Cultivating District Leadership to Build Systems
for English Language Learner (ELL) and Multilingual Learner (MLL) Success

A Professional Learning Initiative of Stanford University and WestEd
Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Memorandum of Understanding

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) specifies the commitments of participating parties in an initiative designed to establish and facilitate a network of School District ELL/MLL Leaders across New York State. These ELL/MLL Leaders will engage in professional learning designed to deepen their understanding of current research on ELL/MLL teaching and learning; develop their capacity to analyze and interpret current ELL outcomes, strengths, and challenges; build committed teams; and lead effective change for ELLs/MLLs in school systems. Leaders and teams will build these capacities while developing and implementing a district Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success with sufficient human and material resources and district community support to be actionable and sustainable. While this MOU principally covers the period October 2017-June 2018, the initiative is expected to continue through the 2018-19 school year, contingent upon continued funding. Commitments for Year 2 are specified, and will be revisited in summer 2018.

During <u>October 2017 – June 2018</u>, **WestEd/Understanding Language** will:

1. Provide **three face-to-face leadership professional learning institutes** in New York (October 2017, February 2018, and June 2018) facilitated by Stanford and WestEd ELL/MLL experts in policy, instructional leadership development, district and school systems change management, assessment and accountability, and pedagogy for simultaneous academic language and content learning. These institutes for 20-30 School District ELL/MLL Leaders from New York State will build their capacity to recruit and lead a local Core Leadership Team (3 to 5 school and district educators) in developing a Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success aligned to the New York State Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success. The first two institutes will convene the ELL/MLL Leaders, while the third Institute will convene the ELL/MLL Leaders and their Core Leadership Team members.

2. Introduce and support ELL/MLL Leaders' use of a **suite of online, downloadable tools** for systemic planning and implementation to support capacity-building work. Tools include research-to-practice syntheses; customizable ELL/MLL quantitative and qualitative data-gathering and analysis tools and displays; focused application tasks;

sample policy, program, and process guidelines and inquiry prompts; classroom videos of evolving and accomplished practice, etc.

3. Offer **six online, synchronous working sessions** (November and December 2017; January, March, April, and June 2018) guided by Stanford and WestEd for ELL/MLL leaders, focused on use of tools, case study examples, data collection and analyses, application tasks, and facilitated peer discussions, using an inquiry and continuous learning approach.

4. Provide **periodic, asynchronous feedback**; synchronous, **online small-group consultations** on application tasks to advance improvement planning work; and **facilitated leader network discussions** on research evidence and emerging problems of practice.

5. Provide access to **Stanford online open courses** that ELL/MLL Leaders and Core Leadership Team members can use to supplement and deepen central ideas related to ELL/MLL instructional leadership, systems change, and developing pedagogical capacity for ELL/MLL academic language and content learning.

During August 2018 – June 2019, (conditional on continued funding), **WestEd/Understanding Language** will:

1. Provide **two face-to-face leadership professional learning institutes** in New York (October 2018 and March 2019) for the convened network of School District ELL/MLL Leaders. These sessions will support Leaders in: applying concepts and tools for developing, refining, and completing the Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success; effectively managing and building the capacity of the Core Leadership Team; effectively facilitating a districtwide Stakeholder Leadership Team that provides input, consultation, and support; and securing Plan implementation adoption and support.

2. Offer **seven online, synchronous working sessions** guided by Stanford and WestEd for ELL/MLL leaders, focused on strengthening use of tools, case study examples, data collection and analyses, application tasks, and facilitated peer discussions, using an inquiry and continuous learning approach.

3. Provide **periodic, asynchronous feedback**; synchronous, **online small-group consultations** on application tasks to advance improvement planning work; and **facilitated leader network discussions** on research evidence and emerging problems of practice.

4. Provide access to **Stanford online open courses** that ELL/MLL Leaders and Core Leadership Team members can use to supplement and deepen core ideas related to ELL/MLL instructional leadership, systems change, and developing pedagogical capacity for ELL/MLL academic language and content learning.

School District Superintendent will:

1. Nominate the School District ELL/MLL Leader by August 2017, and support the selection of the local Core Leadership Team (3-5 members) by 2018, that will participate in the initiative.
2. Ensure the School District ELL/MLL Leader dedicates **80 hours** of participation time in **October 2017 – June 2018**, and **160 hours** of participation time in **August 2018 – June 2019**, for learning, planning, and leading; and ensure the ELL/MLL Leader's current job responsibilities substantially align with the focus and professional learning objectives of this initiative.
3. Ensure each local Core Leadership Team member dedicates **40 hours** of participation time in **February – June 2018**, and **80 hours** of participation time in **August 2018 – June 2019**, for learning, planning and leading; and ensure each CLT member's current job responsibilities and experiences complement and allow for participation.
4. Help the School District ELL/MLL Leader and Core Leadership Team recruit a representative **Stakeholder Leadership Team by end June, 2018** from across the school district community that will participate in **three 4-hour** district-based working sessions during **October 2018 – May 2019** to contribute to developing and refining the Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success.
5. Secure fiscal and material resources and time to support the School District ELL/MLL Leader and the local Core Leadership Team.
6. Schedule **three 2-hour** public meetings for **key community stakeholder groups** to vet and provide feedback on early drafts of the Strategic Improvement Plan during **Fall 2018/Winter 2019 and Spring 2019**.

School District ELL/MLL Leader will:
1. Engage fully in **three face-to-face leadership professional learning institutes** in New York (October 2017, February 2018, and June 2018); **six online, synchronous working sessions** (November and December 2017; January, March, April, and June 2018); and **periodic, asynchronous feedback**; synchronous, **online small-group consultations**; and **facilitated peer leader network discussions** offered by the project. A total of 80 hours of participation time (October 2017-June 2018) is required to complete application tasks; share challenges, insights, and emerging lessons learned with peer network members (e.g., regarding ELL/MLL outcomes, strengths and challenges; developing a sense of urgency and motivation among Core Leadership Team members and District stakeholders, etc.); apply learnings and strengthen their own capacity to lead and support the team and larger District community to develop a Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success.
2. Guide and support a Core Leadership Team (composed of 3-5 members in leadership positions) – and with their support, the Stakeholder Leadership Team – through a systemic improvement planning process to strengthen the quality of ELL/MLL policy,

practices and programs in alignment to the NYS Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success. The Plan development process will begin during the 2017-18 school year, and result in a Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success approved during the 2018-19 school year, and ready for implementation.

3. Work with the Core Leadership Team to recruit a representative **Stakeholder Leadership Team by end June, 2018** from across the School District community to participate in **three 4-hour** district-based working sessions during **October 2018 – May 2019** to contribute to developing and refining the Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success.

4. Lead the planning and facilitation of **three 2-hour** public meetings for **key community stakeholder groups** to vet and provide feedback on early drafts of the Strategic Improvement Plan during **Fall 2018/Winter 2019 and Spring 2019**.

5. Collaborate with a peer leader network of colleagues to surface ideas for the next generation of tools and processes needed to further distribute responsibility and develop strong commitment to ELL/MLL success throughout the school district system.

6. Submit a vetted, draft Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success for Board or District approval by **June 2019**.

Core Leadership Team Members will:

1. Engage in selected learning opportunities offered by the project, including **one face-to-face professional learning institute** in New York (June 2018) and **three online, synchronous working sessions** (March, April, and June 2018). A total of 40 hours of participation time is needed in February – June 2018 to become grounded in the District ELL/MLL pedagogy and program improvement approach; complete application tasks, apply learnings, and work as a team with the District ELL/MLL Leader to prepare the groundwork to begin developing a Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success.

2. Collaborate both individually and as a team with the District ELL/MLL Leader to carry out an inquiry-based planning and continuous improvement process to strengthen the quality of ELL/MLL policy, practices and programs in alignment to the Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success during 2018-2019.

3. Help to recruit a **Stakeholder Leadership Team** from across the school district community by **end June 2018.** Work with Core Leadership Team members and the District ELL/MLL Leader to plan and facilitate the Stakeholder Leadership Team's participation in **three 4-hour** district-based working sessions during **October 2018 – May 2019** to contribute to developing and refining the Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL Success.

4. Collaborate closely with the District ELL/MLL Leader to plan and facilitate **three 2-hour** public meetings for **key community stakeholder groups** to vet and provide feedback on

early drafts of the Strategic Improvement Plan during **Fall 2018/Winter 2019 and Spring 2019**.

5. Submit a vetted, draft Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success for Board or District approval by **June 2019**.

School District ELL/MLL Leaders Roles and Responsibilities

Participants in the Leadership for ELL/MLL Success Strand will be expected to fulfill the following roles and responsibilities:

Learning:
7. Attend a three-day kick-off training session in New York with 20-30 district-level facilitative leaders to build capacity to help districts develop and implement a Strategic Improvement Plan for ELL/MLL Success.
8. Learn about and test Toolkit resources such as research-to-practice syntheses, quantitative and qualitative data displays, focused application tasks, guidelines and question prompts, classroom videos, and data-gathering and analysis tools.
9. Read and discuss current, relevant research to be able to understand and share effective practices.
10. Learn and employ grounded, innovative strategies and practices for addressing inequalities in ELL/MLL educational opportunities in districts/schools.
11. Identify and describe current trends and pressing needs within systems in the pursuit of EL educational equity.
12. Explore and understand the complexities of systems change and the wealth of internal and external resources, expertise, and opportunities that state/district/school leadership teams can leverage to create coherent systemic transformation models.
13. Understand and anchor the work using New York's *Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success* (the state's policy framework).
14. Develop and share research-based leadership skills, effective adult learning approaches, and organizational and instructional improvement practices designed to address root causes of key challenges found in current ELL/MLL policies, practices and programs and their link to ELL/MLL under-achievement in districts/schools.
15. Complete focused application tasks between sessions related to each area of study.

Facilitating:
1. Commit to guiding and supporting a district/school leadership team (composed of 3-5 members in leadership positions) through an ELL/MLL systemic improvement planning process during the 2017-2018 school year.

2. Co-facilitate six (6) on-line sessions in 2017-18 for a local district/school leadership team.
3. Foster interactions among local colleagues using resources and processes developed by UL and WestEd that lead to a shared vision for ELL/MLL success; a coherent ELL/MLL language development approach; specification of core competencies required of ELL/MLL educators; new/enhanced ELL/MLL instructional program models; an implementation roadmap for identified strategic objectives and high leverage strategies; and aligned oversight structure for the system.
4. Help the local system develop a plan to improve policies, practices, and programs for ELLs/MLLs aligned to *Blueprint* principles.
5. Facilitate a comprehensive examination and understanding of the impact of policies, structures, and practices that are embedded in their state/district.
6. Use an inquiry-based framework to gather quantitative and qualitative evidence about systemic ELL/MLL policies and practices and to engage leadership teams in review and action-planning activities.
7. Consider research and evidence-based practices as well as transformation models that can improve ELL/MLL outcomes through strategic and well-implemented high-yield actions and policies.
8. Identify, in partnership with leadership team, best practices for transforming ELL/MLL education systems with capacity to scale up and sustain meaningful innovations in their local context.
9. Apply approaches in a district or school and bring to subsequent sessions, challenges, insights, and evidence of application and impact.
10. Coach on data analysis and decision-making to help leadership teams understand data about ELLs/MLLs in their district/school and to make appropriate interpretations and decisions based on these data.
11. Strengthen leadership team's capacities in management and operations, including analyzing how district/school resources are deployed and arrayed, and offer suggestions to encourage and support resource realignment to advance ELL/MLL achievement.

Co-constructing:

1. Surface ideas for next-generation tools and processes needed to distribute and foster responsibility for ELL/MLL success throughout systems.
2. Engage with a network of colleagues to discuss problems of policy and practice, and generate new resources and strategies to support ELLs/MLLs and their educators.
3. Provide technical assistance in designing transformation models and tools tailored to New York context.

Selection Criteria for School District ELL/MLL Leaders:

1. Strong background in effective instructional practices and instructional leadership to improve K-12 classroom teaching and learning.
2. Strong background and experience in second language development and ELL/MLL education (e.g., K-12 ENL, bilingual/multilingual education)
3. Desire to improve District and school leadership and coaching of ELL/MLL educators
4. Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to weaving together academic language use, analytical practices of academic disciplines, and content learning
5. Strong relational skills and proven experience facilitating adult professional learning (e.g., presenting, coaching, modeling, facilitating professional learning community, etc.)
6. Experience implementing K-12 systemic improvements, college and career ready standards, NYS Next Generation P-12 Learning Standards, and ELL/MLL educational programs and practices
7. Sufficiently flexible calendar to meet regularly with Core Leadership Team and engage in inquiry-based continuous learning, policy and practice problem solving, and formative feedback (see commitments in Memorandum of Understanding)
8. Demonstrated commitment and experience as an active listener, learner, and thinker
9. Demonstrated experience as a proactive problem explorer and solver
10. Demonstrated experience working with principals and teachers; ability to easily gain access to schools/classrooms (e.g., as function of District office position)
11. Nominated and supported by District Superintendent; solid understanding of the sponsoring district, with demonstrated recognition and respect of district/school leadership and staff preferred
12. Ready access to both district leadership and instructional leaders (i.e. principals, coaches, subject matter specialists, lead teachers, et al.)
13. Current job responsibilities substantially align with the focus and professional learning objectives of this initiative