



Lenay Dunn, Deputy Director, and John Rice, Director, REL West

Greetings!

In our previous newsletter, we discussed REL West's commitment to equity and shared some resources we've developed to help support educators who are committed to using evidence-based practices to increase equitable opportunities for all students. As part of this continued discussion, in this newsletter, we would like to share how REL West is collaborating with our REL colleagues in the other nine regions to develop resources on how educators can support Multilingual, Bilingual, and Heritage (MBH) language students to increase their opportunities and outcomes.

In this capacity, this REL collaboration:

- Takes an asset-oriented approach—that is, viewing students' bilingualism, multilingualism, and heritage literacy as assets instead of obstacles to overcome.
- Supports educators' use of high-quality research and evidence-based strategies to improve MBH language students' achievement.
- Establishes a framework for using research when working with states, districts, and schools to inform programmatic and policy decisions to improve learning environments for MBH language students and draw on their strengths.
- Supports interest-holders' use of high-quality research, data, and evidence to improve outcomes for MBH language students.

Some of our initial efforts were to work on redefining the terminology we use to describe MBH learners and understanding the systemic factors that contribute to MBH students' opportunities and outcomes. This is a relevant conversation, as data shows that one in four students in the U.S. speak more than one language.^[1] In fact, in 2023, the U.S. Department of Education launched a new initiative called "Being Bilingual is a Superpower" to promote multilingual education and bolster high-quality language programs and a diverse multilingual educator workforce across the country.^[2]

REL West and our colleagues are working to contribute to the body of research and evidence used to support MBH learners, increasing understanding and improving opportunities and outcomes for these students. To that end, we have recently developed two new resources that are intended to help educators further understand and reframe the conversation on how to support these students.

The first resource, [An Asset-Based Approach to Multilingual Learner Terminology](#), discusses how the terminology we use to describe and identify multilingual learners can help signal an asset-based approach that helps to ensure students' experiences are acknowledged, valued, and incorporated. The second resource, [Systemic Factors That Shape Multilingual Learners' Opportunities and Outcomes](#), discusses systemic factors that impact multilingual students and what school leaders can do to support multilingual students.

We invite you to explore these resources and share them with others who are interested in learning more about this work.

Sincerely,

John & Lenay

Partnership Spotlight

[Reducing Chronic Absence in Washoe County School District \(WCSD\) by Strengthening Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#)

As in other districts, attendance fell, and chronic absence spiked during the pandemic in Washoe County School District (WCSD). Students missing too much school continues to be a challenge, and is especially concerning for historically underserved groups, such as Hispanic students, American Indian students, and students experiencing homelessness. Regular school attendance is critical to learning and success in school.



REL West and WCSD are partnering to boost attendance by strengthening and expanding the use of student support interventions that reduce chronic absence. The partnership engages in applied research, technical assistance, and dissemination projects to better understand and strengthen implementation of interventions that

New Chronic Absence Resource

[Applying a Cycle of Evidence-Based Continuous Improvement When Selecting Interventions and Project Components to Improve Attendance](#)

As discussed in our partner spotlight above, many states, districts, and schools are developing strategies to reduce chronic absence and ensure students attend school regularly. While many proposed interventions and project components to reduce chronic absence and support attendance exist, it is important to view them within a cycle of evidence-based continuous improvement. This resource provides an overview and example of how districts can apply a cycle of continuous improvement when selecting attendance interventions or project components.



Information from the [Institute of Education Sciences](#)

[Click here](#) to explore a recent report on state and district practices aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) goals of appropriate identification of students birth–age 21.

IES recently released a new public access plan for publications and data sharing. [Click here](#) to learn what you need to know.

Have you explored the [IES Topic Pages](#)? Learn more about what IES is doing across the Centers on critical topics in education including English Learners, STEM, Literacy, Career and Technical Education, and Postsecondary Education.

More REL Resources

The following are recently released resources from our REL colleagues.

- [Framework for Equitable Opportunities to Learn in STEM](#) – REL Northeast and Islands
- [You Are Welcome: Creating Safe and Supportive Schools](#) (Documentary Film) – REL Midwest
- [How Educators Can Engage Kinship Caregivers and Grandfamilies](#) – REL Appalachia

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References

- [1] U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). *American Community Survey*.
- [2] <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-launches-%E2%80%9Cbeing-bilingual-superpower%E2%80%9D-promote-multilingual-education-diverse-workforce>

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