Multilingual learners (MLs) are the country’s fastest growing student population, and they were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic both inside and outside the classroom. Remote learning closed these students off from critical support systems and as a result, their academic and linguistic growth suffered setbacks. MLs are more likely to attend high-poverty schools, which means they face sizable opportunity gaps. Congress appropriated a historic $122 billion through ARP ESSER III funds to support the education system’s pandemic recovery efforts. Through September 2023, we have the chance to ensure these resources address long-standing inequities in the educational opportunities afforded these students. Less than 15% of the total allocated funding has been spent to date.

This toolkit is meant to support communities in advocating to ensure that districts’ ARP ESSER spending attends to the needs of multilingual learners by offering tools and guiding questions to:

1. Get Clear: Understand and Assess Your District’s ARP ESSER Plan
2. Get Strategic: Influence the Plan
3. Get Solutions-Oriented: Target Support for Multilingual Learners

If you have questions or are interested in collaboration, please email rosario.quirozvillarreal@tntp.org.
1. GET CLEAR – UNDERSTAND AND ASSESS YOUR DISTRICT’S ARP ESSER PLAN

Every state and district was required to submit a plan for how they will use their ARP ESSER funds. The plan required specific attention to MLs and other underserved student populations, by requiring districts and states to:

- Submit data on the academic outcomes of MLs,
- Engage in meaningful consultation of representative stakeholders, and
- Reserve funds for addressing the disproportionate academic impact of lost instructional time.

Understanding the district’s existing plan will provide some insight on what’s happening for MLs within the district(s) in your community and should help identify gaps within the plan and additional questions to ask to better leverage this opportunity. Organizations like FutureEd offer broad guidance on how to read a COVID-Relief Plan. The questions offered here are meant to ensure that you read the plan with a consistent lens on ML students. As you review the plan, keep in mind what you have experienced about the assets and experiences of your community’s MLs. Compare the district’s plan to your understanding, as a way to guide what could be discussed with your district leaders.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>How is the district planning to use recovery funds to address “learning loss” for MLs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beyond addressing “learning loss,” in what other ways does the plan target the needs of MLs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If there is a targeted approach, does it align with what ML advocates identified as the most pressing concerns?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the targeted approach come with sufficient funding?</td>
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KEEP IN MIND

1. Districts are expected to review their plans for intended impact every six months.
2. Less than 15% of the total allocated funding has been spent to date.
3. The requirements for the plan are on the side of our students—we have every right to call out when they are not being considered within district recovery efforts.

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2. GET STRATEGIC – INFLUENCE THE PLAN

Once you have read the plan and understand where it could be improved in order to leverage the current opportunity for MLs, it's important to consider the strategies for moving the plan toward addressing the needs of MLs, both those created and exacerbated by the pandemic.

This section offers guidance on identifying who must be influenced and some potential tools for influencing those decision makers:

1. **Power Map: Identify who you are seeking to influence**
2. **Asset map for collective voice**
3. **Use data to serve MLs**

### STRATEGIES TO INFLUENCE: POWER MAP

Knowing who is involved in the creation of the district's ARP ESSER Plan and who has the authority to approve it will help identify the primary people you seek to influence. You can power map to visually identify your targets, where they stand in relation to strengthening pandemic recovery efforts to support multilingual learners, and the relationships that influence them to make certain decisions.

There are various templates and tools for power mapping. For helpful overviews with suggested templates, visit:

- Union of Concerned Scientists' [Power Mapping Your Way to Success](#)
- The Education Trust’s [Understanding Power in Your Region: A Better Way of Power Mapping](#)

The questions offered here are meant to support you in capturing information about how the decision-makers you seek to influence think about multilingual learners. You can also capture their contact information in this section.

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<tr>
<td>Who within the district was responsible for crafting the ARP ESSER Plan, and who do they answer to?</td>
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<td>In recent history, which district leaders have championed MLs? In what ways?</td>
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<tr>
<td>In recent history, which school board members stood for or against supporting MLs? In what ways?</td>
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**STRATEGIES TO INFLUENCE: ASSET MAP FOR COLLECTIVE VOICE**

Unfortunately, our communities and districts often operate in silos, which can make attempts to change systems to serve all students feel overwhelming. By asset mapping, you intentionally inventory the existing strengths and resources that exist within your community to increase collaboration and break down silos. This strengths-based approach should surface potential collaborators and allies who care about improving outcomes for multilingual learners. Understanding that you are not alone will help ensure that the needs of MLs are not a blind spot within your community's district(s). Together, your community can build a collective voice to increase impact.

Some additional tools to help you think comprehensively about your community's assets include:
- A Cable in the Classroom Publication's Engaging All Leaders chart
- Our Block: An innovative way for communities to identify, share, and promote the resources, services, and events present in their community
- TNTP's Community Assets Map Blank template

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<tr>
<td>Who in the community works to serve multilingual learners and/or their families? (Ex: Community centers, after school programs, literacy programs, immigrant-serving organizations, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which multilingual learner advocates within the district and community were consulted on the plan? To what extent did their input influence decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What relationships do we have – or do we need to build – to effectively advocate for ARP ESSER spending and implementation that is inclusive of multilingual learners?</td>
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**STRATEGIES TO INFLUENCE: USE DATA TO SERVE MLs**

Data can and should be used to point out the impact of the pandemic on multilingual learners and help uplift why these students must be prioritized within district plans. Being strategic about coupling qualitative data (the stories) with quantitative data (the numbers) can help ensure you present a story that resonates and helps drive districts towards change.

1. Choose 1-2 sources or strategies for collecting qualitative data. Input should be collected from ML students, their caregivers, community stakeholders, educators, and district staff. Consider:
   a. Focus Groups: [NYSED Bilingual Ed Focus Group/Interview Protocols](#)
   b. 1-1 Empathy Interviews: [Zion and Zion How to Conduct Empathy Interviews](#)
   c. Surveys (open-ended questions): [Washington State OSPI Multilingual/English Learner Program Family Feedback Survey Open-Ended Questions](#)

2. Choose 1-2 sources for quantitative data. These sources should provide a broad picture of what’s happening for multilingual learners and their caregivers through stats and figures. Consider:
   a. Surveys (close-ended, multiple-choice questions): [Missouri State Surveying Multilingual Families](#)
   b. Assessment data disaggregated for MLs
      i. District data
      ii. [NAEP Report Card Reading*](#)
      iii. [NAEP Report Card Mathematics](#)
      *While NAEP data did not reveal a drop in ML’s reading scores during the pandemic, the vast disparity in assessment scores that was present pre-pandemic remains.
   c. Language proficiency and reclassification data for the district’s ML student population
   d. Absenteeism rates disaggregated for MLs
   e. Graduation rates disaggregated for MLs

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What qualitative data will you cite? Are there sources of data already available to you? If not, how will you collect data?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who will you include in your data collection efforts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What quantitative data will you cite? Where can you find the data?</td>
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### TIPS ON DATA GATHERING AND COLLECTION

- If you’re not sure where to start, know that districts are required by federal law to disaggregate data regarding academic outcomes for various student populations, including “English Learners.” Where possible, explore the last four years of data (19-22) to identify the areas of concern and opportunities that existed pre-pandemic. Reviewing this data can help you gain an understanding of the impact of the pandemic on MLs with a clear point of comparison.

- Ensure that data collection methods anticipate and address barriers to participation for multilingual learners and their caregivers. Be considerate of language access, technology access, transportation needs, varying literacy levels, and constraints on time. If there are existing structures for connecting with MLs and their caregivers, such as Parent Advisory Councils or Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meetings, leverage those opportunities. While federal guidance requires meaningful consultation with stakeholders, anecdotes suggest some districts limited collection of input on ARP ESSER to traditional modes, such as public comment at school board meetings or surveys of school staff. This likely limits input from caregivers and communities advocating for multilingual learners.

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3. GET SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED – TARGET SUPPORT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

The decision makers in your district are likely well aware of the impact of the pandemic on students’ academic and socio-emotional well-being. Given the federal guidance on recovery efforts, they may have an understanding that multilingual learners require specific attention. However, simply raising the issue without recommended solutions is not likely to effectively move your efforts to success. Propose solutions to decision-makers for targeting the needs of MLs through ARP ESSER funds!

Arriving at solutions can seem like a daunting task, but it is not something anyone should take on alone. Several organizations have demonstrated that uplifting diverse stakeholder voices to arrive at solutions on the use of pandemic recovery funds is possible! This is a place to tap into your community’s assets and existing resources so as not to reinvent the wheel. The resources offered here are meant to support you in identifying and proposing solutions to decision-makers.

SURVEY FOR SOLUTIONS

Qualitative data collection from multilingual learners’ representative stakeholders should include questions about what they’d hope to see the district do to better serve multilingual learners. For example, organizations like Alliance for Quality Education surveyed families and communities across New York to identify desired spending priorities. You can also ask how they’d hope to be involved in the implementation of those solutions.

REVIEW DISTRICT STRATEGY

The process for proposing solutions through the use of ARP ESSER Funds matters. If there is a specific department for supporting these learners or a strategy for improving outcomes for multilingual learners, there are likely accompanying priorities that have resulted from careful consideration of existing problems of practice. ARP ESSER could be leveraged to accelerate those priorities and ensure instructional coherence in recovery efforts.

IDENTIFY EXISTING SOLUTIONS

The EduRecovery Hub uplifts and draws attention to state and district practices implemented through ARP ESSER funds that have the potential to help schools recover stronger and all students benefit. The EduRecovery Hub, New America, and TNTP partnered to develop Multilingual Learner Best Practices, a 2-pager of solutions for MLs, questions to improve existing practices, and guidance on navigating existing resources.

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