

Advancing Multilingual Education: Illuminating the Linguistic and Cultural Assets of English Learners/Multilingual Learners (ELs/MLs)

Thursday, November 7, 2024 | 8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Central Connecticut State University Student Center, Alumni Hall
165 Ella Grasso Boulevard, New Britain, CT 06053

Conference Schedule

8:30–9:00 a.m.	Registration/Check-In
9:00–9:30 a.m.	Welcome and Purpose
9:30–10:30 a.m.	Keynote Address: Dr. Hector Montenegro
10:30–10:40 a.m.	Break
10:45–11:10 a.m.	Presentation of the EL/ML Statewide Framework
11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Breakout Session 1
12:00–12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:50–1:35 p.m.	Breakout Session 2
1:40–2:25 p.m.	Breakout Session 3
2:30–3:00 p.m.	Closing

Conference Information

- Parking is available in the Welte Garage. The GPS address is 39 Ella Grasso Blvd., New Britain, CT.
- Please plan to arrive between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. to pick up your name tag.
- The conference will conclude at 3:00 p.m.
- Free Wi-Fi will be available for attendees.
- We have great professional resources that we will be giving away, so don't forget to return to the main room at 2:30 p.m.



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Connecticut State Department of Education

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Room at Student Center	Session 1 11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Session 2 12:50–1:35 p.m.	Session 3 1:40–2:25 p.m.
Main Room: Alumni Hall	Room in transition	Ensuring Academic Success for ELs with SEL Dr. Hector Montenegro SEL	Ensuring Academic Success for ELs with SEL Dr. Hector Montenegro SEL
133 Blue & White Meeting Room 1st Floor	Honoring Multilingualism and Intersections with Race, Ethnicity, Culture Natalie Zwerger, Esq. Equity	Shifting Minds and Changing Lives: EL/ML Data Through a Storytelling Lens Luz Rivera Equity	Equity in the Social Emotional Learning of Our EL/ML Students Dr. Aneury “Reese” Morales Equity
134 Clock Tower Meeting Room 1st Floor	Charting the Course: MTSS as a Roadmap for Multilingual Learner Success Dr. Lisa Schleer Jose Escribano MTSS	Quick Wins: Integrating Academic Vocabulary in Middle and High School Classrooms Jonathan Hull MTSS	Empowering MLs/ELs in Math: Strategies for Success Jennifer Michalek Paul Castiglione Equity
119 Carleton Meeting Room 1st Floor	Empowering Teachers and Administrators to Lead Successful Bilingual Programs with the DL Mastery Program Ashley Solesbee Biliteracy	ILitELL: Leveraging High Quality Instructional Materials to advance literacy equity for ML/EL learners Camille Kenner Wayne Eichen Technology	The Madres Guerreras Dream: What does Language Justice in our Schools Look Like? Sara Swetsoff Biliteracy
120 Philbrick Room 1st Floor	The Interconnectedness of the Translanguaging Pedagogy and the Social Emotional and Ethical Frameworks Damaris Cruz SEL	Equity in Multilingual and Special Education: Empowering Dual-Identified ELs/MLs through Inclusive Practices Mislal Andom-Lake Genesis Ryant Equity	Bridging the Gap: Equitable Practices for ELL Students in Special Education Evaluation Marcelo Souza Equity

continued

Room at Student Center	Session 1 11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Session 2 12:50–1:35 p.m.	Session 3 1:40–2:25 p.m.
120 Camp Room 1st Floor	<p>Lost in Translation: Uncovering How the Science of Reading Empowers Multilingual Learners</p> <p>Dr. Janice Silver Dr. Lori Silver Vanessa Diaz-Valencia</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Localizing Language Education Policies: A leadership workshop on policy appropriation</p> <p>Dr. Matthew Ciscel</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Translanguaging From the Student Up: Coaching Conversations with Content Teachers of Newcomer MLs</p> <p>Kristin Bengtson-Mendoza</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>
1849 Meeting Room 2nd Floor	<p>Integrating SEL Strategies within Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to Empower Multilingual Learners</p> <p>Sophia Diamantis Elisa Laudati</p> <p>SEL</p>	<p>Cornerstones: A Framework for Intentional Dual Language Pedagogy</p> <p>Amy Finsmith</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>	<p>Translanguaging: Leveraging Multilingual Students' Home Languages</p> <p>Chrissy Bowman</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Hector Montenegro

Ensuring Academic Success for English Learners with Social Emotional Learning



Dr. Hector Montenegro, president/CEO of Montenegro Consulting Group, LLC, currently works with districts and administrators nationally and internationally on systemic implementation of social emotional learning, instructional strategies for English learners (EL), leadership development for administrators, language and literacy, instructional coaching, and parent engagement. Dr. Montenegro has been a math teacher, principal, chief of staff for the DC Public Schools, and superintendent of three school districts in Texas. He is an internationally recognized speaker and presenter throughout the U.S. and abroad in over 23 countries. He obtained his masters from Stanford University and doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin.

Session 1

Location & Theme	11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
<p>133 Blue & White Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Equity</p>	<p>Honoring Multilingualism and Intersections with Race, Ethnicity, Culture</p> <p>This session will interrogate the ways educators can honor multilingualism and its power while negating the inherent deficitizing of young people particularly if intersecting race, ethnicity, and culture. Participants will engage in a dialogic model to share, unpack, and complicate practices that foster justice and liberation for young people.</p> <p>Participants will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine ways to honor multilingualism in teaching, engaging, and relating to young people; 2. Interrogate practices to avoid deficitizing young multilingual learners; 3. Solutionize ways to foster equity and justice literacy; and 4. Collectively generate next steps for learning and action. <p>Presenter: Natalie Zwerger, Esq., RE-Center Race & Equity in Education</p>
<p>134 Clock Tower Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</p>	<p>Charting the Course: MTSS as a Roadmap for Multilingual Learner Success</p> <p>Discover how to effectively support Multilingual learners (MLs) by implementing a comprehensive MTSS Framework. Learn to navigate the tiers, emphasizing critical Tier 1 instructional strategies. Explore essential components, including targeted professional development and home-school partnerships. Equip yourself to guide MLs toward academic success and language proficiency.</p> <p>Participants will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the MTSS framework and its application to Multilingual learners; 2. Recognize the critical importance of Universal Tier 1 support for MLs; 3. Identify key strategies for implementing effective Tier 1 support for MLs; 4. Understand the importance of home-school partnerships and learn strategies to strengthen them; 5. Develop skills to analyze and use data for making informed decisions about ML support; 6. Gain knowledge of evidence-based practices for supporting MLs across all MTSS tiers; 7. Learn how to align MTSS practices with language acquisition principles; 8. Understand how to differentiate instruction and interventions for MLs at various proficiency levels; 9. Develop strategies for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of MTSS for MLs; 10. Learn how to create a culturally responsive MTSS framework that addresses the unique needs of MLs; and 11. Gain insights into resource allocation and scheduling to optimize MTSS implementation for MLs. <p>Presenters: Dr. Lisa Schleer and Jose Escribano, LMS Educational Consulting</p>

Location & Theme	11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
<p>119 Carleton Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>	<p>Empowering Teachers and Administrators to Lead Successful Bilingual Programs with the DL Mastery Program</p> <p>Discover how Dual Language Mastery empowers educators and school leaders to unlock the full potential of bilingual education. Learn about specialized coaching, comprehensive professional development, and strategic tools designed to enhance dual language programs, ensuring consistent, high-quality instruction that transforms your school’s approach to bilingualism and global learning.</p> <p>Participants will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Key Challenges in Dual Language Programs: Participants will explore common challenges faced in dual language education, such as inconsistent instructional quality and lack of targeted professional development. 2. Discover Tailored Solutions through DL Mastery: Attendees will learn how the Dual Language Mastery program addresses these challenges with specialized coaching, leadership support, and comprehensive training. 3. Evaluate the Impact of DL Mastery on Program Success: Participants will assess how implementing DL Mastery can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their dual language programs, leading to improved student outcomes. <p>Presenter: Ashley Solesbee, Participate Learning</p>
<p>120 Philbrick Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</p>	<p>The Interconnectedness of the Translanguaging Pedagogy and the Social Emotional and Ethical Frameworks</p> <p>Learn why the translanguaging pedagogy is a critical shift in the teaching and learning of Multilingual learners and how it can impact their social emotional learning and well-being.</p> <p>Participants will walk away with knowledge of what translanguaging pedagogy is and how to implement it to help multilingual students succeed in school both socially and academically.</p> <p>Presenter: Damaris Cruz, Stratford Public Schools</p>
<p>1849 Meeting Room (2nd Floor)</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</p>	<p>Integrating SEL Strategies within Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to Empower Multilingual Learners</p> <p>This session focuses on the application of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) within Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for Multilingual learners (MLs). Using CSDE’s definition of SEL, Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits of Mind, and translanguaging strategies, we’ll dive into practical implementation approaches and considerations for MLs.</p> <p>Participants will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine CSDE’s definition of SEL and Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits of Mind through the lens of applications for MLs; 2. Identify key translanguaging strategies that support the integration of SEL into instructional practices for MLs; and 3. Explore practical approaches for culturally responsive social-emotional learning (SEL) supports that address the unique needs of multilingual learners within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. <p>Presenters: Elisa Laudati and Sophia Diamantis, State Education Resource Center</p>

Location & Theme	11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
<p>120 Camp Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Lost in Translation: Uncovering How the Science of Reading Empowers Multilingual Learners</p> <p>In this session, explore how the Science of Reading aligns with translanguaging practices to empower multilingual learners. Learn evidence-based strategies that integrate students’ full linguistic repertoires, enhancing reading proficiency and language development. Attendees will gain insights into fostering an inclusive, culturally responsive environment that leverages translanguaging to support equitable literacy outcomes.</p> <p>Learning outcomes for the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the intersection of the Science of Reading and translanguaging to support multilingual learners’ literacy development and academic success. • Identify practical, evidence-based strategies that leverage students’ full linguistic repertoires, promoting reading proficiency through culturally responsive instruction. • Develop actionable approaches that can be readily used to create an inclusive learning environment that integrates translanguaging and supports equitable literacy outcomes for multilingual learners. <p>Presenters: Vanessa Diaz-Valencia, Director of Early Learning Programs, New Haven; Dr. Lori Silver, Lexia, National Literacy Consultant; Dr. Janice Silver, Lexia, National Literacy Consultant</p>

Session 2

Location & Theme	12:50–1:35 p.m.
<p>Main Room: Alumni Hall</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</p>	<p>Ensuring Academic Success for ELs with SEL</p> <p>As a continuation from the keynote presentation, this session will demonstrate how adults can integrate core SEL competencies into language, literacy and core content instruction in order to ensure success for all ELs in all subject areas.</p> <p>This session will have participants practice how adults can develop key SEL competencies in students while teaching vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing. These strategies are ideal for teaching all subject areas in elementary and secondary schools. Examples of adult facilitation skills and teaching strategies that empower ELs to be more confident and socially successful will be emphasized. Participants will develop skills of collaboration, communication, facilitation and instructional innovation to deepen the instructional capacity of teachers and for administrators to become stronger instructional leaders. This session will also include a greater understanding of SEL core competencies and their value to student achievement, developing school-based structures that create an inclusive culture for EL students which include the SEL Three Signature Practices, morning meetings, restorative and mindfulness practices.</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Hector Montenegro, Montenegro Consulting Group, LLC</p>
<p>133 Blue & White Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Equity</p>	<p>Shifting Minds and Changing Lives: EL/ML Data Through a Storytelling Lens</p> <p>Dive into a district’s journey of analyzing data through a storytelling lens. Learn how a district is making a difference for multilingual learners by creating and implementing systems to provide inclusive classroom environments that give them equitable access to quality education and success!</p> <p>The audience will be able to fine-tune the way they look at data to create systems of support for inclusion and academic success for all students.</p> <p>Presenter: Luz Rivera, Norwich Public Schools</p>
<p>134 Clock Tower Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</p>	<p>Quick Wins: Integrating Academic Vocabulary in Middle and High School Classrooms</p> <p>Learn simple, effective strategies for integrating academic vocabulary into middle and high school content classrooms. This session offers practical ‘quick wins’ for teachers and building leaders, providing techniques that can be easily implemented to boost student achievement across all subjects.</p> <p>Participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of integrating Tier II academic vocabulary in content areas; • Explore quick, practical strategies for embedding vocabulary across subjects; • Identify ways to support student comprehension and achievement through vocab instruction; and • Equip both teachers and building leaders with tools for immediate implementation in middle and high school classrooms. <p>Presenter: Jonathan Hull, Secondary ML Teacher, Region 15</p>

Location & Theme	12:50–1:35 p.m.
<p>119 Carleton Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Technology</p>	<p>ILitELL: Leveraging High Quality Instructional Materials to Advance Literacy Equity for ML/EL Learners</p> <p>Overview of how ILitELL resources can be used to provide engaging lesson experiences for Newcomers. We will read, write and talk together as we share best practices for leveraging LitELL to accelerate language development and build on students’ linguistic assets.</p> <p>Educators will leave knowing more about ILitELL and how the resources can support their classroom goals and learning objectives for Newcomers</p> <p>Presenters: Camille Kenner & Wayne Eichen, Savvas Learning</p>
<p>120 Philbrick Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Equity</p>	<p>Equity in Multilingual and Special Education: Empowering Dual-Identified ELs/MLs through Inclusive Practices</p> <p><i>Equity in Multilingual Education: Empowering ELs/MLs</i> shares strategies to promote equity by leveraging the linguistic and cultural assets of English learners/Multilingual learners. We focus on creating inclusive environments that ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for all students, regardless of language background or special education needs.</p> <p>Knowledge-Based Outcome: Participants will leave with a clear understanding of what equity in multilingual education entails and why it is essential for the success of ELs/MLs.</p> <p>Skill-Based Outcome: Attendees will gain practical skills for identifying linguistic and cultural assets and implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms.</p> <p>Reflective/Attitudinal Outcome: Participants will be inspired to reflect on their own practices and motivated to take actionable steps towards creating more equitable learning environments for ELs/MLs.</p> <p>Presenters: Mislal Andom-Lake & Genesis Ryant, Platt Technical High School (CTECS)</p>
<p>1849 Meeting Room (2nd Floor)</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>	<p>Cornerstones: A Framework for Intentional Dual Language Pedagogy</p> <p>What does effective teaching look like in Dual Language? Explore the Cornerstones of Intentional Dual Language Pedagogy and discover a simple framework that supports both novice and experienced educators. Participants will leave with a copy of the Cornerstones and practical ideas to strengthen teams supporting multilingual learners.</p> <p>Participants will explore the Cornerstones of Intentional Dual Language Pedagogy and identify ways to apply the framework to enhance Dual Language or multilingual learner programs in their districts. They will collaborate in groups to align the framework with their district’s priorities and initiatives.</p> <p>Presenter: Amy Finsmith, Windham Public Schools</p>

Location & Theme	12:50–1:35 p.m.
<p>120 Camp Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Localizing Language Education Policies: A Leadership Workshop on Policy Appropriation</p> <p>This workshop for teachers and administrators will explore how federal and state policies on English learners influence and can be influenced by teaching practices in the schools. We will work in groups to explore and then share out how federal and state policies get localized in our schools.</p> <p>Participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain their roles as arbiters of language education policies. 2. Critically evaluate the local impact of policies in their schools. 3. Develop channels of feedback from the local school/district to inform future policies. <p>Presenter: Dr. Matthew Ciscel, Central Connecticut State University</p>

Session 3

Location & Theme	1:40–2:25 p.m.
<p>Main Room: Alumni Hall</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</p>	<p>Ensuring Academic Success for ELs with SEL</p> <p>As a continuation from the keynote presentation, this session will demonstrate how adults can integrate core SEL competencies into language, literacy and core content instruction in order to ensure success for all ELs in all subject areas.</p> <p>This session will have participants practice how adults can develop key SEL competencies in students while teaching vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing. These strategies are ideal for teaching all subject areas in elementary and secondary schools. Examples of adult facilitation skills and teaching strategies that empower ELs to be more confident and socially successful will be emphasized. Participants will develop skills of collaboration, communication, facilitation and instructional innovation to deepen the instructional capacity of teachers and for administrators to become stronger instructional leaders. This session will also include a greater understanding of SEL core competencies and their value to student achievement, developing school-based structures that create an inclusive culture for EL students which include the SEL Three Signature Practices, morning meetings, restorative and mindfulness practices.</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Hector Montenegro, Montenegro Consulting Group, LLC</p>
<p>133 Blue & White Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Equity</p>	<p>Equity in the Social Emotional Learning of Our EL/ML Students</p> <p>This interactive workshop will engage in a discussion of the equity in the social emotional learning of English learners/Multilingual learners. We will discuss strategies, approaches, availability, and resources that can have a positive impact in the academics and the social emotional intelligence of students.</p> <p>We expect participants to learn about what other districts and institutions are doing, planning to do, or have done in the past to be equitable with the social emotional learning of EL/ML students.</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Aneury “Reese” Morales, Ansonia Public Schools</p>
<p>134 Clock Tower Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Equity</p>	<p>Empowering MLs/ELs in Math: Strategies for Success</p> <p>Grounded in CT Model Curricula, this presentation offers practical strategies to help MLs/ELs access grade-level math content in K–8 classrooms. Discover resources and insights to enhance engagement, comprehension, and success for diverse learners, ensuring all students meet rigorous academic standards in mathematics.</p> <p>Presenters: Jennifer Michalek and Paul Castiglione, Connecticut State Department of Education</p>

Location & Theme	1:40–2:25 p.m.
<p>1849 Meeting Room (2nd Floor)</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>	<p>Translanguaging: Leveraging Multilingual Students’ Home Languages</p> <p>This session will delve deep into ways that schools and educators can leverage multilingual students’ home languages for instruction and learning. Viewing and utilizing this essential part of students’ identities as an asset will allow schools and classrooms to foster more inclusive and equitable learning environments.</p> <p>Participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a functional understanding of translanguaging theory; • Develop a functional understanding of translanguaging pedagogy; and • Identify and explore asset-based strategies that leverage multilingual students’ home language(s) for instruction and learning and foster inclusive and equitable learning environments. <p>Presenter: Chrissy Bowman, CREC Resource Group</p>
<p>119 Carleton Meeting Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>	<p>The Madres Guerreras Dream: What does Language Justice in our Schools Look Like?</p> <p>In this workshop, the member-leaders of the parent committee Madres Guerreras will present their dream for language justice in our school system. The madres will situate ideal language access practices within the larger vision for a liberated, community self-determined, and culturally responsive education.</p> <p>This workshop will include learning outcomes that are factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive. First, the audience will learn about the lived experience of multilingual families in the Hartford region. Second, the audience will learn about the concepts of language access and language justice. Third, the audience will learn what kinds of policies and procedures at the school and district levels are needed to meet parents’ language access needs. Fourth, the audience will reflect on their own implicit biases and received knowledge, and push themselves to imagine the better world we know is possible.</p> <p>Presenter: Sara Swetzoff, Make the Road CT — Madres Guerreras</p>
<p>120 Philbrick Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Equity</p>	<p>Bridging the Gap: Equitable Practices for ELL Students in Special Education Evaluation</p> <p>This presentation addresses the intersection of ELL and special education, a critical yet under-researched area. With Connecticut’s ELL population up 30% in five years, educators must distinguish language challenges from disabilities. We’ll explore “The Critical Data Process” to enhance equitable, culturally responsive practices and evaluations.</p> <p>By reevaluating our approach to ELL students and special education qualification, we can create more equitable, culturally sustaining systems that truly reflect the diverse needs of our student population. This presentation will serve as a catalyst for change, promoting equity-centered leadership and practices within our schools.</p> <p>Presenter: Marcelo Sousa, North Haven Public Schools</p>

Location & Theme	1:40–2:25 p.m.
<p>120 Camp Room (1st Floor)</p> <p>Biliteracy</p>	<p>Translanguaging From the Student Up: Coaching Conversations with Content Teachers of Newcomer MLs</p> <p>In secondary schools around Connecticut, content teachers without formal training in language acquisition are tasked with making curricula accessible to newcomer MLs. How can coaching conversations clarify their understanding of effective translanguaging practices? I will share research and my approach to coaching teachers in the complex art of translanguaging pedagogy.</p> <p>Participants will come away from this workshop with recommendations for further reading on the topic and some examples of these kinds of coaching conversations from my own practice in my school and district. These will include the article “Language Policy And Practice In Almost-Bilingual Classrooms” by Allard, Apt & Sacks (2019), which illuminates the challenges and common mistakes that occur when teachers are new to working in a newcomer or sheltered program and their students speak multiple languages. We will have an opportunity to share experiences related to translanguaging in content area classes, the role of Google Translate and Artificial Intelligence in classrooms, and what we have found works best in coaching teachers new to ML populations to think critically about their language use.</p> <p>Presenter: Kristin Bengtson-Mendoza, New Haven Public Schools, Southern Connecticut State University</p>

Presenter Bios

Session 1

Natalie McCabe Zwerger (she/her/ella) is a long-time educator and advocate. For 20+ years, she has fought for equity, racial justice, and liberatory education. As a white Puerto Rican, cis-hetero, non-disabled woman with significant class privilege, she is driven by an interrogation of where folx are situated in historical and contemporary oppressions. Her expertise includes elevating critical consciousness, dismantling systems of oppression, and centering Black and Brown youth and youth from historically excluded identities.

Lisa Schleer is a distinguished education professional with expertise in Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), special education compliance and programming, inclusive practices, differentiated instruction, and EdTech marketing. As the founder of LMS Educational Consulting, she delivers transformative solutions to school districts and offers comprehensive needs assessments, audits, and professional development.

Her career includes roles as assistant superintendent, executive director of personalized learning, and director of special services. Her leadership has been instrumental in implementing district-wide initiatives, managing multi-million dollar budgets, and significantly improving student outcomes across a PK–12 system.

As a thought leader in education, her commitment to equity and inclusion is unwavering. She frequently presents at conferences, sharing insights on these crucial topics, as well as on MTSS and supporting students with disabilities. Her dedication to equitable education extends beyond her professional roles: she serves as board president of the Ingeborg A. Biondo Memorial Foundation, which provides low-income students with disabilities the opportunity to attend summer camp in Sussex County and Pike County, PA.

Jose Escribano is currently the chief of family and community engagement for Springfield Public Schools, in Springfield, Massachusetts. He previously served as Principal for Brightwood Elementary School. Jose has dedicated his career to working with youth in urban communities. Jose holds a master's degree in education with a concentration in school adjustment counseling and mental health counseling. Before entering education, he worked as a social worker for the Department of Children and Families where he started as an ongoing social worker and then became an adoption social worker. As an administrator, Jose was involved in turn around work and was an integral part in improving three schools in the district.

Elisa Laudati is a first-generation Italian American, born in the United States to two immigrant parents. She spoke Italian only until beginning kindergarten, where she learned English. Her personal experiences shaped her career as an educator which focuses on supporting wellbeing for all members of school communities and enabling access and meaningful participation for the widest range of learners.

Elisa earned her undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Connecticut and completed her master's and sixth-year degrees in school psychology at Southern Connecticut State University. Elisa practiced as a school psychologist in K–12 public school settings and served as the director of academic support and educational services at an independent boarding school. She also worked at Yale University where she was a trainer for educators and families in implementation of social emotional learning approaches.

As a SERC consultant, Elisa supports a range of initiatives including integration of social emotional learning, trauma-informed practices, and academic intervention into Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Universal Design for Learning. Across roles within SERC, Elisa strives to center identity and equity for exceptional learners, racially, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Sophia Diamantis has experience in language teaching, teacher education, and qualitative research. She completed a PhD in curriculum and instruction and an MS in TESOL and bilingual education.

At SERC, Sophia aims to ensure multilingual students receive an education that is connected to their realities, strengths, and needs. She has learned to attend to whose bilingualism is valued with attention to race, ethnicity, ability, and income. With critical reflection on language and identity, she works with educators to affirm and leverage students' full linguistic resources to extend learning.

Sophia was raised in two languages in the U.S. by immigrant parents. From age 4 to 12, she attended a heritage language school to develop literacy skills in Greek. However, Sophia became English dominant as she experienced a monolingual approach in her K–12 education, where her bilingualism was recognized but not engaged in learning. Applying the concept of translanguaging has empowered Sophia to resume communicating across languages; she feels free again to choose linguistic features associated with differently named languages in her repertoire, at any moment, given the situation and person/s with whom she is speaking. Sophia has found multilingual communication supports meaningful connection with others and her cultural background.

Ashley Solesbee is a seasoned educator with over a decade of experience in the field, currently serving as the associate director of partnership development at Participate Learning. Previously, she served as a dual language program manager, where she guided educators and school districts in implementing and expanding dual language and global education programs across three states. Her work has connected her with teachers from around the world, fostering a deep appreciation for the power of bilingualism, which she passionately advocates as a true superpower in today's interconnected world.

Ashley is dedicated to creating professional development solutions that are both equity-focused and student-centered, ensuring that every educator is equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students. Her commitment to Participate Learning's mission—to unite the world through global learning—drives her to support initiatives that promote inclusivity and cultural understanding in classrooms. With a strong background in educational leadership and program management, Ashley is well-versed in the challenges and opportunities associated with advancing English learners and multilingual learners. She is eager to contribute her expertise to the EL/ML Education Summit, where she hopes to inspire and empower fellow educators to embrace bilingualism and global learning as critical components of student success.

Damaris Cruz served as a bilingual educator for the last 30 years beginning her career in the Bronx, NY. She currently holds 5 certifications and is currently enrolled in Sacred Heart University's SEAL EdD program for Social Emotional & Academic Learning for Social Justice, where she also received her administrative certificate in the same area of study. She taught in a dual language program in Norwalk for 22 years before joining Stratford in November 2023. This year she is serving in the capacity of department head for dual language and ESOL K-12. She has already begun researching the translinguaging pedagogy and plans to write her dissertation on this topic and expand on the current literature.

Vanessa Diaz-Valencia is the Director of Early Learning for New Haven Public Schools. Having served as a classroom teacher, intervention specialist, and assistant director of curriculum, instruction, and programs, Vanessa has focused her work upon improving student outcomes through equity.

Dr. Lori Silver, a former teacher, coach, administrator, and district leader, is dedicated to improving literacy through professional learning and district-wide initiatives. Lori is committed to supporting educators in eliminating the opportunity learning gap for students, with the evidence and research bases of the Science of Reading serving as the foundation for that work.

Dr. Janice Silver joined Lexia with 20 years of education experience at the school, district, and DOE level in multiple states. Over the course of her career, she has contributed a wealth of articles to professional journals, served on international committees, hosted national webinars, presented at national conferences, and led Multilingual learner programs.

Session 2

Dr. Hector Montenegro, president/CEO of Montenegro Consulting Group, LLC, currently works with districts and administrators nationally and internationally on systemic implementation of social emotional learning, instructional strategies for English learners (EL), leadership development for administrators, language and literacy, instructional coaching, and parent engagement. Dr. Montenegro has been a math teacher, principal, chief of staff for the DC Public Schools and superintendent of three school districts in Texas. He is an internationally recognized speaker and presenter throughout the U.S. and abroad in over 23 countries. He obtained his master's from Stanford University and doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin.

Luz Rivera has been in the education field for more than 24 years. She was a multilingual learner when she attended Hartford Public Schools and this experience gave her great insight into the work she does for students. She is passionate about supporting advocacy for multilingual learners and creating inclusive and safe spaces for all students in classrooms while giving them access to quality education. She has a BA in English education, MA in TESOL, and a Sixth-Year in educational leadership from CCSU. Her career as an educator includes experience as a TESOL teacher in middle school and high school for over 12 years, dual language teacher in elementary, dual language instructional coach, assistant principal and, currently, director of multilingual learners. Her professionalism and leadership style has inspired many of her colleagues and has made her the proud recipient of the first, Public Educator Scholarship presented by CALAS in 2017 and, most recently, the Outstanding Leadership Award presented by CAS in 2024. She is looking forward to supporting other leaders in their professional growth.

Jonathan Hull has taught ESOL in a wide range of settings over the past decade. He spent several years in the Bronx, one year in Finland, two years in Panama, and now Region 15 in Connecticut. While the acronyms changed in each place, the needs of multilingual students learning English are similar across the world. Jonathan's experience in New York, Helsinki, and Panama City to Connecticut shaped his approach to teaching ESOL, and is excited to share his learning.

Amy Finsmith is a supervisor of multilingual education in Windham Public Schools, home to the *Compañeros*, *Dos Ríos*, and *Compañeros Unidos* dual language programs. Over the past 25 years she has been a dual language classroom teacher, literacy coach, *maestra de lectura*, dual language specialist, dual language parent, and currently works with the Multistate Association for Bilingual Education (MABE) as the dual language coach network facilitator and a dual language consultant, specializing in dual language program design, curriculum, and instruction. Amy is passionate about helping educators bring high-quality dual language bilingual education to their multilingual students and communities.

Camille Kenner serves as the national curriculum specialist for SA&A at Savvas Learning Company. Before joining Savvas, she spent 15 years as a special education teacher in primary and secondary schools. With her extensive experience collaborating with educational professionals, Camille is dedicated to enhancing student learning through innovative and creative instruction. She is a passionate and enthusiastic educator, committed to fostering a love of learning in children. Camille firmly believes that every student has the potential to learn.

Wayne Eichen has presented at educational conferences across the country for over 30 years. Dedicated to increasing student achievement, he has served as a consultant to the New York State Department of Education and is currently the National Account Executive for Supplemental, Acceleration, and Assessment at Savvas.

As an instructional technology coach in Sarasota, FL, he helped facilitate a one year, 27-point increase in student test scores in math at a Title 1 school with a high ELL population, and continues to promote highly effective programs such as iLit ELL and SIOP® for all students, teachers, and administrators. Wayne has a master's degree in learning disabilities from Southern Connecticut University and is certified in educational leadership in Florida, and ESE K–12 (special education) in Florida, Connecticut, and New York.

Mislal Andom-Lake is a special education teacher with 17 years of experience, currently at Platt Technical High School. Originally from Eritrea, she's a passionate advocate for equitable education, holding degrees in business, education, and educational leadership, and certifications in special education, TESOL, and administration. A mother of two, she became an educator to support diverse learners, particularly in public schools. Outside of teaching, Mislal enjoys traveling, spending time with family, and volunteering with adult education and IRIS, reflecting her commitment to helping newcomers integrate into the community.

Genesis Ryant, a special education teacher at Platt Technical High School, has 11 years of K–12 teaching experience. Originally from New York, she holds a

bachelor's in communication arts, a master's in literacy, and is completing a PhD in literacy with a focus on educational leadership. Certified in special education, general education, and literacy in New York and Connecticut, Genesis is passionate about equitable education, drawing inspiration from her students and two daughters. In her free time, she enjoys dancing, spending time with family and friends, and exploring diverse cuisines.

Dr. Matthew Ciscel is a professor of linguistics at Central Connecticut State University. Originally trained as a teacher of German, he also holds a PhD in linguistics from the University of South Carolina, Columbia. For more than two decades, he has taught TESOL methods, language policy, and other applied linguistics courses at CCSU. His research has focused on language policy and language acquisition in the post-Communist states of Europe and in the United States.

Session 3

Dr. Hector Montenegro, president/CEO of Montenegro Consulting Group, LLC, currently works with districts and administrators nationally and internationally on systemic implementation of social emotional learning, instructional strategies for English learners (EL), leadership development for administrators, language and literacy, instructional coaching, and parent engagement. Dr. Montenegro has been a math teacher, principal, chief of staff for the DC Public Schools and superintendent of three school districts in Texas. He is an internationally recognized speaker and presenter throughout the U.S. and abroad in over 23 countries. He obtained his masters from Stanford University and doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Aneury “Reese” Morales currently serves as Director of Equity and Communications, Deputy of Expulsions, McKinney-Vento liaison for Ansonia Public Schools. Dr. Morales has been a certified teacher and administrator in Connecticut for 26 years. He holds six Connecticut certifications in bilingual education, ESOL, Spanish, FLES, school administrator, and superintendent of schools. Dr. Morales was born in Puerto Rico and came to Connecticut when he was 15 years old as a high school bilingual education student. In 1991, Dr. Morales served as assistant to the director at the Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center while attending the University of Connecticut–Storrs. In 1996, he attended Southern Connecticut State University where he was assistant to the director of the African American Cultural Center and president of OLAS (Organization of Latin American Students). He obtained a master's degree in education from the University of Bridgeport. Dr. Morales attended Fairfield University and Central Connecticut State University to complete the coursework necessary to obtain his teaching certificates and Sacred Heart

University's College of Education for the completion of the 093 Superintendent of Schools and School Administrators Certification Programs. Dr. Morales has taught bilingual education, ESL, English enhancement, and Spanish native language arts.

Jennifer Michalek serves as education consultant for mathematics and computer science at the Connecticut State Department of Education. In this role, she provides leadership and support to the over 200 districts across Connecticut, developing and facilitating professional development opportunities at school, district, and state levels.

With 18 years of classroom experience, Jennifer began her career as a high school mathematics teacher in Region 10, later teaching math and computer science in Simsbury Public Schools. She concluded her classroom tenure as an 8th grade math teacher in Bristol, where she was recognized as Teacher of the Year in 2012.

Jennifer is a co-principal investigator on the Connecticut Noyce Math Teacher Leaders (MTL) Program Team and a partner in the Visual Access to Mathematics project, focusing on supporting middle school educators who serve multilingual and English learner students.

She holds a BS in mathematics and computer science with a minor in secondary education from Stonehill College, and an MA in special education from Central Connecticut State University.

Paul Castiglione serves as the project manager for K–8 Model Curriculum in the academic office at the Connecticut State Department of Education. In this role, he has supported the development of Model Curriculum and the creation of GoOpen CT Connecticut's public digital library of open educational resources. Paul spent over 20 years in North Haven Public Schools in various roles, including 5th grade teacher, district instructional coach, curriculum coordinator for K–6 mathematics, and administrator at both the middle school and high school level before joining the state department in 2021 to support the development of Model Curriculum. He holds BA in economics, an MS in elementary education from IONA University, and his Sixth-Year in educational leadership from Southern Connecticut State University.

Chrissy Bowman is a Multilingual learner consultant for the CREC Resource Group, specializing in assisting educators develop and refine programs, policies, and practices that support multilingual learners while fostering language and academic growth. Chrissy has worked in a variety of contexts, including urban, suburban and rural settings, as well as in many different types of programs, such as dual language, bilingual and push in/pull out ESL. She has worked in districts with both large and small EL/ML populations and knows the unique challenges of each. Her varied experience coupled with her expertise gained from her degrees

in elementary education, Spanish, and bilingual/multicultural education and TESOL allow her to design and implement individualized coaching and professional learning experiences for all districts and educators. Chrissy is passionate about supporting teachers and districts as they work to enhance the experiences of the multilingual learners in their schools.

Sara Swerzoff is an education organizer for Madres Guerreras, a parent committee in the Hartford area with children in the Hartford, CREC, Manchester, East Hartford, Wethersfield, and West Hartford school districts.

Marcelo Sousa, originally from Brazil and now a longstanding U.S. citizen, is a passionate advocate for multilingual learners and equality in public education. With over 17 years of experience, he is a writer, educator, singer, and coach, fluent in many languages. Marcelo holds a bachelor's degree in history and elementary education from Kean University and a graduate degree in TESOL/Bilingual Education with a Sixth-Year degree in educational leadership from Southern Connecticut State University. Certified by The Center for Christian Coaching, he dedicates his time to teaching and public speaking globally, championing educational equality. He excels in training educators, developing and delivering comprehensive programs to equip them with the skills needed to implement effective EL-modified lessons across all grade levels. Additionally, Marcelo collaborates with staff to develop a district-wide ELL data process using "The ELL Critical Data Process," distinguishing between language acquisition and disability, and promoting equitable access to services.

Kristin Bengtson-Mendoza is the lead teacher and instructional coach of the International Academy at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven. With two decades of experience teaching multilingual learners and supporting teachers in public schools in Guatemala, Brooklyn, NY, and New Haven, CT, her areas of interest include programming and instruction for students with limited/interrupted formal education (SLIFE), college and career access for multilingual students, restorative practices, new teacher mentoring and retention, and urban educational policy. She is also a doctoral student of educational leadership and policy studies at Southern Connecticut State University.