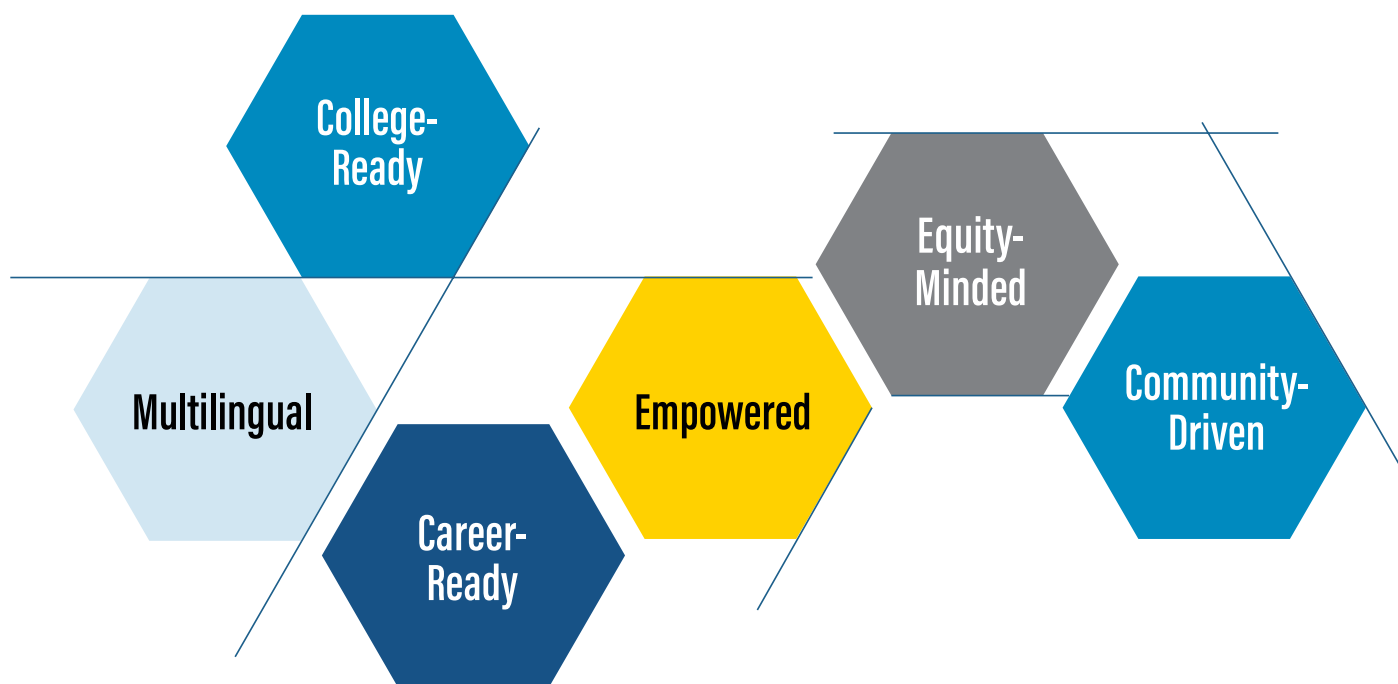
<sup>2</sup> "Educators" is used broadly to refer to teachers, administrators, and other school staff who shape MLLs' educational experiences.

To guide the shifts in educational practice necessary for MLLs to thrive, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Planning Team recruited individuals from local education agencies, universities, community organizations, and offices at RIDE and the Providence Public School District (PPSD) to form workgroups. These workgroups created the *Blueprint for MLL Success*. The *Blueprint* specifies the systemic practices

required for MLLs to succeed and is the underlying policy framework for the *Strategic Plan for MLL Success*.

The *Blueprint* includes a **vision** for MLLs and a set of interrelated **principles** to strengthen educational policies, programs, and practices for all MLLs. The vision captures the expressed aspirations of our MLLs, families, educators, and community members.

Figure 1. Key characteristics of successful MLLs



# VISION



All multilingual learners in the state of Rhode Island are empowered with high-quality instructional opportunities, including multilingual education, that leverage their cultural and linguistic assets, promote college and career readiness, and prepare them to thrive socially, politically, and economically, both in our state and globally.

This vision calls for evidence-based instruction and enrichment opportunities for MLLs, aligned to college preparatory grade-level standards.

Rhode Island's Principles for MLL Success establish what must be in place to realize this vision. The principles are intended to anchor the systemic improvement of policy, regulations, guidance, services, and supports

at the state, district, school, and classroom levels. Application of these five dynamic, interrelated, and interdependent principles requires shared responsibility. All educators at all levels of the schooling system must work to develop MLLs' academic and linguistic capacities within environments that respect, value, and sustain their languages and cultures.

# Rhode Island's Principles for MLL Success



## Principle 1:

An asset-oriented system embraces expectations and approaches to value, respect, and sustain MLL languages and cultures.

## Principle 2:

A high-quality instructional system (including curriculum, instruction, materials, assessments, and

professional learning) provides access to rigorous standards-aligned learning opportunities and empowers students.

## Principle 3:

A family- and community-centered system maximizes the assets of families, communities, and schools so MLLs reach their full potential.

## Principle 4:

A research- and data-informed system holds all educators responsible for continuously strengthening MLL education.

## Principle 5:

A coherent and nimble system aligns policies, resources, and practices to increase MLL achievement.

## Principle 1. An asset-oriented system that embraces expectations and approaches to value, respect, and sustain MLL languages and cultures:

- Leverages students' home languages, knowledge, and cultural assets to bridge prior knowledge to new knowledge and to make content meaningful and comprehensible;
- Supports biliteracy and multilingual development through diverse pre-K-12 multilingual pathways and experiences;
- Provides purposeful and targeted supports and services in English and home languages to meet the diverse needs of MLL student groups;
- Creates structures and processes to engage the knowledge, cultures, and languages of MLL students in all educational opportunities and settings;
- Strengthens the understanding of all educators (including classroom teachers, special educators,

paraprofessionals, MLL teachers, and school and district administrators) about the relationship between first-language development and second-, third-, or fourth-language development and builds their capacity to implement asset-oriented approaches in teaching and learning.

## Principle 2. A high-quality instructional system (including curriculum, instruction, materials, assessments, and professional learning) that provides access to rigorous standards-aligned learning opportunities and empowers students:

- Develops literacy, languages, and demanding grade-level, standards-aligned content knowledge simultaneously;
- Requires daily explicit instruction on academic language, oral language, and disciplinary literacy development;
- Engages MLLs in sustained, purposeful, and productive academic discourse, using peer collaboration structures;
- Provides a variety of data-informed collaborative structures, supports, and access points to core content and language development to meet the diverse needs of MLLs, including intervention strategies and supports for differently abled MLLs from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade;
- Provides MLLs with ongoing feedback on language proficiency and content knowledge development, using formative assessment in English and home languages.



- Builds all educators' knowledge of and ability to implement effective evidence-based practices for promoting the successful education of MLLs;
- Strengthens all educators' knowledge and skills to implement formative assessment to inform instruction and use, interpret, and apply all assessment results for MLLs.

### **Principle 3. A family- and community-centered system that maximizes the assets of families, communities, and schools so MLLs reach their full potential:**

- Leverages MLL families' knowledge, culture, and language assets to build strong learning communities;
- Establishes structures and capacity development opportunities to strengthen partnerships among families, communities, and schools to advocate for MLLs, design equitable education, and strengthen decision-making that increases student achievement;
- Collaboratively designs and implements, with families, communities, and schools, solutions to identified challenges to student achievement;
- Co-constructs, with families, communication tools and resources disseminated in representative languages, using multiple modalities, to strengthen awareness of resources in schools and communities and increase use of aligned resources to support their well-being, participation, and decision-making;

- Develops educators skilled at establishing respectful partnerships with families of MLLs and advocating on behalf of MLLs for high-quality instruction and services.

### **Principle 4. A research- and data-informed system that holds all educators responsible for continuously strengthening MLL education:**

- Requires all teachers and leaders to share responsibility and accountability for MLLs' education;
- Develops MLL instructional frameworks, services, and policies grounded in equity.
- Provides time and structures to develop capacity for research and data use;
- Secures and funds evidence-based, sustained, and purposeful MLL professional learning for all educators and leaders across and within systems;
- Uses classroom observation protocols aligned to high-quality MLL instructional tenets in regular learning walks<sup>3</sup> to monitor implementation and improve practice;
- Engages educators in equity audits<sup>4</sup> of practices, programs, policies, and decision-making throughout systems.
- Secures valid and reliable assessments and implements culturally and linguistically appropriate monitoring systems;
- Focuses on educators accelerating MLL progress through processes that use quantitative and

<sup>3</sup> A learning walk is a short classroom visit that allows educators to reflect on student learning.

<sup>4</sup> An equity audit is a process for examining program and policy data to guarantee all students have access to quality educational opportunities, regardless of race, language, socioeconomic status, ability, or other identities.

qualitative data to inform continuous improvement of practices and services.

## **Principle 5. A coherent and nimble system that aligns policies, resources, and practices to increase MLL achievement:**

- Defines non-negotiable, evidence-based core educational services that must be delivered at each level of the system, as well as areas where there is flexibility in service delivery;
- Secures and allocates human and fiscal resources to support high-quality core instruction to meet the diverse needs of MLLs, including professional learning opportunities for all teachers and administrators;
- Designs and implements high-quality instruction, guidance, services, and extended supports tailored to MLLs' diverse social, emotional, and academic needs;

- Creates and adopts policies on college and career readiness education and guidance services to increase access and success for MLLs;
- Structures regular collaborations within and across systems to increase and sustain productive and effective implementation of policies, services, and plans.

Rhode Island's Principles for MLL Success will guide continuous improvement for MLLs at all levels of the educational system. Implementation of these five principles will strengthen our capacity to support parents' and students' aspirations and help MLL students meet ambitious goals. The state and its districts and schools will use these principles as a foundation when they analyze or design systemwide policies, programs, and practices.

Specifics about how we will implement the *Blueprint* are in Rhode Island's *Strategic Plan for MLL Success*. The Strategic Plan identifies goals, high-leverage strategies, and action steps to meet those goals as well as targeted student outcomes that will demonstrate MLL success.





# CHARGE

A committed, diverse, and talented team of educators and members from local education agencies, universities, and community organizations contributed to the *Blueprint for MLL Success* workgroups. These individuals articulated the hopes, concerns, and aspirations of Rhode Island's community. The workgroups delved into research, analyzed data related to Rhode Island's MLLs, and developed the Blueprint to provide a framework for change. Districts and school communities are now charged with developing their own MLL improvement plans in alignment with Rhode Island's *Blueprint for MLL Success*.

# Acknowledgments

We thank the Region 2 Comprehensive Center for its support in facilitating the development of Rhode Island's *Blueprint for MLL Success* and would like to recognize the contributions of our *Blueprint for MLL Success* workgroups, which consisted of community stakeholders and staff at RIDE and PPSD.

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