Action Steps: Identifying Multilingual Learners

Every local education agency (i.e., school and district) should assess the steps it takes to identify and assess potential MLs. The following action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 182), are intended for this purpose. These questions can guide a review of school and district Multilingual Learner [ML] identification procedures and policies.

What steps have we taken to ensure timely, valid, and reliable identification/assessment of potential MLs and notification of families of ML identification?	
What might we do to strengthen those steps?	
What documents, forms, and protocols are we using?	
What professional readings or school/district documents on this topic should be included?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address, such as providing interpreters when needed? (Please see Communicating with Multilingual Families for more ideas).	

What additional questions should we ask about our identification process?	
What type of professional growth do we need about identifying all our MLs?	

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Action Steps: Language Assistance Programs

Every local education agency (i.e., school and district) should assess the effectiveness of its language assistance programming for MLs. The assessment should draw from the three prongs of the *Castañeda v. Pickard* ruling. These action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 184), are intended for this purpose. These questions can guide a review of a school or district language assistance program.

What steps have we taken to ensure that we are providing MLs with language assistance programming that is educationally sound and proven successful, consistent with the *Castañeda v. Pickard* ruling?	
What might we do to strengthen those steps?	
What is the evidence-based research that our language assistance program is educationally sound and proven to work?	
What documents, forms, and protocols are we using to demonstrate that we are providing educationally sound and successful language assistance programming?	

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What professional readings or school/district documents on this topic should be included?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	
What additional questions should we ask about our language assistance programming for MLs?	
What type of professional growth do we need about analyzing the success of our language assistance programming for MLs?	

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Staffing and Staff Preparation for MLs: Annual Survey

We welcome learning as much as we can about the prior preparation of our school/district educators so that our professional learning opportunities are tailored to meet the needs of our multilingual learners. Please complete the following survey, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 186), for this purpose. Thank you!

Name:

Role:

School:

Date:

Please list prior professional development sessions or formal courses taken in multilingual education.	
Number of PD or Formal Education Hours Earned	
Do you possess an advanced Degree in Multilingual Education? If yes, please list the degree earned.	
What topics would you like included in our professional growth activities so that it strengthens your preparedness working with MLs?	

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Action Steps: Meaningful Participation in Activities

Every local education agency (i.e., school and district) should review state agency obligations related to student participation in school activities. The following list of action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 190), is intended to guide schools and districts as they ensure that MLs have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in the same curricular and extra-curricular activities (before-, during-, and after-school) and local activities as their English-fluent peers, both in and out of school.

What steps have we taken to ensure MLs' participation in school activities?	
What might we do to strengthen those steps?	
What are we doing to ensure that MLs have agency in creating or suggesting new activities?	
What steps are being taken to communicate these opportunities with multilingual families?	
What documents, forms, and protocols are we using?	

What professional readings or school/district documents on this topic should be included?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	
What additional questions should we ask about ML participation in school activities?	
What type of professional growth do we need to ensure ML participation in school activities?	

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Action Steps: Assessing Unnecessary Segregation of MLs

Every local education agency (i.e., school and district) should review their practices in order to ensure that MLs are not unnecessarily segregated in school settings. The following action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 192), are intended to support this type of review and strengthen language assistance programming.
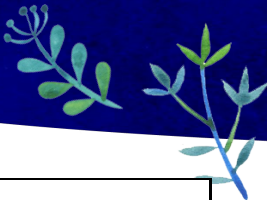
What steps are being taken to avoid unnecessary segregation of MLs?	
What might we do to strengthen those steps?	
What documents, forms, and protocols are we using?	
What professional readings or school/district documents on this topic should be included?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	

What additional questions should we ask about avoiding unnecessary segregation?	
What type of professional growth do we need about avoiding unnecessary segregation?	

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Analysis of ML Population & Special Education Referrals

The following action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 166-167), are intended to help schools and districts in assessing the identification of and services for MLs with learning disabilities.

Total **number** of identified MLs in the school	
Total **number** of MLs who were referred during this school year for a special education evaluation in the school	
Total **percentage** of MLs referred for a special education evaluation during this school year	
Is the proportion of MLs who have been **referred** the same as the proportion of the general population of students who have been referred?	
If no, what is the difference noted?	
Is the proportion of MLs who have been **identified** as having disabilities the same as the proportion of the general population of students who have been identified?	
If no, describe the differences.	
Are there commonalities among the languages spoken by MLs and the reasons for referral or diagnosis of disability?	
If yes, what is the commonality?	

Action Steps: Reasons for ML Special Education Referrals

The reasons, by total number of occurrences, that MLs were referred for a special education evaluation this year follow below.

_____ Autism

_____ Cognitive Disability

_____ Deaf-Blindness

_____ Deafness

_____ Emotional Disturbance

_____ Hearing Impairment

_____ Multiple Disabilities

_____ Orthopedic Impairment

_____ Other Health Impairment, Including ADHD

_____ Specific Learning Disability

_____ Speech/Language Impairment

_____ Traumatic Brain Injury

_____ Visual Impairment, Including Blindness

The most common reason that MLs were referred for a special education evaluation this year is:	
Anecdotally, describe any additional commonalities among the MLs who were referred (e.g., interrupted formal education).	

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Action Steps: Staffing and Assessments for MLs with Disabilities

Teachers and Specialists	
Have assessors received instruction and ongoing professional learning in second language acquisition and linguistic and cultural diversity?	
If no, what steps will ensure that evaluators — including school psychologists, speech and language therapists, and special education staff — are being equipped with the appropriate theory, research, and techniques?	
Assessments	
Do the assessments used to identify MLs with disabilities make use of relevant and actual behaviors in classroom contexts?	
Are assessments provided in the students' home language(s) by staff who have been trained in second language acquisition and practices for teaching MLs?	
If no, what steps will ensure that staff are trained?	

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Action Steps: Identifying and Serving MLs with Learning Disabilities

What steps are we providing to ensure that the language assistance programming for MLs as a whole is effective and follows the *Castañeda v. Pickard** federal regulations? *Language assistance programming for MLs must be based on sound educational research, implemented with adequate commitment and resources, and evaluated and proved to be effective.	
What interventions, including Multi-tiered Systems of Support [MTSS], are we providing in the language assistance instructional program** that are effective for MLs who appear to struggle academically and socially-emotionally? **This includes general education and English language development instruction for MLs.	
How are we partnering with families, understanding their perspective, and communicating effectively to support their child's success? What role does communicating, interpreting, and partnering play in our work together? Note: Please refer to a federal lawsuit that was filed showing a lack of involvement with families around special education.	

What steps are we providing to ensure that MLs who have or are suspected of having a disability are identified and evaluated in a timely manner?	
What steps are we taking to ensure that the language needs of MLs who need special education and disability-related services are considered in evaluations and delivery of services?	
What professional growth readings should be included to support our understanding about the differences and distinctions between MLs with learning differences and disabilities, including students with limited and interrupted formal education and those who have experienced trauma?	
What additional questions should we ask about our identification process of MLs with learning differences and disabilities?	
What resources and tools are we using to demonstrate the steps we are taking?	
How might we strengthen what we are doing?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations should we address?	

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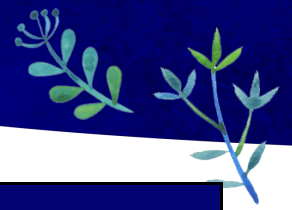
Action Steps: How Many Students Are Opting Out?

To use the following tool, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 69), fill out the number of students in each grade who are opting out of language assistance services based on their primary language. Compiling data in this way can help identify trends among language groups, as well as by grade level.

Language	PreK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

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Action Steps: Meeting the Needs of MLs Who Opt Out of Language Education Services

It is helpful for a school- and/or district-based team of teachers, administrators, and specialists to periodically review and analyze the learning needs of the MLs whose parents opted their children out of language education services. The following list of action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 196), is intended for this purpose.

What steps are we using to meet the needs of MLs who opt out of language assistance programming?	
What might we do to strengthen those steps?	
What documents, forms, and protocols are we using?	
What professional readings or school/district documents on this topic should be included?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	

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What professional development do we need to effectively identify and work with all our MLs, including those whose parents or guardians have opted out of the language education program?	
What additional questions should we ask to meet the needs of MLs who have opted out of language assistance programming that we have not yet included?	

Before families opt out of language education services, how do we ensure that families understand:

● Their child's rights to these services	
● The benefits of language education services	
● How to follow their child's progress	
● The language education services their child is entitled to receive	
● Their right to opt back into these services	

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Action Steps: Monitoring MLs' English and Content Acquisition for Successful Transition from Language Assistance Programs

This list of action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 193), is intended to support schools and districts in monitoring and evaluating MLs' English and grade-level content growth and successful transition from language education programming.

What steps are we using to monitor and evaluate MLs in language assistance programs to: • Ensure their progress in acquiring English proficiency and grade-level content knowledge; • Exit ML students from language assistance programs when they are proficient in English; and • Monitor exited students to ensure they were not prematurely exited and that any academic deficits incurred in the language assistance program have been remedied?	
What resources are we using to demonstrate each ML's acquisition of English and grade-level content and successful transition out of our language assistance programming?	
How might we strengthen what we are doing and better ensure MLs' smooth and successful transition out of that language assistance programming?	

What additional questions should we ask about students' success in our language assistance programming and their successful transition from these programs that we have not yet considered?	
What district documents should be included?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	
What type of professional growth do we need to support staff understanding about the ways we monitor and evaluate MLs in language assistance programs and successful transition out of the programming?	

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Action Steps: Monitoring and Evaluating Language Assistance Programming

The following list of action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 200), is intended to support us in monitoring and evaluating MLs' English and grade-level content growth and successful transition from language education programming.

What steps are being taken to evaluate the effectiveness of our language assistance programming to ensure that: • MLs acquire English proficiency; and • Each program is reasonably calculated to help MLs attain parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time?	
What resources are we using to demonstrate how we are evaluating the effectiveness of our school/district language assistance programming?	
What additional steps might we take to strengthen what we are doing to support MLs in language assistance programming and successful transition from the programming?	
What professional readings or school/district documents should be included in our effort to strengthen our language assistance programming?	

What additional questions should we ask that we have not yet asked about our MLs, the success of our language assistance programming, and the steps we need to take to analyze success and make changes when needed?	
What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	
What type of professional growth is needed to support everyone in our school/district in understanding the goals, mission and structures of our language education programming?	

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Action Steps: Meaningful Communication with MLs' Parents and Guardians

The following list of action steps, drawn from Zacarian (2023, p. 202), is intended to support meaningful communication with parents and guardians of MLs.

What steps are we taking to establish meaningful communication with families of MLs and to become partners in supporting their child's education?	
What additional actions could we take to strengthen those steps?	
What documents, forms, and protocols are we using?	
What professional readings or school/district documents should be included to ensure meaningful communication with families?	
What additional questions should we ask about partnering and communicating with families that we have not yet included?	

What cultural and linguistic considerations do we need to address?	
What type of professional growth do we need to support stronger and more meaningful communication and partnerships with families?	

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