

A New Blueprint for Success:

Meeting the Needs of Asian American Multilingual Students



Although California is home to more than **120,000 Asian American multilingual learners (AAMLs)**, the model minority myth and one-size-fits-all instructional approaches render them largely invisible in state education policy. Too often, these students lack the tailored support they need to succeed.

Drawing on insights from educators and community partners, these recommendations present pathways to improve outcomes for AAMLs and expand resources for multilingual learners across language backgrounds.

Key Findings

Policy Solutions

Low Critical Mass & Resource Gaps

- Educational resources in Asian languages, especially in less common languages, are far less available than Spanish materials.
- California lacks enough bilingual Asian-language educators and updated instructional materials, leading to teacher shortages and low-quality curricula.

Develop Asian-Language Educators and Curricula

- Provide regional grants to create centralized hubs for recruitment, curriculum development, assessment translation, and teacher placement for low-incidence Asian languages.
- Renew and expand funding for the Asian Language Bilingual Teacher Education Program Consortium, including outreach, technical assistance, professional-development incentives, and loan-forgiveness pathways.

Data & Assessment Barriers

- State and district data aggregate all Asian students, obscuring language-specific needs.
- AAMLs reclassify slowly, in part due to challenges with the written English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), stalling learning progress and undermining student confidence.

Strengthen Statewide Standards, Data, and Accountability

- Publish disaggregated AAML outcome data (reclassification, Long Term English Learner rates, attendance, access, proficiency) to make needs visible and actionable.
- Review and revise the written ELPAC to ensure cultural and linguistic validity and more accurate reclassification pathways.

Family Engagement in Uncertain Times

- Federal threats to diversity, equity and inclusion and increased immigration enforcement create fear and lower engagement at school for AAMLs and their families.
- Family engagement systems are burdensome, hard to navigate for immigrant households, and often not culturally responsive to Asian American communities.

Support Whole-Child and Community Well-Being

- Codify previous federal English learner guidance into California law and strengthen existing state protections for immigrant students, ensuring districts uphold student rights, deliver high-quality programming, and maintain safe and inclusive learning environments.
- Allocate stable funding to implement AB 101 (ethnic studies), which improves academic outcomes and civic engagement for AAMLs and all students.
- Establish ongoing community-school and social-emotional learning grants to support trauma-informed, culturally responsive services for Asian American communities.

Build a better foundation for multilingual learning to help California's Asian American students!