



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

CAL CENTER
FOR APPLIED
LINGUISTICS



MISSION & CORE VALUES

The mission of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is to promote language learning and cultural understanding by serving as a trusted source for research, resources, and policy analysis. Through its work, CAL seeks solutions to issues involving language and culture as they relate to access and equity in education and society around the globe.

CAL also has a set of core values that guide its endeavors and help us focus our efforts.

These values, outlined below, reflect CAL's commitment to promoting access, equity, and mutual understanding for linguistically and culturally diverse people worldwide

- Languages and cultures are important individual and societal resources.
- All languages, dialects, and cultures deserve to be respected and cultivated.
- Multilingualism is beneficial for individuals and society.
- Effective language education should be widely available.
- Accurate information should be the basis for policies and practices that involve language and culture.
- Language skills and cultural knowledge should be valued in work situations.
- Language and cultural differences should not be obstacles to personal or group success or well-being.

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Through Fiscal Year 2024, the Center for Applied Linguistics has maintained a strong and positive trajectory in advancing its mission and operational impact. I am grateful to all CAL staff for their unwavering commitment to CAL’s mission and for their excellence and rigor in delivering CAL’s services. My heartfelt thanks also go to my CAL Board of Trustees colleagues for their invaluable guidance, contributions, wisdom, and support. I am pleased to welcome our new board members—Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, David Cassels Johnson, Francis Hult, and Maria Adelaida Restrepo—whose expertise and dedication will enhance CAL’s efforts to promote multilingualism by supporting first-language enrichment and second-language learning. I am also excited and delighted to welcome Dr. Diep Nguyen as the new CAL President and CEO!

Dr. Diep succeeds Dr. Joel Gómez, who advanced CAL’s sustainability, legacy, and mission over the past seven years. Dr. Gómez’s lifelong research, policy, and practice accomplishments in higher education and public education have advanced equity in multilingual education, earning him the Ramón Santiago Award from the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) in 2018 and the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2022.

This past period has been one of remarkable progress for CAL. Programmatically, CAL staff have launched innovative initiatives, such as the updated BEST Literacy assessment, furthered valuable partnerships, and expanded research efforts, particularly in dual-language education and world-language instruction. Administratively, CAL has continued refining its operations to support a nationally located hybrid workforce while strengthening HR practices and implementing new technologies. Financially, CAL has achieved a record operational net surplus and secured significant savings through tactical planning and decision-making. On the IT front, CAL has expanded its digital infrastructure, ensuring seamless support for both onsite and remote staff for the sales of CAL online services while laying the groundwork for future AI integration.

Looking ahead, the Board of Trustees remains committed to supporting CAL’s mission to promote language learning and cultural understanding as a trusted source for research, resources, and policy analysis in education and society. I support CAL’s aspirational goal to continue its leadership role in applied linguistics by supporting its staff in delivering high-quality services and harnessing the power of artificial intelligence to transform CAL’s wealth of online assets. By integrating high-tech innovation into CAL’s systems, CAL will offer a dynamic, user-centered experience that amplifies the impact of CAL’s research, educational resources, and professional development offerings, thus advancing equity and excellence in supporting multilingualism and language education locally and globally.

The commitment of CAL’s staff to CAL’s mission and the unwavering support of the CAL Board of Trustees for CAL operations are the cornerstones of CAL’s success. We are poised to navigate future opportunities and challenges with resilience, purpose, and optimism.

With sincere appreciation,

Dr. Liying Cheng

*Chairperson for the Board of Trustees
Center for Applied Linguistics*



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), I am delighted to present the CAL annual report for 2024.

I was honored to join CAL in July of 2024 as its President and CEO, following Dr. Joel Gómez, who retired after six years of leadership. CAL as an organization was known to me since the 1980s as I began my graduate studies, and it has always been the “go-to resource” for me, whether I was conducting research, administering an educational program, or engaging in teacher professional development. To be selected to lead such a legacy organization is the pinnacle of my career as a multilingual educator and a formidable challenge.

During my short tenure thus far, as I learn more about CAL’s contributions to the applied linguistics and language education field in the past 60 years, I am struck by the breadth and depth of CAL’s impact on researchers, educators, and students at every level in the U.S. and abroad. The wide range of endeavors that the organization is currently undertaking is a clear reflection of the legacy that CAL has built over its history. I am confident that, as you review the 2024 report, you will agree that the organization continues to meet the goals of its mission to promote language learning and cultural understanding by serving as a trusted source for research, resources, and policy analysis. The 2024 annual report highlights several contributions that CAL made this year in the areas of language and educational research, assessment development, professional development and resources, and advocacy. As a new leader, I am grateful for the contributions of CAL staff who continue to advance CAL’s mission in their daily work.

We live in an unprecedented time where diversity is under attack, and language rights as well as educational rights are being denied. As an organization that champions multilingualism and equity in education, CAL stands firm in our conviction to support researchers, educators, and policymakers in their efforts to ensure that all students have safe schools where they can belong and learn and that all language learners continue to have the opportunities to develop their multilingual skills.

CAL’s continued success is a testament that multilingualism and language education matter. I am proud to present this annual report detailing our activities and accomplishments in 2024. I am grateful for your continued interest and the support of the CAL Board of Trustees and staff to achieve CAL’s mission.

With gratitude,

Diep Nguyen, Ph.D.

*President
Center for Applied Linguistics*



PROGRAM AREAS: PK-12 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY (PK-12)

PROGRAM AREAS: PK-12 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY (PK-12)



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

- **Kia Johnson,**
Director, PK-12 Language and Literacy
- **Marybelle Marrero-Colón,**
Associate Director of Professional Development Relations
- **Ali Alahmadi,**
Professional Development Business Coordinator
- **Marilyn Raphael,**
Administrative Specialist

Achievements and Outcomes

The PK-12 Language and Literacy team continued to provide high-quality professional development nationwide and saw strong enrollment in online courses and professional development institutes. Highlights of 2024 included a two-part professional development project with Jefferson County Schools in Kentucky, which provided virtual workshops and in-person training on the CAL SIOP Model at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, and an expanded partnership with Anne Arundel County Public Schools that allowed all schools in the county to procure professional development services. The team partnered with Vista Higher Learning to deliver culturally responsive advocacy sessions to over 700 educators in Prince George's County, Maryland, during the district's professional development day in August 2024. They also sponsored the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association's Advocacy Action Days Dinner on July 22, 2024, in Alexandria, Virginia, where attendees met CAL's new President and Chief Executive Officer, Diep Nguyen.

Internationally, they facilitated a six-day virtual workshop series for St. Paul American School in Hanoi, Vietnam, where teachers engaged in real-time implementation planning.



In the summer of 2024, the team hosted in-person professional development institutes in Chevy Chase, Maryland. More than 60 participants from across North America attended the CAL SIOP Training of Trainers

Foundations, the Advanced Coaching Strategies, and the CAL SIOP Overview workshops. The team also provided CAL-branded materials and digital badges to all attendees. In FY2024, the unit moved to a digital handout distribution tool, reducing copy fees and paper waste across its projects. This new tool, FlippingBook, debuted during the in-person CAL SIOP Training-of-Trainers Advanced Coaching Strategies Institute, where participants appreciated seamless navigation and direct slide access. The unit planned to expand the use of FlippingBook to distribute the new Digital Badge Catalog, allowing clients to access professional development service details in a digital format.



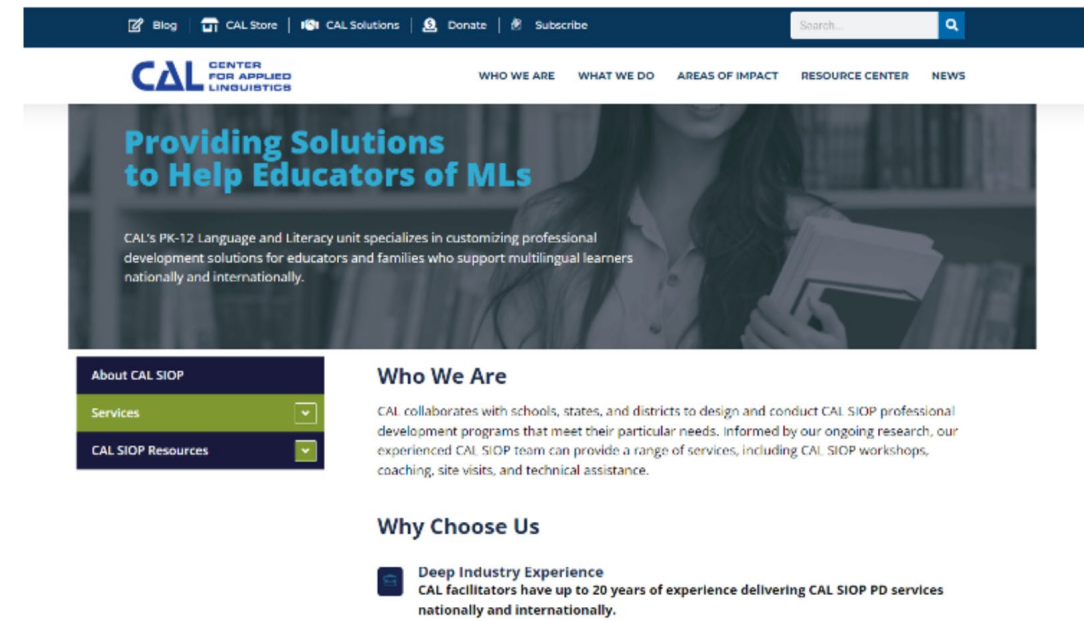
After a well-received response to a presentation at the 2023 WIDA Conference, facilitated by Maria Cieslak, the PK-12 Unit was interviewed for three episodes of ML Chat: Conversations with Multilingual Educators, a podcast hosted by Flashlight Learning. Director Kia Johnson, along with Associate Directors Marybelle Marrero-Colón and Maria Cieslak, shared insights and expertise on key topics such as grow-your-own pathways for multilingual educators, strategies for supporting MLs with disabilities, and methods for igniting a passion for STEM in ML students while they learned English. Their participation highlighted CAL's commitment to advancing multilingual education through shared knowledge and practical strategies.

March 6, 2024: [Maria Cieslak on Igniting Student Passion for STEM and Language Integration](#)

April 3, 2024: [Kia Johnson on Education Leadership and Advocacy Insights](#)

May 1, 2024: [Marybelle Marrero-Colón on Uplifting English Learners with Disabilities](#)

2024 also saw a revitalization of the CAL SIOP web page, bringing new research and resources to educators and researchers who want to learn more about CAL's take on the SIOP Model and its long history with this framework.



TESTIMONIALS

"This has been one of the MOST beneficial PDs I have attended. The instructors were engaging and truly invested in what they were presenting. Thank you so much!"

—Participant of CAL SIOP Training of Trainers: Foundations Institute, facilitated by Marybelle Marrero-Colón and Deena Marshall in July 2024

"Great session! Incredible, informative, and engaging. I appreciated the time to put things into practice and to process the information with colleagues."

—Participant of English Learners and Effective Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Strategies Institute, facilitated by Marybelle Marrero-Colón, Ruth McMullen, and Ashley Millet in July 2024

"The institute was phenomenal! We were 'fed' with rich opportunities to strengthen knowledge, raise awareness, and utilize thinking/planning time and resources to feed our ongoing work for future program and system improvements. Thank you!"

—Participant of Newcomers in Your School Institute, facilitated by Maria Cieslak in May 2024

The unit saw strong enrollment in online courses and professional development institutes in 2024, enrolling participants in four online courses and revising and relaunching the Fundamentals of SIOP course. CAL has also continued to respond to the demand from the field for digital badging credentials for PD participants. The team worked to expand digital badging, increasing engagement, strengthening the CAL SIOP brand, and driving professional learning demand – and issued 220 unique digital badges in 2024.



PROGRAM AREAS: DUAL LANGUAGE AND MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION (DLME)

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

- Lisa Tabaku,
Director
- Igone Arteagoitia,
Research Specialist
- Ali Alahmadi,
DLME Support
- Marilyn Raphael,
DLME Support

Achievements and Outcomes

The Dual Language and Multilingual Education (DLME) unit completed multiple program evaluations across the U.S. in 2024. These included evaluations of dual language programs in Port Chester Rye School District in New York, Porterville Unified School District and Guadalupe Union School District in California, and middle school programs in Pasco, Washington. It also evaluated services for kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) multilingual learners in dual language and English language development (ELD) programs in Kent School District in Washington state. The unit wrapped up an evaluation of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade (PK-12) Mandarin and Spanish dual language programs in Capistrano Unified School District in California and an evaluation of a single school's Spanish-English program in San Marcos County School District in California. It also conducted a short-term dual language feasibility study for Lowell Public Schools in summer 2024.

The unit continued to provide Grand Rapids Public Schools with technical assistance guidance and professional development for Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual program improvement. It also provided consultation and professional development to Clark County Public Schools, Nevada, to assist with the development of new dual programs.

The team provided curriculum mapping and literacy support to school districts implementing Spanish language programs. It supported Alexandria City Public Schools in Virginia in mapping a new kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) Spanish literacy curriculum in fall 2023 and followed up with professional development in Spanish language and literacy in early 2024. The unit also provided dual language professional development to educators in multiple locations, conducting in-person training sessions for dual language leaders and teachers in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Suffern, New York; and Portland, Oregon. It facilitated virtual training sessions for educators in Palmdale, California, and Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The unit supported international and specialized programs. It delivered CAL SIOP for dual language training to a Japanese-English dual language program in Georgia. It provided remote professional development to an Arabic-English elementary school in Doha, Qatar, and followed up on a dual language program review conducted during a site visit to the school in summer 2023.

The unit provided technical assistance, professional development, and evaluations across multiple projects. It delivered technical assistance and professional development to five school districts, conducted professional development on six projects, and completed programmatic and instructional evaluations for eight additional projects.

The team expanded its support for dual language educators by delivering remote professional development institutes throughout the year. It facilitated seven institute sessions across the span of the year. The unit welcomed program administrators, school leaders, dual language teachers, and resource staff to these sessions, which focused on dual language program implementation, instructional strategies, and literacy development.

The unit conducted two Leading Dual Language Programs for Student Success sessions, which provided school and district administrators with strategies for implementing dual language programs. It also delivered two sessions of CAL SIOP for Dual Language Instruction: Developing Academic Language and Content in Two Languages, which trained educators on integrating content and language instruction across dual language settings. These four sessions served 84 participants from 20 states.

The unit delivered three sessions of Language and Literacy Instruction for Spanish/English Emergent Bilingual Learners, two sessions in English and one in Spanish. The three sessions of these institutes served 71 participants from 16 states.

The team developed two new professional development institutes focused on biliteracy development and instruction to expand its offerings for the following year. It designed one institute in Spanish and one in English, ensuring access for educators in both program languages. The unit planned to offer these institutes at two levels, Foundations and Advanced, allowing participants to deepen their knowledge and instructional strategies in biliteracy development.

TESTIMONIALS

"Phenomenal PD! It made me aware of how my students (Spanish speaking, especially but in general, my ELs) experience learning English and the ways that the connections they make prove their understanding of language."

"It was a great institute. Its content is based on current research and its findings, and on best practices that derived from this research. The presentation was organized and shared in a clear manner with the participants. It is an institute I would recommend to anyone interested in the development of biliteracy and bilingualism in the emergent language learners. Thank you!"

"This was the first course I have taken at CAL (my own personal professional development rather than as a professional requirement). It was thoroughly informative, interactive, and engaging. [The presenter] did a wonderful job integrating/modeling the strategies she was teaching. I'm looking forward to taking other CAL Institutes classes."

"The program was packed with invaluable information. Resources were so helpful. Overall, the sessions were beneficial and practical. It was very well paced with interesting content and group conversations. The instructor was very pleasant and professional. Thank you very much!"





PROGRAM AREAS: ADULT LITERACY AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION (ALLE)

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

- Katherine Moran,
Director, Adult Language and Literacy Education
- Mathilda Reckford,
Adult Language and Literacy Education Specialist

Achievements and Outcomes

The Adult Literacy and Language Education (ALLE) unit administered the English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) program in partnership with Georgetown University's English Language Center and the Institute of International Education. The EHLS program provided intensive English language training for proficient speakers of Department of Defense-designated critical languages who sought professional careers in the federal government. The EHLS program operated under sponsorship from the National Security Education Program (NSEP) within the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO). Katherine Moran served as project director for the program at CAL.

The unit supported 18 scholars in the EHLS 2024 cohort, who completed the program and graduated in August 2024. Prior to graduation, the scholars presented their open-source analysis projects (OSAP) at a symposium held in June 2024 at Georgetown University. The scholars addressed various critical issues, including Russian information operations and the impact of conflict on healthcare access in Ethiopia. The high-caliber presentations received positive feedback and assisted scholars in their job search efforts.

The unit launched the EHLS 2025 application cycle in February 2024, following a standard review process by DLNSEO, CAL, and the Institute of International Education. DLNSEO provided the recruitment language list, which included Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Persian Farsi, Russian, Ukrainian, Korean, Turkish, Hausa, and Kazakh.

The unit executed a strategic recruitment season led by Mathilda Reckford. The recruitment process included in-person outreach in Los Angeles, Houston, and New York, where Mathilda Reckford attended festivals and community events to engage potential applicants. The recruitment efforts also included webinars and a social media campaign focusing on Mandarin Chinese speakers at the request of DLNSEO. The recruitment efforts generated 160 applications, including 23 Mandarin Chinese applicants, the highest number in several years. The top 50 applicants were scheduled to complete additional language testing, and the program notified the 18 final awardees in mid-October 2024.

An innovative aspect of the EHLS program is the development of professional competencies in addition to language proficiency. To better understand the outcomes of this dimension, CAL developed an assessment—the Professional Performance Assessment (PPA)—to measure growth in pragmatic competence in the federal workplace. The EHLS team administered the PPA post-assessment to the 2024 cohort in August 2024 and in order to analyze and compare the pre- and post-assessment results to measure participant growth. CAL now has several years of data showing a distinct trend of improvement in pragmatic competence for scholars between the beginning and the end of the EHLS program. CAL staff, including Mathilda Reckford, Leslie Fink, and Katherine Moran, presented on PPA rubric development and rater training at the East Coast Organization of Language Testers (ECOLT) conference in October 2023 and the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) conference in March 2024.

In addition to EHLS work, the ALLE team engaged in several other projects in 2024.

The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), the largest state public health survey in the nation, is a web and telephone survey that includes questions of interest to health policymakers and others on various health topics. CHIS provides representative data on all 58 counties in California and offers a detailed picture of the health and healthcare needs of California's large and diverse population. CAL continued to support the California Public Health Institute, which administers this survey, by completing a linguistic review of 2024 survey items with a focus on plain and accessible language.

The team also provided professional development services to educators of adult learners of English. In November 2023, CAL offered a two-part professional development webinar series for adult English language instructors. The webinars focused on CAL's Eight Principles for Effective Adult Language Education and included classroom activities and ideas for incorporating the principles into teaching. Webinar recordings are available on CAL's website.

The unit continued its role as the English as a Second Language (ESL) strand partner for the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference. It reviewed around 70 proposals, assisted proposal authors with submission questions, and provided organizational support for accepted proposals.

PROGRAM AREAS: CAL-WIDA PARTNERSHIP (CAL-WIDA)



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Management

- Justin Kelly,
Senior Director, CAL-WIDA Partnership
- Jimmy Lee,
Director of Program Operations, CAL-WIDA Partnership
- Shu Jing Yen,
Senior Director, Psychometrics and Quantitative Research
- Tanya Bitterman,
Associate Director, Test Development
- Dale Ingram,
Manager, Test Production

Test Development (TD)

- Michele Kawood, *Test Development Manager*
- Samantha Musser, *Test Development Manager*
- Rebecca Pred-Sosa, *Test Development Manager*
- Sharry Vahed, *Test Assembly Manager*
- Christy Shepherd, *Kindergarten Test Development Manager*
- Ian Bradley, *Language Testing Specialist*
- Shauna Cannon, *Language Testing Specialist*
- Melissa Cheston, *Language Testing Specialist*
- Regina DiBella, *Kindergarten Language Testing Specialist*
- Ashley Gurule Sauerwein, *Language Testing Specialist*
- Rachel Miles, *Language Testing Specialist*
- Megan Welch, *Language Testing Specialist*
- Alexandra Herbert, *Senior Test Development Assistant*
- Victoria Burges, *Test Development Assistant*
- Leah Cave, *Test Development Assistant*
- Jackie Jackson, *Desktop Publishing Graphic Designer*

Test Production

- Todd Rudolph, *Technology Lead*
- Kim Balacuit, *Production Artist*
- William Evans, *Production Artist*
- Stephanie Galvez, *Production Artist*
- Irina Mukhutdinova, *Production Artist*
- Adam Neubauer, *Production Artist*
- Basra Abdillahi-Chire, *Test Assembly Specialist*
- Elizabeth Pavlova, *Test Assembly Specialist*

Psychometrics and Quantitative Research (PQR)

- Frank Wucinski, *Project Manager*
- Yamei Wang, *Quantitative Team Lead*
- Seong Eun Hong, *Psychometrician*
- Yage (Leah) Guo, *Psychometrician*
- Yu Lan Su, *Senior Psychometrician*
- Sofia Buitrago, *Quantitative Research Assistant*
- Reshmi Kumpakha, *Quantitative Research Assistant*
- Aubrey Sahouria, *Quantitative Research Assistant*
- Jasmine Tsai, *Quantitative Research Assistant*
- Jung Jung Lee, *Intern*

Achievements and Outcomes

The CAL-WIDA Partnership Team continued its longstanding collaboration with WIDA to develop, analyze, and produce high-quality English language assessments. The team supported WIDA's mission to advance academic language development and achievement for culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth. It contributed test development, psychometric research, and technical expertise to support more than 2.5 million students who took ACCESS for ELLs annually.

ACCESS for ELLs Field Testing and Development

Between October 2023 and September 2024, the team conducted comprehensive test development activities for ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Screener. The CAL Test Development Team—led by Associate Director of Test Development Tanya Bitterman; Test Development Managers Michele Kawood, Samantha Musser, and Rebecca Pred-Sosa; Test Assembly Manager Sharry Vahed; Manager of Test Production Dale Ingram; and Technology Lead Todd Rudolph—developed new test materials through a rigorous quality control process. This process included educator input, sourcing verification, fact-checking, mock administration, layout review, and quality control checks.

The team developed items and tasks for upcoming field testing in all four domains, including extensive pilot administration and analysis of new Writing tasks. It facilitated Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews with educators both virtually and in person.

PROGRAM AREAS: CAL-WIDA PARTNERSHIP (CAL-WIDA) CONTINUED

ACCESS for ELLs Operational Assessments and Research

The team completed technical analysis and operational test development for ACCESS for ELLs assessments. The Psychometrics and Quantitative Research Team—led by Senior Director Shu Jing Yen—analyzed field test data from the 2023–2024 school year. The team conducted multiple statistical analyses to ensure the measurement quality of the assessment in all domains.

The team assembled ACCESS for ELLs operational test forms for the 2024–2025 school year. The Test Development Team delivered computer-based test packages, print-based administrator scripts, and supporting materials for ACCESS for ELLs Online and ACCESS for ELLs Paper. It collaborated with WIDA and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to refine scoring rubrics, anchor responses, and rater training materials for operational administration.

Innovations in WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition

The team continued collaborative efforts to align WIDA assessments to the WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition. The Test Development and Psychometrics and Quantitative Research Teams, led by Associate Director of Test Development Tanya Bitterman, collaborated to finalize a new scoring rubric for the Writing subtest, ensuring alignment to updated Proficiency Level Descriptors. They conducted score distribution analyses, rater agreement evaluations, and training module updates to support assessment implementation.

TESTIMONIALS

Educators who participated in the Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews shared the following reflections:

“It was great to be part of this event. Thank you so much for inviting us to the review process. I learned a lot about how much is going on behind the scenes of thinking how to assess English language learners.”

“I am proud to have been able to advocate for my students.”

“I also loved learning how much time, consideration, and thought goes into making these tests.”

“ACCESS test development is very thorough. We can trust students will have an opportunity to show their language proficiency free from bias and sensitivity.”

PROGRAM AREAS: LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESEARCH (LAIR)



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

- Anna Zilberberg,
Senior Director, Language Assessment and Instructional Research
- Jamie Morgan,
Senior Project Manager
- Elyssa Wen Sun,
Associate Project Manager
- Leslie Fink,
Senior Research Assistant
- Rachel Myers,
Senior Research Assistant
- Jenna Bushton,
Research Assistant
- Amya McKoy,
Customer Relations Specialist
- Anya Larson,
Customer Support Assistant

Achievements and Outcomes

During the reporting period, the Language Assessment and Instructional Research (LAIR) unit led language assessment development, instructional research, and professional learning initiatives.

BEST Assessments

The unit oversaw BEST assessments for adult English language learners, including content development, test sales, delivery, administrator training, and client relations. CAL offers BEST Plus, which measures speaking and listening proficiency, and BEST Literacy, which measures reading and writing proficiency.

In response to newly updated National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Level (EFL) descriptors, CAL redeveloped BEST assessments to align with the new standards and meet updated best practices in assessment. The new test products went through a technical review by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). OCTAE approved BEST Plus 3.0 and BEST Literacy 2.0 for use by federally funded programs that report data through the NRS for seven years, until July 2030.

The unit launched BEST Literacy 2.0 in early 2024, and BEST Plus 3.0 in fall 2024.



The launch of both products included the development of online, self-paced test administrator training courses on CAL's Moodle platform to ensure administrators were prepared to administer the new assessment. The unit plans to oversee the transition of more than 2,000 test administrators from over 300 adult education programs nationwide before the sunset period for BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy in summer 2025.

To support clients, the unit expanded client support and communications to facilitate the transition, including onboarding additional staff to handle inquiries. It updated the Adult English Assessment website (www.cal.org/aea), created stakeholder FAQs, launched new landing pages, and provided webinars and custom presentations to state-level clients. It also promoted BEST assessments at the Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conferences. The unit produced an informational video on the new generation of BEST assessments.

NYSESLAT

CAL continued its multi-year partnership with MetriTech to develop items for the speaking portion of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), an assessment of English oral proficiency for all English language learners enrolled in Grades K–12 in New York State schools.

Instructional Research in World Languages

The unit continued its longstanding partnership with the Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center (AELRC) at Georgetown University. It hosted the 2023 East Coast Organization of Language Testers (ECOLT) conference, which attracted 100 participants, 15 paper presentations, and nine poster presentations. Post-conference survey responses were positive.

“The conference was fantastic from the organization to the talks and posters. It was a very professional and welcoming place!”

The unit also hosted a one-day institute on world language program evaluation in June 2024, serving 14 participants. Participants praised the training as one of the most useful they had attended.

In FY2024, LAIR began work on two grants recently funded by the Department of Education's International Research and Studies (IRS) program and completed work on a third project.



PROGRAM AREAS: LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESEARCH (LAIR) CONTINUED

SPOTLIGHT: THE CENTER FOR THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS (CSEL)

The project Strengthening K-16 Language Program Articulation to Expand National Foreign Language Capacity focuses on identifying world language program models and practices that promote smooth transitions between different program levels, particularly between K-12 and higher education. In the project Building an Effective Heritage Language Program: Training for K-12 Teachers, Administrators, and Families, the team developed and disseminated self-access training courses to assist educators in building programs that respond to the unique needs of heritage language learners. In the third project, World Language Assessment for PreK-8 Learners, the team created a self-access, computer-based training program for CAL's world language assessment tools for PreK-8 learners: the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) and the Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA).

CAL was also a partner with STARTALK, a federal critical-need language learning initiative funded by the National Security Agency. CAL's STARTALK Excellent Language Program Evaluation (ELPE) project developed and delivered an online teacher training program to teach 15 educators of critical languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and Russian, how to design and implement a high-quality language program evaluation. The STARTALK Performance Assessment Training Program (SPAT) equipped K-16 teachers of Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian, and Russian with the technical knowledge and practical skills to develop and use performance-based assessments in their local contexts. STARTALK Career Pathways: Connecting Heritage Learners to Federal Careers built workforce capacity in the federal government to meet national security needs.



In May 2024, Educational Researcher, a Sage Publications journal, published the brief "Ever English Learner 4-Year Graduation: Toward an Intersectional Approach" by Ben Le, Kristin E. Black, Coleen Carlson, Jeremy Miciak, Lindsay Romano, David Francis, and Michael J. Kieffer. The study analyzed high school graduation rates among English Learners in New York City, examining disparities based on gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. CAL distributed the brief to more than 70,000 contacts via email and social media. Through these efforts, CAL expanded the reach of CSEL's research and resources through its digital outreach initiatives.

In FY2024, CAL continued to serve as the national outreach and dissemination partner for the Center for the Success of English Learners (CSEL), a federally funded research center focused on improving educational outcomes for English Learners (ELs) in secondary schools. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, CSEL conducted research to identify barriers to EL academic success, develop instructional strategies, and inform policy during the reporting period. It examined content-based language instruction, unit-based learning, and formative assessment to enhance EL learning in science and social studies.

While CSEL's Twitter follower count remained steady, CAL's outreach unit ensured greater visibility by sharing CSEL content with more than 70,000 email contacts and social media followers. The CSEL website also experienced increased site sessions and unique visitors during FY2024. This growth in website traffic reflected the effectiveness of CAL's communication strategies and outreach efforts.

During the reporting period, CAL assisted CSEL in planning its annual conference, which included creating a registration website. The goal was to build on the previous year's event and support a successful 2024 conference.

In this way, CAL reinforced its role as CSEL's outreach partner by supporting conference planning, research dissemination, and digital engagement. CAL's initiatives ensured that CSEL's work reached a broad audience of educators, policymakers, and researchers, enhancing its impact in the field of English Learner education.

SPOTLIGHT: MULTILINGUAL MULTIMODAL SCIENCE INVENTORY (M2-SI)

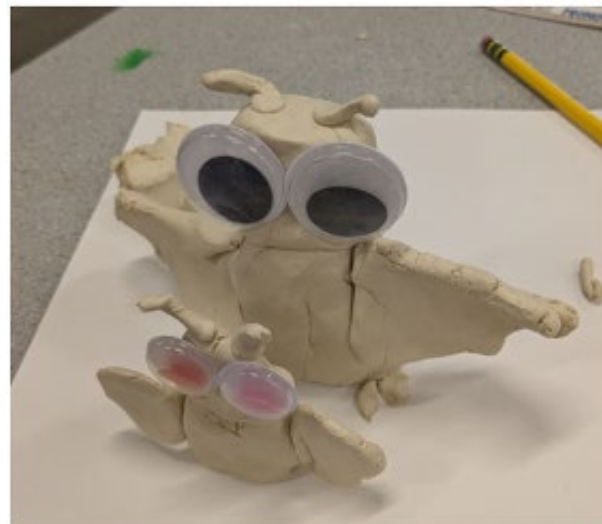
TEAM SPOTLIGHT

- Dr. Keira Ballantyne,
VP Programs and Development (Co-PI)
- Dr. Amy Burden,
Multilingual Multimodal Test Development Manager
- Brittany York,
Senior Research Assistant

CAL continued its partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to develop the [Multilingual Multimodal Science Inventory \(M2-Si\)](#). This project, funded by a 2022 U.S. Department of Education Competitive Grant for State Assessments, aimed to create a formative e-portfolio assessment that supported multilingual students in upper elementary science classes. The M2-Si centered multilingual learners in the design process and aimed to allow educators to understand what students know and could do in science, not just what they know and could do in science *in English*.

CAL worked with NCDPI to integrate multimodal and multilingual assessment strategies into the M2-Si e-portfolio, ensuring that science instruction and assessment reflected the needs of North Carolina's growing multilingual student population. In 2022–2023, North Carolina public schools enrolled more than 146,000 English Learners (ELs), representing 9% of the state's student population. The M2-Si project addressed this demographic shift by incorporating linguistically responsive assessment practices into science education.

In the second year of the grant, the CAL team engaged a group of 14 educator-researchers to co-construct a set of standards-aligned classroom assessment activities that elicited engagement from students using their full linguistic and communicative repertoire. Students were invited to engage with materials in their language of choice or to use communicative modes such as drawing, model-making, constructing diagrams, or using gestures to engage in scientific sense-making. In spring 2024, the team pilot-tested these activities with 11 educators and 279 students, collecting classroom observations, teacher reflections, student think-alouds, and more than 950 student samples. The team also engaged the educator-researchers in an ongoing professional learning community. Analysis of this data was ongoing, but initial results suggested that students and educators were able to engage in scientific sense-making in situations where they did not share a common language.



A student's representation of her understanding of adaptive body structures – the owl and the baby owl have exaggerated eyes, which allow them to hunt for food at night.

TESTIMONIAL

“Suddenly my students who don't speak any English were engaged, making connections to their life of what they had seen in their home country, and sharing their thoughts and experiences excitedly with the class.”

— Fourth-grade educator participant in the M2-Si pilot

SPOTLIGHT: RESEARCH TO POLICY: CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION WEBINARS



The *Research to Policy: Critical Conversations in Language Education* webinar series continued to serve as a platform for advancing discussions on key issues in multilingual education. The 2023–24 theme, *Technologically Mediated Learning in Multilingual Contexts*, explored the impact of digital tools on language learning, with a focus on accessibility, equity, and innovation. The series brought together educators, researchers, and policymakers to engage in meaningful conversations that informed and inspired action.

The webinars featured discussions such as *Teaching Multilingual Learners with Generative AI: Affordances, Limitations, and Policy Implications*; *Artificial Intelligence and the Future of International Schools*; and *Bias in Automatic Speech Recognition: The Case of African American Language*. These sessions examined how emerging technologies shaped the future of language education and provided insights into best practices for leveraging AI in equitable and responsible ways. Additional webinars, including *Technology Integration: Language Education for Immigrant Adults and Responsible AI in Assessment*, highlighted innovative approaches to supporting multilingual learners and ensuring fairness in digital learning environments.

Participation remained strong, with several webinars recording more than 700 registrations and attendance reaching approximately 300 participants per session. Recorded sessions received more than 800 views, extending the series' reach beyond the live events. Educators comprised the largest group of attendees, followed by researchers, administrators, and

policymakers, which demonstrated the series' effectiveness in engaging a broad range of stakeholders in the field.

The planning committee strengthened its efforts to ensure speaker diversity and representation, bringing forward perspectives from underrepresented voices. The series fostered collaboration with professionals from institutions and organizations aligned with CAL's mission, expanding networking opportunities and reinforcing CAL's leadership in language education policy. By focusing on inclusivity and expert-driven content, the webinars provided valuable knowledge and actionable insights to a wide audience.

The series met its objectives of equipping CAL stakeholders with research and positioning CAL as a thought leader in policy discussions. Positive feedback and sustained engagement confirmed that the series made a meaningful impact in the field. Moving forward, CAL plans to build on this success, refining our approach and expanding the reach of these conversations to further support multilingual learners and educators.

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

- Nick Scherf,
Communications Director
- Althea Rowe,
Communications Coordinator

Achievements and Outcomes

During the reporting period, the Communications unit managed internal and external communications, digital engagement, and marketing strategies for CAL. The unit collaborated with administrative and programmatic units to produce high-quality content, including email campaigns and social media updates. It enhanced CAL's digital presence by improving website content and design. The unit coordinated and promoted events such as webinars and facilitated internal communication through the SharePoint intranet, the Corpus, where staff and associates accessed essential resources.

The unit broadened external engagement through various channels, including email and social media campaigns, newsletters, and website improvements. Communications launched a mid-month update newsletter, CAL News Snapshot, to complement the end-of-month CAL News newsletter. These newsletters were designed to complement the monthly newsletter, CAL News.

Publications Update



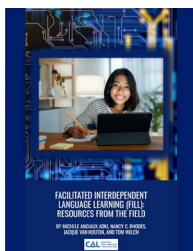
[“Right from the Start: Enriching Learning Experiences for Multilingual Learners Through Multiliteracies”](#)

Author: Margo Gottlieb
Date: 2023

Publisher: Center for Applied Linguistics
“Selected Poster Presentations from the American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference 2023: Supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): Effective Policies, Practices, and Programs”

Authors: Jamie Morgan, Megan Montee, and Francesca Di Silvio
Date: 2023

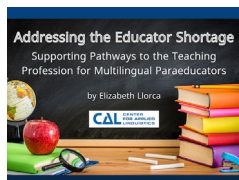
Publication: *Language Teaching*, 56(4), 562-565
DOI: 10.1017/S0261444823000290



[Supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\): Effective Policies, Practices, and Programs](#)

Authors: Jamie Morgan, Megan Montee, and Francesca Di Silvio
Date: 2023

Publication: *Language Teaching*, 56(4), 562-565
DOI: 10.1017/S0261444823000290



[“Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning \(FILL\): Resources from the Field”](#)

Authors: Michele Anciaux Aoki, Nancy C. Rhodes, Jacque Van Houten, and Tom Welch
Date: 2024

Publisher: Center for Applied Linguistics

[“Addressing the Educator Shortage: Supporting Pathways to the Teaching Profession for Multilingual Paraeducators”](#)

Author: Elizabeth Llorca
Date: 2024

Publisher: Center for Applied Linguistics

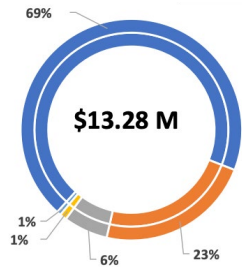
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- Lolita Hewett-King,
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- Christina Selden,
Associate Director of Finance
- Melanie Richards,
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- Sabrina Parker,
Senior Manager Operations

CAL's financial, accounting, contractual, and operating elements are led by CAL's VP of Finance, and managed and implemented by a dedicated team of professionals with expertise across these areas.

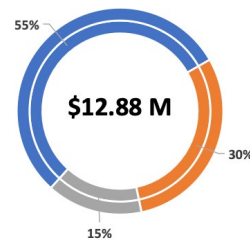


FY24 SOURCE OF FUNDS



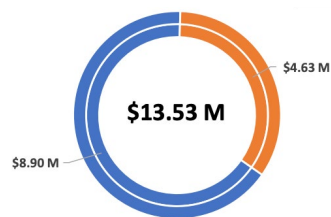
- Contracts & Grants
- Consulting Fees & Workshops
- Testing
- Products & Publications
- Other

FY24 USE OF FUNDS



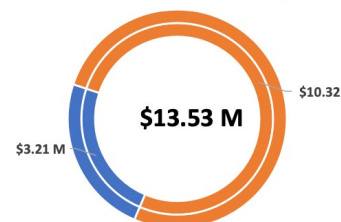
- Salaries, Wages & Benefits
- Consultants, Purchased Services, Pass-thru & Subcontract Costs
- Other Program Expenses & Support Services

FY24 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION ASSETS



- Cash, Receivables & Investments
- Other Assets

FY24 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS



- Liabilities
- Net Assets

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