

**POLICY PRIORITY #2:**

# EXPAND LANGUAGE ACCESS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

*Language Justice in Education*

## CORE MESSAGE

Language should never be a barrier to belonging. Latine students, multilingual learners (MLLs), and immigrant families face isolation when schools fail to provide equitable access to communication, resources, and decision-making.

Too often, students are asked to act as interpreters for their parents, or families are excluded from vital conversations about their child's education. By investing in language access and family engagement, North Carolina can ensure that every family is a full partner in their child's success.

## WHY IT MATTERS:

### FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE SUCCESS:

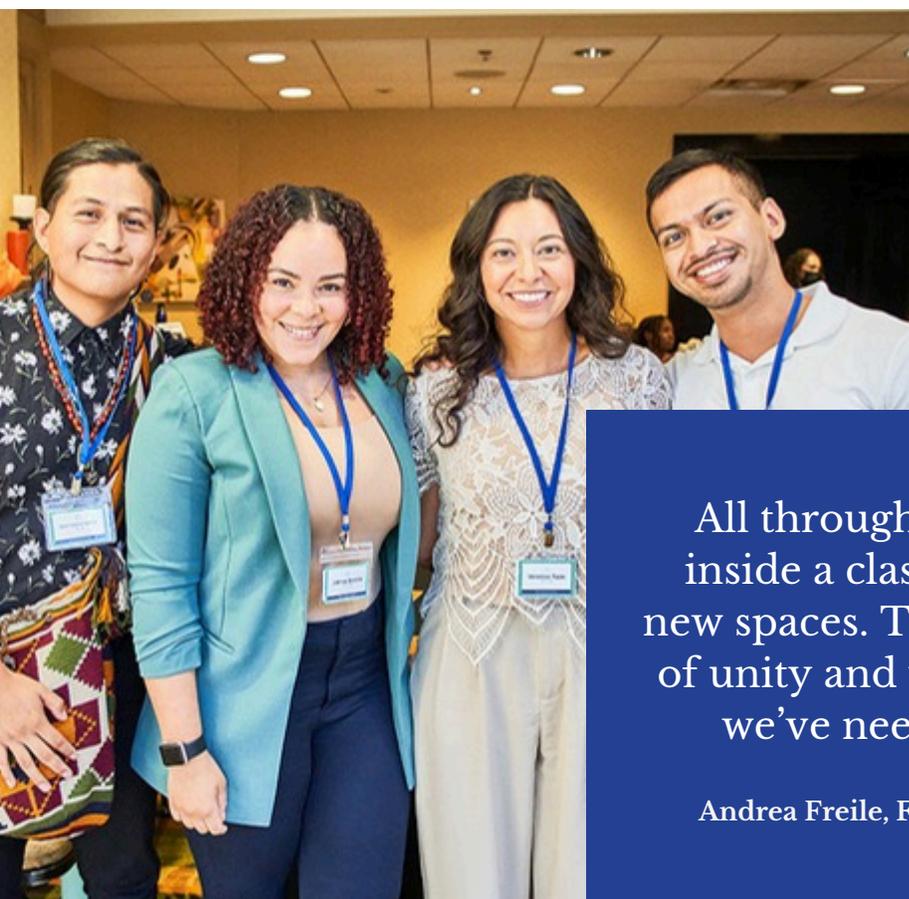
When families are engaged, students are more likely to achieve academically, attend school regularly, and graduate prepared for college or career.

### EQUITY IN ACCESS:

Without proper language support, families are left behind in decision-making, undermining students' right to a sound, basic education.

### STRONGER COMMUNITIES:

Schools that embrace linguistic and cultural diversity strengthen community trust and create welcoming environments for all.



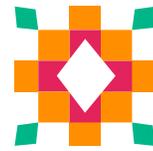
All throughout NC, voices that only lived inside a classroom, are now projected into new spaces. Thanks to LatinxEd, our messages of unity and understanding have the support we've needed to make a larger impact.

Andrea Freile, Founder of Viva Cultura Consulting, LLC

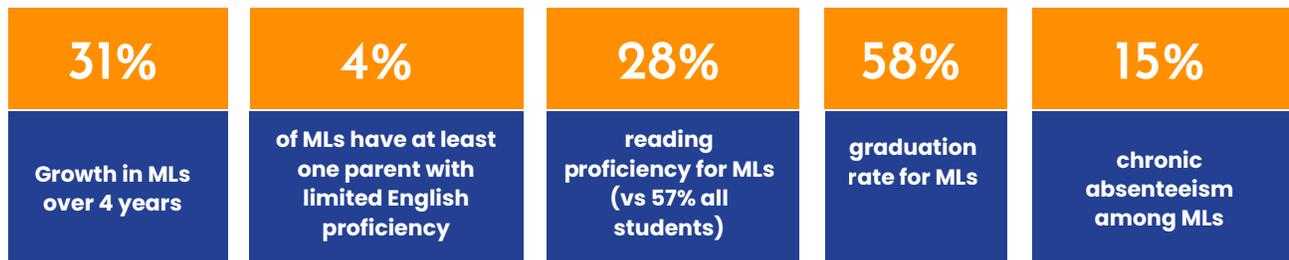
# THE CURRENT REALITY IN NORTH CAROLINA

## RAPID GROWTH:

The number of multilingual learners in NC grew by 31% in the last four years, now over 125,000 students (8% of all students).



## SEVERE UNDERREPRESENTATION:



## SYSTEMIC IMPACT:

- Only 28% (reading) and 34% (math) of MLs in grades 3–8 are proficient, compared to 57% and 59% of all students.
- MLs make up <1% of gifted program enrollment, showing systemic under-identification.
- Multilingual households are twice as likely to lack internet or computer access.

FROM DREAMS TO ACTIONS



## BOTTOM LINE

### IT'S THE LAW:

Federal and state law require schools to provide language access and equitable opportunities for MLs. This isn't optional. It's a constitutional obligation.

### IT BENEFITS EVERYONE:

North Carolina is home to 1.2 million residents who speak a language other than English. Building multilingual, culturally competent schools strengthens the entire state's economic and civic future.

### STRONGER WORKFORCE:

Today's multilingual learners are tomorrow's leaders. Ensuring their families can fully engage strengthens North Carolina's global competitiveness.

## CALL TO ACTION

Language justice is educational justice. To strengthen schools and communities, North Carolina must:

1. Expand and fund language access services statewide.
2. Create equitable school funding models that meet multilingual learner needs.
3. Center families as partners, not outsiders, in every child's educational journey.

When we invest in language access, we invest in a future where every family belongs, every child succeeds, and every community thrives.

## POLICY & PRACTICE SOLUTIONS

### EQUITABLE FUNDING MODELS:

- Revise the "Limited English Proficiency" allotment into a weighted student funding model that reflects student need and population growth.
- Increase state investment in language access services (interpreters, translated materials, bilingual family liaisons).

### INNOVATIVE SCHOOL MODELS:

- Expand schools like Guilford County's Sylvia Mendez Newcomers School, which support both students and families through cultural acclimation, adult literacy classes, and family engagement.
- Establish mentorship networks that support Latine educators into leadership roles.

### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS:

- Provide families with translation technology and multilingual communications.
- Expand programs like Bladen County's Migrant Education Program.
- Leverage tools like Lexia Learning to provide bilingual communication across districts.

### LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

- Advocate for state funding that expands language access and family engagement resources.
- Include language access as a central element of NC's education recovery and equity agenda.