

Center for **ENGLISH**
LANGUAGE Learners

at American Institutes for Research ■



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®



ENSURING SUCCESS
for **English Language Learners**
in School Districts

Our APPROACH

WE LISTEN. We understand that each district is unique—from the wide range of students’ backgrounds, to the allocation of qualified teachers, to the resources available to support teachers. We know you need an individualized plan to help English language learners succeed.

WE OBSERVE. In classrooms, we evaluate the way students interact, how curriculum is aligned to core standards, how well instructional methods support English language learners in mastering core content, and how well teachers monitor student progress. At the district level, we review policies and practices related to the successful development of ELL students’ English language, literacy, and core content. Using these observations, we tailor our approach to meet your needs.

WE COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES.

We assist district leaders in allocating resources effectively and in implementing successful ELL programs. We help educators to scaffold grade-appropriate curricular content, to examine data on student progress, and to adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students. We examine school and district level policies and programming and, in collaboration with school and district leaders, develop solutions for improvement.

AIR EXPERTS are adept at solving district- and school-level challenges. Here are some questions we hear from the field:

- How can teachers differentiate curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of diverse English language learners, from newcomers to long-term ELLs?
- What guiding principles can be used to identify and develop instructional materials that support all learners?
- How do educators distinguish learning disabilities from language differences?
- What are effective methods for formatively assessing English language learners’ receptive and productive language and core content knowledge?
- Cultural connections help teachers draw on the home language knowledge, skills, and background experiences of their students. What resources and models are available for making cultural connections?



WE HELP DISTRICTS SUCCEED. At the request of the superintendent and school board of **Hartford (Connecticut) Public Schools**, AIR ELL specialists conducted document reviews, classroom observations, and interviews with district-level leads, school administrators, ESL (English as a second language) specialists, and classroom teachers. Our final report made recommendations for strengthening ELL practices in both elementary and secondary schools across the Hartford district.

“AIR’s findings and recommendations are a key part of our district and school support strategy to close the learning gap between our ELL and non-ELL students.”

Chief of Early Literacy and
Parent Engagement, Hartford (Connecticut)
Public Schools

“As a teacher, I have found the ACCELL professional development provided by the AIR ELL specialists extremely useful and of the highest quality. I’m thrilled to be part of such a worthwhile project.”

ESL Teacher,
Poughkeepsie (New York) Public Schools

In **Poughkeepsie (New York) Public Schools**, with support from the American Federation of Teachers Innovation Fund, AIR specialists used the ACCELL Framework to support ESL secondary school teachers in developing the curriculum and using methods aligned with the Common Core State Standards in English language arts.



In **Albuquerque, New Mexico**, for another project funded by the American Federation of Teachers Innovation Fund, AIR specialists designed practical, research-based ACCELL classroom materials and trained teachers to implement the Common Core State Standards for English language learners.

AIR collaborated with WETA, public television in Washington, D.C., to produce videos of ESL-trained teachers using methods developed in Poughkeepsie. These videos are available at www.colorincolorado.org/teaching-ells/common-core/common-core-videos-lesson-plans#albuquerque, a bilingual website for teachers and families of English language learners. Classroom materials developed in Albuquerque have become national exemplars and are also available on this site.

“These ACCELL projects were a trailblazing effort for the American Federation of Teachers, and the AIR ELL specialists’ extraordinary skills were pivotal in making them a success.”

Associate Director, Educational Issues,
American Federation of Teachers

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. Improve school readiness through curriculum and teacher training using **COLLTS** (Cultivating Oral Language and Literacy Talent in Students), a research-based program developed by AIR to prepare prekindergarten and kindergarten dual-language learners for mastering kindergarten English language arts standards.

K-12 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. Assist districts and schools as they implement curriculum and instruction to meet their states' challenging academic standards using AIR's Attaining Core Content for ELLs (**ACCELL**), a research-based framework for scaffolding core content for English language learners (ELLs).

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SUPPORT. Review current programs and policies to develop resources and structures to improve ELL outcomes; for example, identify students who are struggling as well as those who are excelling; provide guidance on alternative assessments and accommodations to capture ELL learning; and ensure that teacher evaluation systems support effective teaching of English language learners.



Center for **ENGLISH** **LANGUAGE** Learners

at American Institutes for Research ■

The **Center for English Language Learners at AIR** is committed to reducing the achievement gap and improving outcomes for English language learners by conducting rigorous research and connecting research to policy and practice.



Diane August, Ph.D.
daugust@air.org

Diane August, Ph.D., leads the center. She is supported by a skilled AIR team with experience working with numerous schools, districts, universities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to help English language learners achieve success.

Washington, DC

Diane August, Ph.D.; Ashley Simpson Baird, Ph.D.; Lisa Tabaku, M.A.T.

California

Jennifer O'Day, Ph.D.

Chicago

Patricia Garcia-Arena, Ph.D.

Southeast Region

Heidi Goertzen, Ph.D., Laura Golden, M.A.

Texas

Linda Cavazos, Ph.D.

For more information, contact ELLCenter@air.org.



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835

www.air.org

About American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research on important social issues and delivers technical assistance, both domestically and internationally, in the areas of education, health, and workforce productivity.