EDUCATION
A "NO EXCUSES" APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN MONTEREY COUNTY

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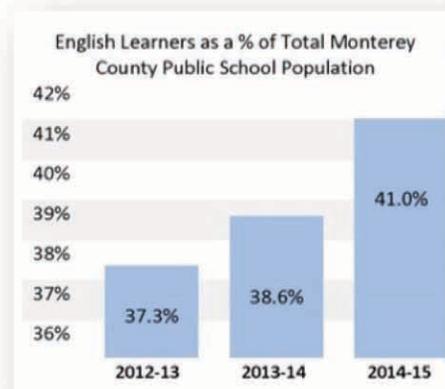
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SUMMARY

The low educational achievement of our youth has been a concern in Monterey County for many years. Results of Standardizing Testing and Reporting (STAR)[1] published annually by the California Department of Education continue to show that with very few exceptions Monterey County students are underperforming and are not reaching minimal academic levels established by the State of California.

By far the lowest academic performance in the County is found among the growing population of English Language Learners (ELL), who comprise more than 40% of the County's K-12 public school population. These students consistently under-achieve, as they struggle to acquire the English language skills that will enable them to succeed in regular classrooms. The improvements in performance by English Language Learners in Monterey County have been negligible for decades. The predictable result for these students has been school failure, chronic unemployment, and the likelihood of crime.

English Learners as a % of Total Monterey County Public School Population

Source: Monterey County Education Reports to the Community.

School districts in California operate autonomously for the most part, but they are assisted in a variety of ways by the County Offices of Education (COE). For example the COE are in the position to provide ELL professional development/training, mentorship, and services for their school districts that help create and support robust ELL programs. It was not evident to the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury (MCCGJ) that the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) has done all it can in the ELL area. To verify this conclusion, the MCCGJ met with administrators and staff members at MCOE, some school district administrators and board members in Monterey County who use MCOE services, and administrators at other County Offices of Education in the state whose standout leadership and passionate commitment to ELL success generate positive outcomes for their students.

Because our students' ability to learn English impacts not only their own academic and workplace futures but also the economic and social well-being of Monterey County, the MCCGJ focused its investigation on how MCOE can strengthen its role in helping school districts bring the

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[1] STAR was replaced by the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in January 2014.

County's 30,000 ELL students to a level of English proficiency that will give them the chance to be successful. Monterey County's English Language Learners will be among our future leaders, and we need to see that they get the education they deserve.

The challenges—poverty, parent illiteracy, number of diverse cultures and dialects, geographic spread of the County, lack of funding—are admittedly formidable, but clearly real improvement is possible. The time for excuses by MCOE, by the County Board of Education, by school districts, and by the citizens of Monterey County is past. We need a "no excuses," focused approach to English Language Learning in every school in our County.

BACKGROUND

Monterey County is divided into 24 independent K-12 school districts that include 134 schools serving 74,000 students. The districts are governed by locally elected school boards and administered by superintendents. School district sizes range from the largest with nearly 14,000 students to districts with only one school and just over 100 students.

Monterey County is an area of extreme cultural diversity that poses a significant challenge for public education. The California Department of Education reported that in March 2014 Monterey County had 30,608 ELL enrolled in the public K-12 school system. Ninety-five percent of these students are Spanish speaking, and many are not literate in their own language. In some districts the percent of ELL exceeds 85%. No Monterey County school district with an ELL population of over 30% has met the state's minimum Academic Performance Index (API) standard,[2] and such districts typically are also lacking all-important parent involvement as well as full awareness and participation by the local school boards in prioritizing English Language Learning.

BARRIERS TO ELL SUCCESS IN MONTEREY COUNTY

The MCCGJ was interested in why so many English Language Learners in our school districts are not meeting minimal levels of proficiency needed to succeed in school and work. Two measures—the state API Standard and the Federal Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) Report—show that schools and districts in Monterey County with significant numbers of ELL universally have not met established targets.[3]

The MCCGJ learned that in Monterey County the biggest barriers to English learning success are: (1) the large numbers of migrant and non-English speaking families, which can overwhelm a school district's ability to respond effectively; (2) the presence of all-Hispanic enclaves in the County (with primarily US-born individuals) in which families can live and work without the need to learn English; (3) lack of parent education and literacy; (4) poverty; and (5) the lack of basic life skills, life experiences and opportunities that poverty brings.

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[2] Until 2014, Monterey County used the state's Academic Performance Index (API) as a measure of academic performance and improvement, with a scoring range from 200–1000 and a statewide minimum target of 800. The CA Board of Education is developing a new measure that will replace API.
[3] The MCCGJ is limited by statute in its investigation of education to operational procedures, methods and systems. Explicitly prohibited are investigation of substantive policy concerns and curriculum.

Because a new state funding model that has expanded the autonomy of school districts prevents MCOE from being able to mandate specific ELL programs in school districts, it is even more important that the local school district leadership and the local community jointly desire positive outcomes. Competent local school boards must be elected and trained. The MCCGJ noted that current local school boards are not necessarily aware of the importance of ELL programs or the resources needed to overcome the barriers.

The investigation revealed other challenges to ELL success, such as the geographical spread of the County, lack of widespread communication among districts about successful strategies, inadequate access of students to computers (particularly at smaller schools with limited budgets), and lack of confidence by most districts interviewed in the support offered by the County's Office of Education. The MCCGJ found that although MCOE has an in-house ELL specialist position (currently vacant) and provides some limited ELL professional development activities for school districts, its support consists primarily of advisory services using a "fee for service" model when school districts request its assistance in the ELL arena.

RECENT CHANGES IMPACTING EDUCATION IN MONTEREY COUNTY

Common Core Standards: In 2013 California adopted new "Common Core State Standards" (CCSS) intended to develop and measure the higher order learning skills of understanding, applying, analyzing, and evaluating. Reaching these standards requires new methods of teaching and learning and is a special challenge for ELL, who struggle with the basics of language. New testing based on CCSS was administered for the first time in spring 2015. The testing was done on computers, another challenge for some school districts whose students—including ELL— have limited access to technology.

Local Control Funding: In 2014, following six years of budget cuts in California public schools, the state instituted a new school-funding model called Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Under this mandate each school district in the county is required to develop a Local Control Accountability Report (LCAP) that outlines its strategic plan of required resources and services that will serve the unique requirements of their students. Once the LCAP is prepared, approved by MCOE and submitted to the state, schools receive a base amount of funding. In addition, districts with high percentages of disadvantaged students receive supplemental funding. This funding model gives local school districts unprecedented control and great latitude in how they may use LCFF funding in improving student performance. Since many schools in Monterey County qualify for the supplemental funding, the new LCFF is an opportunity for "game-changing" strategic improvement for English Language Learners.

ROLE OF MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The educational hub in Monterey County is the Office of Education, which is run by an elected County Superintendent of Schools who reports to a five-member elected Board of Education. Like other California COE, MCOE performs a variety of state-mandated compliance and other functions under the direction of the California State Superintendent of Schools, including:

- Providing assistance to districts and schools with the implementation of statewide legislative mandates and programs;

- Exercising AB-1200 statutory oversight of school district fiscal operations including approval of districts' annual budgets;
- Offering support services to the districts that include credentialing, professional development, teacher recruitment, and instructional services;
- Administering separate educational programs for special student populations;
- Monitoring and reporting on all aspects of low performing schools; and
- Ensuring school district compliance in a variety of areas.

ROLE OF MONTEREY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Monterey County Board of Education oversees the Monterey County Superintendent of Schools in establishing the direction and priorities for the County Office of Education through its budgetary determinations and leadership to support the success of public education. A primary responsibility of the Board of Education is to approve the curriculum and maintain accountability for student learning and safety in schools and programs operated by the County Office of Education.

> *When students fail to learn English they typically show poor academic performance and low self-esteem that, unfortunately, may lead to gang activity. And educational staff member noted, "These are the students who predictably end up in our jails."*

Education Code Section 1040 requires the County Board of Education to adopt rules for its own governance and keep a record of its proceedings, approve annual budgets of the Superintendent of Schools and review the report of the annual audit. Because the Board of Education has been granted fiscal independence by the Board of Supervisors (BOS), the annual budgets do not need BOS review. The Board of Education also has a statutory duty to hold appeal hearings for students expelled by local school districts. Additionally the Board may adopt rules governing the administration of the COE and perform other non-mandated duties.

INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY

The investigation of ELL student success involved multiple avenues of inquiry including:

- Interviews:
    -- Monterey County Superintendent of Schools
    -- A Monterey County Board of Education member
    -- MCOE department and administrative staff members
    -- Monterey County school district administrators
    -- Monterey County school district board members
    -- County Office of Education superintendents in other California counties
- Evaluation:
    -- MCOE Curriculum Leadership meeting
    -- Monterey County Leadership Summit agenda
    -- MCOE website

- Research and Review:
  - -- *Performance levels* of all Monterey County school districts, including overall API scores, ELL API scores, and ELL Proficiency levels in English and mathematics, using California Office of Education databank, DataQuest (Refer to Glossary)
  - -- *Best practices* in teaching and learning for English Language Learners (Appendix A)
  - -- *Budgets* for selected schools and MCOE departments and administrative offices
  - -- *English Learner Master Plans* of selected school districts

DISCUSSION

Despite the tireless efforts of many teachers and school administrators throughout Monterey County, individual school districts have produced uneven ELL achievement results. The MCCGJ was able to identify selected districts making good progress in ELL education and other districts having high percentages of students who never achieve English proficiency throughout their 11-year tenure in the educational system (classified as a long-term English learners). These disparate results are a product of the strategies, resources, and determination of local districts working on their own. There seems to be very little collaboration and sharing of ideas, resources, and strategies among Monterey County school districts. The one common factor for all, however, is the Monterey County Office of Education, which is in a unique position to foster relationships that can benefit **all** English Language Learners and not just those who are lucky enough to be enrolled in the right districts.

The following discussion will address four topics: (1) Rigorous Academic Standards and Performance Accountability, (2) Communication Portal for Countywide Schools and Districts, (3) Professional Development/Training in English Language Learning, and (4) MCOE Organizational Support for ELL Services. These are areas in which MCOE can provide support to individual school districts and bring consistency to their efforts. Each area describes what is currently being done at the Monterey County Office of Education and can be done to further support the English Language Learner in our County.

Rigorous Academic Standards and Performance Accountability

Monterey County's ELL performance levels are discouraging for our community. By third grade, only 19% of ELL students who start in kindergarten in Monterey County schools reach the English proficiency that is needed to participate in academic work in English.[4] The other 81% of English Language Learners (long-term English learners) lag behind their classmates and many never reach English proficiency throughout their time in school. A former County Su-

% of English Learners Achieving the State Target Levels for English Proficiency in Grade 3					
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Monterey County	16%	15%	21%	21%	19%
California	21%	20%	26%	24%	23%

Source: California Department of Education, DataQuest, CELDT Annual Assessment.

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4   See 2014-2015 Monterey County Office of Education "Report to the Community," p. 5.

perintendent commented, "If children haven't learned English by third grade, we know they're in trouble…and it's our fault." When students fail to learn English, they typically show poor academic performance and low self-esteem that, unfortunately, may lead to gang activity. An educational staff member noted, "These are the students who predictably end up in our jails."

The following discussion outlines how the development of strategies that focus on standards, accountability, and best practices can help focus learning achievement for the English Language Learner.

LCAPs that Incorporate ELL Standards and Strategies

The newly state mandated Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) developed by local school districts are so far producing uneven results regarding ELL academic achievement in Monterey County school districts. Because the California Department of Education has yet to establish firm standards for these plans, the County Offices of Education—including MCOE—have the freedom to work with their school districts to develop and implement their own countywide standards that go beyond mere compliance. Some COE have already done this, but MCOE has not. MCOE administrators have also expressed an interest in developing ELL resources for countywide use; however, to date this has not been accomplished.

The COE interviewed by the MCCGJ all provide major guidance and support to districts in developing their LCAP, sending teams to the school districts in advance and helping districts include ELL best practices in their plans. Their help goes far beyond the required compliance role of reviewing and approving district LCAP before they are submitted to the state for funding. These COE promote the practice of using the LCAP as a district's working strategic plan and of using the LCAP to define a district's professional development needs and practices.

English Proficiency Standards and Measurement

Several interviewees noted the importance of using frequent assessment to know immediately when a child is ready to transition to a regular classroom. The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) identifies students who are English Language Learners and determines their level of proficiency and progress. Based on results from the CELDT and other measures, students may be reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) and thus allowed to move to classes delivered in English only. Students who are assessed for their English learning progress only once a year may miss a window of opportunity to be placed in a regular classroom. Ongoing assessment of ELL students is time-consuming and costly for a district, but it clearly pays dividends in student advancement.

ELL Best Practices

The MCCGJ identified many state and national best practices (see Appendix A) that have been tested to show that they are creating positive outcomes for ELL students. Some school districts are using these. The MCCGJ also identified several local districts that have "pockets of educational excellence" where a top-down commitment that originates with the school district superintendent or a school principal is leading innovative strategies and better ELL outcomes. There is

an important role for MCOE to play in regularly disseminating this information and sharing successful strategies countywide.

A commitment that reaches down to every level to provide a consistent, determined, "no excuses" approach to English Language Learning was cited by most interviewees as vital to ELL success. Monterey County school districts with this dedication stand apart in key ways. For example, their school boards have supported the district superintendent in prioritizing English language professional development for all content area teachers who have transitional English learners in their classes, not just for those who teach ELL classes. Some have looked outside Monterey County to find and emulate proven English language programs, and some bring experts from throughout California to work with their teachers. (One administrator took carloads of the district's board members, administrators and teachers to sit in classrooms of a school in another county known for notable English learning success.)

These districts hold themselves accountable to the goals in their Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP). They also benchmark their performance against proven successes elsewhere in California. Some districts with the largest ELL populations emphasize the hiring of teachers primarily from the local community, so they can more successfully engage non-English speaking families in their children's education.

Although the MCCGJ's confidentiality mandate prevents listing which districts, schools and personnel were interviewed, we have used observations and information from interviews as well as research in the field to compile a list of ELL "evidence-based"[5] best practices mentioned above (see Appendix A), including some that school districts would like to use if funding permitted or if MCOE were able to negotiate group discounts with publishers of desired ELL curricula. Other less formal but successful practices that surfaced in the investigation included hiring language coaches to develop daily individualized lesson plans based on a student's level of comprehension of a particular class topic the day before, or having teachers speak only English to children before and after school, at lunch, and on the playground.

COMMUNICATION PORTAL FOR COUNTYWIDE SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

The Monterey County Office of Education is located in Salinas, California and serves all public schools within its 3,771 square mile service area. Given this geographically extensive area, communication to all districts is a challenge. School districts located closer to the county office seem to be more connected than those located in the southern, most rural parts of the county.

"Communication is our lifeblood," noted one County Office of Education Superintendent whose highest priority is to listen to what the school districts need and find ways to support those needs. Several strategies were noted that fostered two-way communication throughout the various counties in the state that included: (1) using a bottom-up approach for frequent meetings with the school districts where the districts set the agenda, and lead and conduct the meetings; (2) offering a robust website that highlights best practices, grant opportunities, and professional development activities; (3) working closely with each school district in developing Local Control Accountabil-

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[5]   Evidence-based practices are those that have evolved from the conscientious use of best evidence from systematic research using sound methodology.

ity Plans that incorporate sound, evidence-based strategies for ELL success; and (4) providing opportunities for all stakeholders (i.e. teachers, administrators, parents, staff members, students, board and community members) throughout the county to gather and share their ELL experiences.

Bottom-up Communication Approach

There was no evidence to suggest that MCOE encourages bottom-up communication to listen and learn about the needs of local English Language Learning programs from frontline educators and administrators. MCOE seems to use a top-down communication approach that is effective when dealing with their primary, mandated focus on state compliance issues but does little to bring area school districts together to share efforts on effective ELL strategies.

Where other successful county offices of education have regular, school district-led functional area meetings (administrative staff, teaching coaches, financial, etc.) as a norm, frequent meetings specifically focused on English Language Learning could not be identified in Monterey County. MCOE does bring senior district administrators together on a regular basis; however, the main focus of these meetings is on state compliance and reporting issues. The newly launched Curriculum Leadership meeting offered by the MCOE Educational Services Department shows some promise in sharing best practices. These meetings, although currently infrequent, are hosted at different County schools where administrators learn about new programs and strategies offered in their districts.

In other counties interviewed it was found that ELL specialists typically work closely with the school districts to develop their internal ELL plans by sharing ELL best practices and facilitating working groups with curriculum and instruction. In Monterey County, individual schools and districts can request ELL consulting services that are provided by an MCOE specialist for a fee. It appears that there is no proactive diagnostic approach to soliciting input about the ELL needs of school districts that provides opportunities for County districts to share, engage, empower, and partner to leverage limited resources.

Website

The MCOE website contains a quantity of information but lacks any English Language Learner resources or best practices that could be accessed by school districts. The districts seem to be "on their own" to locate and fund resources that can assist their ELL programs.

Development of Local Control Accountability Plan

MCOE provides a series of workshops for school districts in developing Local Control Accountability Plans that include a plan for English Language Learning. The focus of these workshops seems to be the compliance requirements of the report (i.e. inclusion of mandated sections, necessary wording, etc.), and not necessarily effective strategies. The MCCGJ found no evidence that MCOE works closely with individual districts to discuss viable plans that could best serve their English learner populations. This is especially true for districts located in the southern, most rural portions of the County where access to MCOE services is severely limited.

Stakeholder Opportunities to Share ELL Experiences

There was no evidence to suggest that MCOE provides opportunities for stakeholders (school boards, parents, students, staff, community members, etc.) of the County to share their experiences with ELL education. It is widely recognized that these ELL support groups cannot be effective if they don't know or understand what they can contribute. The Monterey County Board of Education offered a Leadership Summit for the first time in 2014 addressing stakeholder concerns; however, English Language Learning was not included on the agenda.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Virtually all Monterey district school administrators interviewed noted that the most critical component to the success of the English Language Learner is a passionate and well-trained teacher who sets high expectations for all students. In addition, the various stakeholders that influence and support the English Language Learner—including parents, administrators, school staff members, community members and school board members—must work in tandem with these teachers toward achieving the common goal of ELL success. Given the changes in education and the challenges our English learners face, it is imperative that all these educational players are knowledgeable and continually informed.

The MCOE Educational Services Department is tasked with providing professional development opportunities throughout the County. The following discussion will address what is needed to assure that our teachers and school stakeholders are provided quality, timely, accessible, and affordable professional development opportunities to support their English Language Learners.

Quality Learning Experiences

The workshops, trainings and special programs offered by MCOE are often not well subscribed. A repeated theme from the districts interviewed was that they were less interested in attending a workshop given by an MCOE staff person than hearing about proven strategies from outside experts with documented success.

Timing/Scheduling of Training

All the COE interviewed by the MCCGJ plan their professional development calendars a year in advance, modifying offerings as needed by the districts. This gives teachers time to plan their schedules. Very few ELL training workshops have been scheduled at MCOE over the past year, and the workshop schedule appears to be developed one month at a time.

Accessibility

Given the vast service area of the MCOE, it is very difficult for schools in southern parts of the County to take advantage of trainings, since most are offered at the Salinas location. Even when distance is not a factor, pulling teachers out of class and paying for substitutes is a costly and far from ideal solution for large-scale professional development. Asking teachers to attend training in the evenings or on weekends is equally unsatisfactory. For these reasons, some successful COE have adopted alternative venues such as online training to provide professional develop-

ment services. One County Superintendent refused to close a critically important technology program that lost its state grant funding and continues to support this online program with COE general funds. "We would be hard pressed to provide the rich support we do without it," he said.

MCOE does not offer online professional development programs nor does it offer any other alternative delivery systems other than the traditional, face-to-face method.

Affordability

For most districts, the cost of MCOE-hosted workshops was less a deterrent to attending than the questionable quality of the offerings. On the other hand, bringing in high quality experts in the field was expensive for individual school districts. Hosting educational experts of proven, evidenced-based ELL methods and programs on a countywide basis could help districts reduce professional development costs and provide the quality that's needed in this ever-changing field.

Stakeholder Training

Finally, all stakeholders in the ELL environment need training and the opportunity to share best practices. One county hosts an ELL summit every year that is well attended by all county stakeholders, giving them a venue to learn how to become an effective support to the English Language Learner. Although there are agencies in Monterey County that provide training workshops for stakeholders such as school boards and parents, the MCCGJ could not determine that any provide information about their roles in the ELL process.

MCOE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ELL SERVICES

One of the challenges to ELL success in Monterey County may stem from the organization of the Monterey Office of Education itself. MCOE is an exceptionally large bureaucracy that is responsible for running or supporting many programs and services throughout the County, only one of which is English Language Learning. It is understandably easy to lose focus on any one of the many educational needs; however the following discussion identifies five areas of focus for MCOE that can make a difference in ELL education.

English Language Specialist

Although MCOE content specialists (e.g., those with focused knowledge and expertise in an educational area such as math and English) have a minor responsibility in ELL teaching and learning, there is one specified position for an ELL Specialist, which is currently vacant. This position is vital for MCOE to fulfill its role in providing leadership, offering professional development, and facilitating communication to develop partnerships with the 24 school districts. Without the focus this position can bring to the table, problem solving and the development of strategies that involve all the stakeholders known to impact ELL success cannot be realized.

Budget Support

A comprehensive job description for the ELL Specialist position has been developed at MCOE; however, there is no operational budget beyond salary for the activities in the job description.

Lacking one or more consistent and well-funded ELL Specialist(s) at the County level results in school districts having no specific support, access to expert resources, or ELL mentorship.

Grant Writing

The most successful COE actively seek outside sources of funding for important programs that benefit the school districts, and their grant writers regularly advise and assist school districts in competing for their own grants. Local school districts in Monterey County also have a significant need for grants assistance to identify and be competitive for outside funding for unfunded critical needs such as technology, textbooks and teaching materials for Common Core, the purchase of ELL "best practice" curricula, expert ELL consulting assistance, or special programs for English learners. Current administrators at MCOE provide limited help with grants as time permits, but no professional grant writer(s) is on staff to offer expertise, guidance and support. The MCCGJ did not gain the impression that this is a priority for MCOE.

Leveraging Resources

Another MCOE staff function that potentially could make an inestimable difference to school districts is the brokering of group discounts with publishers for ELL "best-practice" curricula and resources. Few school districts in the County have been able to afford expensive evidence-based ELL programs and curricula, even though these have demonstrated success for English learners. A proactive approach by MCOE might identify opportunities to secure proven resources for interested districts at affordable rates.

Organization Audit

Under the new Local Control Funding model, the scope of services that explicitly fall to County Offices of Education has been reduced as some of these responsibilities have passed to local school districts. An organizational audit by MCOE would determine optimal staffing levels at the County office that reflects this new scope of services. An audit might find that there is a greater need for staffing in the areas above than in previously needed areas.

LOOKING AHEAD

The MCCGJ believes that the Monterey County Office of Education can play a more effective leadership role in fostering two-way communication with school districts, developing a mechanism to share best practices, shaping ELL training and services around the expressed needs of the school districts, regularly bringing in veteran outside experts as resources, looking for economies of scale and partnering with districts to seek solutions that can best be implemented on a county-wide basis, finding ways to encourage local school board member training, providing extra support to small districts, helping districts engage parents and other stakeholders, and other measures.

With the recent changes in school funding, academic standards, standardized testing, and school accountability, Monterey County Office of Education has a window of opportunity to make the

most of these changes to meet the challenge and give English Language Learners the tools to lead productive lives.

The findings that follow highlight the current state and challenges of educating English Language Learners in Monterey County. The recommendations outlined below offer some concrete steps that can be taken now to ensure that these students are not forgotten.

FINDINGS

F1.   English Language Learners (ELL) in Monterey County perform far below the minimal academic standards established by the state and continue to be unprepared for college or the workplace, largely due to inadequate progress in learning English.

F2.   Monterey County school districts have developed local control accountability plans (LCAP) that are producing uneven results in ELL academic achievement.

F3.   The training and support MCOE offers to school districts in development of their LCAP centers primarily on achieving compliance with state requirements and does not include working together to create quality standards or ELL strategies that can produce positive results.

F4.   There is an important role for MCOE to play in regularly disseminating ELL best practices and sharing successful ELL strategies countywide.

F5.   There was no evidence to suggest that MCOE promotes two-way communication and a partnership approach with school districts that encourages sharing of information and resources or that solicits frank input about the needs of local English Language Learning programs from frontline educators and administrators.

F6.   Although the MCOE website contains a variety of information, it is completely lacking in English Language Learner resources and best practices.

F7.   There was no evidence to suggest that MCOE or any other professional organization provides opportunities for stakeholders (school boards, parents, students, staff, community members, etc.) to learn about their role and responsibilities in supporting the English Language Learner.

F8.   The workshops, trainings and special programs offered by MCOE are often not well subscribed by school districts.

F9.   The relatively few ELL professional development trainings that are offered by MCOE do not appear to be scheduled well enough in advance to allow for planning by school district personnel.

F10.   It is very difficult for schools in southern parts of the county to take advantage of MCOE trainings, since most are offered at the Salinas location.

F11.   MCOE does not offer online professional development programs/training or significant other alternative delivery systems to increase accessibility and participation.

F12. Quality professional development provided by experienced ELL experts (generally not MCOE staff) and focused on proven evidenced-based methods was identified as a need by County school districts.

F13. MCOE has one specified position for an ELL Specialist that is currently vacant.

F14. There is no operational budget beyond salary for the activities listed in the MCOE ELL Specialist job description.

F15. No professional grant writer(s) is on staff at MCOE to offer expertise, guidance and support to school districts**.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

All the following recommendations are for action by Monterey County Office of Education, under the direction of the Monterey County Board of Education:

R1. Work with school districts to create a set of ELL standards for use or reference in the development of districts' LCAP, to make it easier for them to set and achieve ELL goals.

R2. Act as a resource for small school districts located in rural, distant areas of South Monterey County in meeting and exploring how they can work together to make most efficient use of shared ELL and other resources.

R3. Establish a satellite office in South Monterey County to increase accessibility and communication of County programs and services by September 2016.

R4. Take on the role of compiling and disseminating successful ELL practices and performance measurements around the County.

R5. Publish best practices and resources for all ELL stakeholder groups on the MCOE or other dedicated website by September 2016.

R6. Establish the regular practice of offering forums that bring together school district ELL personnel with their counterparts at other districts, so they can share information, explore solutions to similar problems, and share strategies and practices by January 2016.

R7. Sponsor and facilitate an annual stakeholder (i.e. representative parents, boards, students, administrators, support staff, etc.) "Summit" to help each group define its roles and responsibilities that influence the English Language Learning process starting in September 2016.

R8. Adopt or develop an online program of professional development workshops to increase access for teachers unable to attend on-site classroom training by June 2017.

R9. Begin a regular practice of soliciting input from all County school districts to determine professional development needs as a basis for creating an annual calendar of ELL educational services, workshops, and activities by September 2015.

R10. Make a commitment to bring the best evidence-based state and national programs and expert speakers on English Language Learning for County professional development activities.

R11. Immediately fill the English Language Learning specialist position that has been recently vacated.

R12. Establish an operational budget for the MCOE English Language Learning specialist to carry out the full scope of duties that support professional development, open communication and cooperation among all County school districts by September 2015.

R13. Hire a full-time grant writer to consistently identify grant opportunities and develop grant applications to raise additional funds in support of district ELL programs.

R14. Benchmark and evaluate County ELL practices and services against practices used by other COEs that are successfully serving ELL stakeholders beyond state compliance requirements.

R15. Perform an organizational audit to determine optimal staffing levels at the Monterey County Office of Education that reflects the diminished scope of required COE services provided under the new Local Control Funding model.

RESPONSES REQUIRED

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury requests responses to all Findings and Recommendations from the following governing bodies:

- Monterey County Office of Education
- Monterey County Board of Education

GLOSSARY

Academic Performance Index (API): A measurement of academic performance and improvement of individual schools in California. API scores ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. The statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. API has been discontinued as of March 2014.

Academic Yearly Progress (AYP): Part of the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act, AYP indicates whether a school or district has improved a required amount each year, as defined by the California Department of Education. An important component of AYP is the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency levels in English and Math.

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP): Established on January 1, 2014, the CAASPP System replaced the prior Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, which became inoperative on July 1, 2013. CAASPP will focus on achievement using newly adopted Common Core Standards.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT): a test administered to any student from grades K-12 who has a *home language* other than English. The CELDT identifies students who are English learners, determines their level of English proficiency, and assesses their progress toward acquiring English proficiency.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school.

DataQuest: A data portal hosted by the CA Department of Education that provides reports about California's schools and school districts. Data are presented for easy comparison among schools, districts and counties and includes information about school performance indicators, student and staff demographics, expulsion, suspension, truancy and a variety of test results.

English Language Learner (ELL): a person who is learning the English language in addition to his or her native language.

Fluent English Proficient (FEP): Students who are fluent English proficient are those whose primary language is other than English and who have met the district criteria for determining proficiency in English.

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF): The LCFF budget package replaces the previous K-12 finance system with a new funding formula. For school districts and charter schools, the LCFF creates base, supplemental, and concentration grants. For county offices of education (COE), the LCFF creates separate funding streams for oversight activities and instructional programs. A supplemental grant equal to 20% of the adjusted base grant is targeted to disadvantaged students. Targeted students are those classified as English Language Learners (ELL), students eligible to receive a free or reduced-price meal, foster youth, or any combination of these factors (unduplicated count).

Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP): A critical part of the new LCFF, the LCAP is a mandated annual strategic plan prepared by each district in California to set forth the district's vision for students, goals and specific actions to achieve the goals. Eight required priority areas include (1) implementation of Common Core State Standards; (2) improving student achievement

and outcomes along multiple measures (including test scores, English proficiency and college and career preparedness) and six other priority areas. Districts must engage parents, educators, employees and the community to establish these yearly plans, which must be accepted before LCFF funding is released to the district.

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR): Each spring, students in grades two through eleven take a STAR test, which measures how well schools and students are performing in math, reading, writing, science, and history. In 2014 STAR was replaced with California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

APPENDIX A: BEST PRACTICES
FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Note: The list below is a representative sample of best practices and resources in English Language Learning used locally, statewide, and throughout the nation.

CPIN - Preschool English Learners Guide
http://cpin.us/content/pel-guide-training

This is a series of modules offered by the California Preschool Instructional Network that focus on instructional strategies for preschool English learners.

Dual Language Immersion Programs
http://sites.uci.edu/bilingualteacher/dual-immersion-schools/

Dual language immersion programs, specifically two-way immersion programs, are designed for students, native and non-native speakers of English, to learn two languages; one language does not replace the other. The main goals for these programs are for students to achieve strong levels of academic proficiency in both languages and to value cultural diversity. In well-implemented programs, both native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language tend to do as well or better in English, the partner language, and tests of academic achievement than their peers in other educational programs.

Engaging ELL Families
http://www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/guides/Engaging-ELL-Families.pdf

This guide outlines how school districts can create a culture of success within their school community to make ELL success a priority. An important aspect of ELL success is family engagement that can only work if all members of the community (including administrators, staff, parents and students) are committed to the broader mission.

Engaging Stakeholders
http://www2.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/stakeholderlores.pdf

This brief focuses on how schools, districts, or states can plan for active parent and community involvement that can sustain student success in reading. The emphasis is on stakeholder engagement where a stakeholder is defined as an individual or group with an interest in the success of an organization in fulfilling its mission—delivering intended results and maintaining the viability of its products, services and outcomes over time.

GLAD Project - Guided Language Acquisition Design
http://projectglad.com/

Project GLAD® is a model of professional development in the area of language acquisition and literacy. The strategies and model promote English language acquisition, academic achievement, and cross-cultural skills. Project GLAD® was developed and field tested for nine years by the United States Department of Education and is based on years of experience with integrated approaches for teaching language. Tied to the Common Core Standards and State Standards, the model trains teachers to provide access to core curriculum using local district guidelines and curriculum.

Key Principles for Managing ELL Instruction
http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Key%20Principles%20for%20ELL%20Instruction%20with%20references_0.pdf

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) require that English Language Learners (ELL) meet rigorous, grade level academic standards. This paper provides a list of principles that are meant to guide teachers, coaches, ELL specialists, curriculum leaders, school principals, and district administrators as they work to develop CCSS-aligned instruction for ELL students. These principles are applicable to any type of instruction regardless of grade, proficiency level, or program type.

Read 180
http://www.intensiveintervention.org/chart/instructional-intervention-tools/12870

READ 180 is a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development to raise reading achievement of struggling readers. READ 180 is intended for use in grades four through high school. The program is designed for students with disabilities (particularly behavioral disabilities), English Language Learners, and any student at risk of academic failure. The academic areas of focus are reading (including phonological awareness, phonics/word study, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and spelling) and handwriting (including spelling, sentence construction, and planning and revising). READ 180 is currently used in all 50 states and in over 40,000 classrooms.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)
Helping Educators Working Effectively with English Language Learners
http://www.cal.org/siop/

The SIOP Model* is a research-based and validated model of sheltered instruction that has been widely and successfully used across the U.S. for over 15 years. Professional development in the SIOP Model helps teachers plan and deliver lessons that allow English learners to acquire academic knowledge as they develop English language proficiency.

Strategies for English Language Learners K-12
http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collection/strategies-english-language-learners

This site contains a series of articles to help educators reach ELL from early childhood through high school. While there are different methods for teaching English as a second language, the one constant is the knowledge of how empowering it will be when students can communicate effectively in English. Students are acutely aware of the handicaps involved with not having English language skills in school, in their communities, and for their future educational and career goals. The English Language Learner is your greatest ally in the effort to teach.

In the Starlight: Research and Resources for English Language Learner Achievement
http://www.vcoe.org/Portals/VcssoPortals/cici/In%20The%20Starlight.pdf

This paper prepared by Martha Hall, Superintendent of Schools in San Bernardino County, provides research and resources that provide a framework for promoting sustained reading development for English Language Learners.