Learning With the Field: Understanding "Promising Practices" for Students With Limited or Interrupted Formal Education in Massachusetts Schools

Fernanda Marinho Kray and Mary Bridget Burns

DECEMBER 2024

American Institutes for Research® | AIR.ORG

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Advancing Evidence. Improving Lives.

Contents

Introduction 1
Context and Background 1
SLIFE Research Project: Purpose, Approach, and Deliverables 2
Research Questions 4
Research Activities 4

Literature and Resource Scan 5
Initial Literature Review Process 5
Identifying, Synthesizing, and Focusing on Select Promising Practices 7
Targeted Literature Scan Findings 9
News Scan Overview: Massachusetts Context During Study 16

Methodology 18
Methodology Summary 18
Survey 19
Interviews 21
Analysis Approach 22
Limitations 26
Ethical Considerations and Transparency 27

Insights Into SLIFE Lives and Programs 27
Student Lives, Student Strengths 28
Program Types 33
Evolution of Practice: Learning From Experience 34

Findings: Key Themes 34
Academic Support 35
Linguistic Support 41
Social Emotional Support 48
Family Connections 51
Community Connections 55
Progress Monitoring 57
Interconnections Across Service Areas 61
Navigating Challenges: District Strategies for Addressing Obstacles 61

Moving Forward: Recommendations for DESE SLIFE Guidance, Resources, and Support 64

Conclusion 65
Building on Existing Strengths 65
Addressing Identified Challenges 65
Future Directions 66
Acknowledgments 66
References 68
Additional Resources 75
Appendix A. RQ2 Summary: Operationalization of Key Service Areas in SLIFE Education 85
Appendix B. Survey Instrument 91
Appendix C. Interview Protocols 99
Appendix D. News Scan References 102

Exhibits

Exhibit 1. A SLIFE Support Ecosystem 2
Exhibit 2. Project Deliverables: Two Complementary Resources Tell a Cohesive Story 3
Exhibit 3. Key Literature Sources and Selection Criteria 6
Exhibit 4. Sequential Process 8
Exhibit 5. Methods Summary 19
Exhibit 6. Geographical Distribution of Survey Respondents 20
Exhibit 7. Program Types Currently in Use by Survey Respondents 21
Exhibit 8. Districts' Evolution of Practice 34
Exhibit 9. Six Priority Areas of SLIFE Education Related to DESE's SLIFE Guidance (2024) 35

Introduction

Section Summary: This section introduces the collaborative effort between the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to support Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). It highlights the growth in SLIFE enrollment in Massachusetts, the impact of the "Right-to-Shelter" law, and the critical need for tailored support and effective educational programs. The section outlines the purpose, approach, and deliverables of the research study, emphasizing the importance of documenting promising practices to inform future program development and instruction.

AIR, in partnership with the DESE, embarked on a collaborative effort to support SLIFE across the Commonwealth by learning about and documenting promising practices currently being implemented in Massachusetts schools.

Context and Background

As a result of numerous global conditions, SLIFE represented a unique and rapidly growing demographic in the 2023–24 educational landscape in Massachusetts. During this period, these students, often newly arrived immigrants, brought a wide array of assets and experiences while facing substantial challenges adapting to new educational environments. This growth was particularly notable following the May 2023 federal expiration of Title 42 of the U.S. Code, which led to increased numbers of refugees entering the state. Approximately 2,000 migrant students were added to 74 Massachusetts school districts in the 2023–24 academic year alone.

Why This Research Matters

Massachusetts has seen unprecedented growth in SLIFE enrollment:

- 2,000+ migrant students added to 74 districts in 2023–24 (Sacharczyk, 2024)
- The "Right-to-Shelter" law (MA General Law Chapter 23B, Section 30, Part 1, Title II) significantly impacts settlement patterns, being the only law of its kind in the United States.
- Districts from across the Commonwealth are increasingly serving SLIFE.

Recognizing the critical need for tailored support and effective educational programs for SLIFE during this period of significant demographic change, **this study aimed to document field-based, promising practices across Massachusetts** between February 2023 and August 2024.

The increasing numbers of SLIFE in U.S. schools is not limited to Massachusetts but is found across the country. The end of Title 42 has had national implications, with many states experiencing similar increases in refugee and immigrant student groups, highlighting the need

for effective SLIFE education programs across the country. Although the specific federal and state immigration patterns and policies described in this report may shift across time, the practices included here offer valuable insights for districts experiencing rapid changes in their SLIFE student body.

Moreover, AIR, in partnership with the Region 1 Comprehensive Center and DESE, developed four interconnected efforts to address the growing needs of SLIFE (Exhibit 1).

- SLIFE Community of Practice (CoP): A thriving network of educators learning together, sharing promising practices and experiences.
- SLIFE Guidance: Comprehensive, user-friendly guidance for identifying and supporting SLIFE.
- SLIFE Toolkit: An interactive companion resource offering practical implementation tools.
- **This field study report from the SLIFE research project**: A new study on school- and district-based promising practices for SLIFE.

Exhibit 1. A SLIFE Support Ecosystem

A SLIFE Support Ecosystem

These initiatives are complementary: the CoP informs research and tests guidance in real-world settings; research findings shape guidance and CoP discussions; and guidance documents frame CoP activities and research dissemination. The SLIFE Toolkit adds tools and resources for districts to implement the guidance. Together, these efforts create an ecosystem of support for SLIFE education in Massachusetts.

SLIFE Research Project: Purpose, Approach, and Deliverables

The purpose of this study was to synthesize common principles and promising practices for SLIFE across various contexts in Massachusetts. Through an investigation of existing practices and collaboration with educators, we sought to document and analyze promising approaches to SLIFE education that could inform future program development and instruction across the Commonwealth.

Our study took a field-based approach that acknowledged and built on the existing expertise of Massachusetts educators. Rather than conducting research in isolation, we partnered with practitioners who were already developing promising or innovative approaches to support SLIFE. Through collaboration with the Massachusetts SLIFE CoP, we documented emerging practices in real schools and classrooms across the Commonwealth. This approach reflected our understanding that practice informs research as much as research informs practice.

The project produced two complementary resources designed to serve different purposes while telling a cohesive story. The first is this **field study report**, which synthesizes findings from across districts and contexts and documents what these educators perceive to be field-based promising practices. The second is a series of **practitioner vignettes** that highlight these findings with accessible, actionable illustrations of practice. The practitioner vignettes offer practical insights based on real-world examples, demonstrating how different districts approached similar challenges and offering implementation suggestions that other districts could customize for their unique contexts.

Exhibit 2. Project Deliverables: Two Complementary Resources Tell a Cohesive Story

Two Complementary Resources Telling a Cohesive Story	
Field Study Report	**Practitioner Vignettes**
• Synthesizes findings across districts and contexts. • Documents field-recommended promising practices.	• Translates research findings into accessible, actionable guidance. • Provides practical insights based on real-world examples.

This dual approach—combining research with practitioner-friendly resources—recognizes that educators need both strong theoretical foundations and practical implementation guidance. This field study report and the vignettes complement both the new Massachusetts SLIFE guidance, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): Guidance for SLIFE Identification, Services, & Supports (DESE, 2024) and its interactive companion, the Massachusetts SLIFE Toolkit, providing tangible examples of how Massachusetts educators put the guidance into practice. Through this work, we bridge the gap between research and practice, creating resources that are both thoughtfully developed and immediately useful to educators serving SLIFE across the Commonwealth.

Research Questions

The initial research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. **Program Models**: How do Massachusetts districts in varying contexts address SLIFE needs through program models?
2. **Key Service Areas**: How do districts operationalize key service areas of SLIFE ?
3. **Contextual Challenges**: How do districts in varying contexts address challenges to ensuring SLIFE success?
4. **Policy Implications**: What recommendations emerge for DESE guidance, resources, and support?

Supporting educators across Massachusetts districts serving SLIFE was a shared priority among DESE and other stakeholders throughout the project. Guided by this focus, the research prioritized interviews with educators to identify and highlight promising practices in SLIFE education, particularly in alignment with DESE's 2024 SLIFE guidance.

Research Activities

- **Literature Scan and Data Examination**: Our research activities encompass an examination of existing data and literature on SLIFE to distill key insights and trends from an array of sources.
- **Survey Administration**: We administered a survey to members of the SLIFE CoP. The survey aimed to unearth perspectives from practitioners deeply engaged with SLIFE regarding promising practices and their implementation.
- **District Interviews**: Complementing these measures, AIR conducted interviews with 16 Massachusetts districts to provide rich, qualitative understanding of diverse practices and contexts in which SLIFE work is occurring.

Methodology Summary

- Emphasis on practitioner perspectives
- Data sources: Survey, interviews, and document reviews
- Focus on real-world implementation

The sections that follow detail the literature review, survey, and interview methodologies.

Literature and Resource Scan

Section Summary: The literature scan aimed to identify promising practices for SLIFE by reviewing existing research and literature. The process involved keyword searches in academic databases, forward and backward citation tracking, and regular monitoring of educational news sources. The scan revealed 13 key promising practices, ranging from programmatic structures to instructional approaches and support services. These findings informed the development of the survey, interview questions, and subsequently this field study report and the eight practitioner vignettes.

In pursuit of understanding promising practices for SLIFE, we adopted a pragmatic approach that built on a recent comprehensive literature review commissioned by DESE (Center for Applied Linguistics [CAL], 2022) and enabled us to identify the latest developments, emerging trends, and gaps within the field.

Initial Literature Review Process

To capture the most current research, sources published after the CAL literature review were consulted, including reports from organizations such as Education Northwest (e.g., Cano & Baur, 2023), the Annenberg Institute at Brown University (Mantil et al., 2023), and the Council of the Great City Schools (Casserly, 2023). Recently published scholarly articles (e.g., Grapin, 2023), books (e.g., DeCapua, 2023), and relevant publications from prior years missing from the CAL report (e.g., Chang-Bacon, 2021) were also examined to provide a broader perspective. Our search was expanded through multiple strategies:

- Keyword searches in academic databases (Google Scholar, ERIC, JSTOR) using terms: "SLIFE," "SIFE," "Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education," "interrupted schooling," "newcomer education"
- Forward citation tracking from the CAL (2022) report to identify newer works
- Backward citation analysis to identify significant works not included in CAL review
- Direct outreach to SLIFE CoP members for practitioner-recommended resources

Given a dearth of research studies specific to SLIFE, we also expanded our search to include dissertations.

Concurrently, news articles reporting on the experiences of new arrivals in Massachusetts and the broader Northeast region were continuously monitored to provide additional contextual grounding. Through this multifaceted approach, we identified literature that

- updated findings from the CAL review,
- addressed gaps in previous research,
- provided current implementation examples, and
- offered Massachusetts-specific context.

Our literature and resource scan also revisited national documents (e.g., the U.S. Department of Education's Newcomer Toolkit), as well as Massachusetts-specific materials pertinent to SLIFE education (e.g., the Department's previous edition of SLIFE guidance, 2019). This methodology (Exhibit 3) expanded the previous coverage of literature on SLIFE while maintaining focus on the most relevant aspects to SLIFE education practices in Massachusetts.

Exhibit 3. Key Literature Sources and Selection Criteria

Category	Sources	Selection Criteria
Previous comprehensive literature review	Understanding and Supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) in Massachusetts (CAL, 2022)	DESE-commissioned comprehensive review
Recent research reports	• Education Northwest (Cano & Baur, 2023) • Annenberg Institute (Mantil et al., 2023) • Council of Great City Schools (Casserly, 2023)	Published after CAL review; focus on newcomer education practices; relevance to SLIFE education
Academic publications	• Grapin (2023) • DeCapua (2023) • Chang-Bacon (2021)	Peer-reviewed or expert authored; specific focus on SLIFE/interrupted education
Government/policy documents	• OELA Newcomer Toolkit • New Massachusetts SLIFE Guidance (2024)	Official guidance documents; state/federal level
News coverage	Ongoing monitoring of regional news sources	Focus on Massachusetts/Northeast; SLIFE-related coverage

Identifying, Synthesizing, and Focusing on Select Promising Practices

We extracted and recorded promising practices in a spreadsheet, noting alignment with previous research and identifying new approaches. These practices were then consolidated into broader categories and cross-referenced against the following:

- Meeting notes and recordings from the SLIFE CoP
- Input from the SLIFE CoP advisory group
- Previous interview data on SLIFE education from the Region 1 Comprehensive Center
- Recommendations from national experts

This process yielded 13 key promising practices that formed the foundation for our subsequent steps. The practices ranged from programmatic structures (such as dedicated SLIFE programs and coordinated districtwide support) to instructional approaches (including specialized curriculum materials and individualized instruction) and support services (such as social-emotional support and wraparound services). Specifically, the practices were as follows:

- Programs designed specifically for SLIFE
- Coordinated districtwide programming and support
- Teachers who are specifically trained to support SLIFE
- Professional learning specific to SLIFE needs
- Built-in structures for collaboration for teachers of SLIFE
- Team-based collaborative approaches
- Curriculum materials designed specifically for SLIFE
- Individualized approaches to instruction
- Individualized pathways to graduation and/or postsecondary outcomes
- Credit for out-of-school learning experiences
- Flexible/extended scheduling
- Social-emotional support
- Wraparound services

The literature and resource scan revealed both the growing body of knowledge about promising SLIFE education and the pressing need for more research-based guidance, particularly given the rapid changes in student demographics and educational needs across Massachusetts and beyond. This plan allowed us to build on existing knowledge while addressing current gaps in the field.

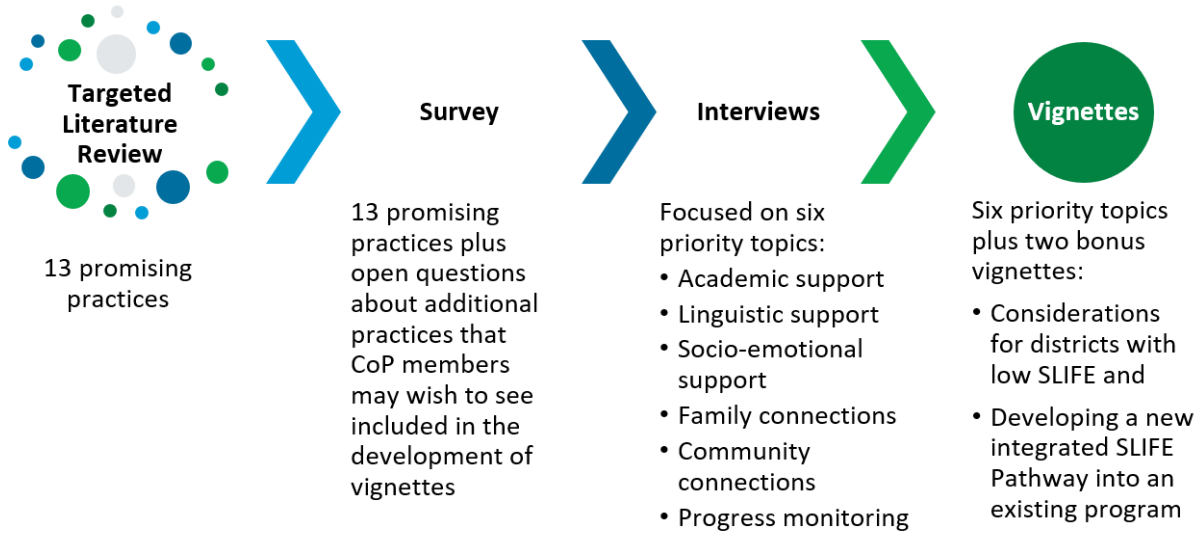
The initial 13 practices were the foundation from which to develop the SLIFE CoP survey. Subsequently, through conversations with the Department and CoP members about critical areas of need in SLIFE education, and in alignment with new state guidance, the 13 practices were further focused into six priority topics that became the foundation for interviews and vignettes.

- Academic support
- Linguistic support
- Socio-emotional support
- Family connections
- Community connections
- Progress monitoring

In response to specific CoP educator needs, two bonus vignettes also were developed:

- Approaches for districts with low SLIFE enrollment and/or in rural settings
- Strategies for developing a new integrated SLIFE pathway into an existing ELE program

Exhibit 4. Sequential Process



Targeted Literature Scan Findings

Section Summary: This section presents the findings from the targeted literature scan, organized based on six priority topics: academic support, linguistic support, socio-emotional support, family connections, community connections, and progress monitoring. It highlights the benefits of tailored programs, the importance of small class sizes, and the need for extended learning opportunities. The findings emphasize the significance of trauma-informed approaches, culturally responsive practices, and comprehensive family and community support systems in promoting SLIFE success.

The following subsections present findings from the literature based on the six priority topics that informed both the study and the development of practitioner-focused resources.

Academic and Linguistic Support

What We Know

- SLIFE benefit from academic services designed specifically for students with limited educational experiences and limited English proficiency (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017; Pentón Herrera et al., 2022; Umansky et al., 2018).
- Programs teaching academic content in English with heritage language support are beneficial (Pentón Hererra et al., 2022).
- Most schools lack access to specialized programs, leaving the majority of SLIFE in settings that do not target their needs (Umansky et al., 2018).
- Small class sizes (fewer than 15 students) are ideal; larger classes tend not to allow for the prioritization of SLIFE needs (Pentón Herrera et al., 2022).
- Older SLIFE face unique challenges:
  - Increased pressure to complete graduation requirements before "aging out" (Pentón Herrera, 2022)
  - Barriers that impede graduation (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017)

What Schools Can Do

Program Structures

- Create specialized programs specifically designed for SLIFE (CAL, 2022).
- When specialized programs are not possible, provide the following:
  - Sheltered content instruction, dual language, or transitional bilingual education programs
  - Additional English language development instruction
  - Instruction on foundational numeracy and literacy skills (Umansky et al., 2018)

Instructional Approaches

- Adapt the curriculum based on SLIFE academic needs (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Hos & Kaplan-Wolff, 2020).
- Create individualized learning plans tailored to academic needs and learning styles (Short & Boyson, 2012; Umansky et al., 2018).
- Balance individual needs with curriculum requirements (Hos & Kaplan-Wolff, 2020).
- Implement essential scaffolds (Pentón Herrera et al., 2022):
  - Contextualized learning opportunities connecting content to real-life situations (DeCapua et al., 2020)
  - Connections to prior experiences to reinforce knowledge (Montero et al., 2014; Winlund, 2020), including culturally relevant content to foster belonging (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010)
  - Language bridging, which involves use of the home language to support learning English and to enhance comprehension (Garrison-Fletcher et al., 2022; Goodrich et al., 2013; Sparks et al., 2009)
  - Multimodal applications (oral, visual, written) to promote learning across contexts (DeCapua et al., 2020; Winlund, 2020)

Support for Older SLIFE

- Provide extended learning through Saturday, vacation, and summer programs (CAL, 2022).
- When needed, design 5-year course sequences instead of the traditional 4-year requirement (Short & Boyson, 2012).
- Implement flexible scheduling to accommodate working students, such as the following:
  - Evening/afternoon programs
  - Adjusted start times based on work schedules
  - Customized attendance contracts that consider employment commitments (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Short & Boyson, 2012; Umansky et al., 2018)

Socio-emotional Support

What We Know

- Many SLIFE have experienced trauma in their home country and/or during migration, requiring significant socio-emotional support to aid transition to a new country, culture, and school (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012; d'Abreu et al., 2019).
- Stress from learning and adapting to a new culture and language, or "acculturative stress" (Berry, 1992) leads to
  - increased anxiety and depression among migrant youth (Sirin et al., 2013; Thibeault et al., 2017) and
  - higher depressive symptoms when faced with discrimination (Ellis et al., 2010).
- Strong ethnic cultural identity serves as a protective factor against acculturative stress, increasing self-esteem and psychosocial adjustment (Neblett et al., 2012).
- Well-designed socio-emotional programs can protect against symptoms of trauma and adverse experiences (Merrell, 2010) while building resilience (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012).
- Schools are uniquely positioned to provide crucial socio-emotional supports for SLIFE because they offer consistent, daily interaction with students in a structured environment in which relationships and trust can be built across time (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012; d'Abreu et al., 2019). Through regular contact hours and established support systems, schools can systematically identify needs and provide targeted interventions.

What Schools Can Do

Core Approaches

- Implement assets-based practices that
  - value students' strengths and unique backgrounds rather than fixating on weaknesses,
  - foster strong student-teacher relationships (López et al., 2020), and
  - create attainable academic goals for SLIFE success (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011).
- Adopt trauma-informed approaches by
  - recognizing the nature and effects of traumatic experiences;
  - identifying signs of trauma, including depression, fatigue, withdrawal, self-destructive behaviors, and outbursts caused by emotional distress (DeCapua et al., 2020; Malizia, 2017);
  - training teachers to identify signs and triggers of trauma (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018; Saulsbury-Molina, 2019; Umansky et al., 2018);
  - promoting positive, safe school environments; and
  - partnering with refugee resettlement agencies (Umansky et al., 2018).

- Use culturally responsive practices that
  - value the unique cultural identities and backgrounds that shape who students are (Casanova & Alvarez, 2022),
  - maintain ethnic pride and heritage cultural identity while teaching about U.S. culture (Casanova & Alvarez, 2022; Castro-Olivo, 2014), and
  - integrate aspects of students' cultural backgrounds into class lessons and materials to foster belonging and inclusivity.

Program Implementation

- Create schoolwide programs teaching specific socio-emotional skills that have been positively linked with increased resilience and better adjustment, such as self-awareness, problem solving, taking responsibility, and other coping skills (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012).
- Provide comprehensive professional development for teachers, guidance counselors, and staff on
  - SLIFE-specific needs and experiences,
  - trauma-informed practices,
  - cultural responsiveness, and
  - methods for supporting socio-emotional development.

  This training is crucial for equipping staff with necessary tools to support SLIFE.

Family Connections

What We Know

- Building strong connections between schools and SLIFE families is crucial for student success. Schools must take the lead in establishing communication channels and creating welcoming environments that facilitate family engagement.
- With their own limited or interrupted education experiences, SLIFE families often
  - lack familiarity with U.S. cultural norms and school procedures (McNeely et al., 2019; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000),
  - need support understanding how the U.S. school system works, and
  - need guidance on how to academically support their children (Pentón Herrera, 2022).
- Clear communication strategies between families and schools are critical for fostering mutual understanding and expectations.
- Varying levels of English proficiency among SLIFE families necessitate translation and interpretation services.

What Schools Can Do

Communication Strategies

- Provide translation and interpretation services through
  - third-party phone-based interpreters (Saulsbury-Molina, 2019),
  - live translators or volunteers from local community-based organizations, or
  - native speakers connected through resettlement agencies (Umansky et al., 2018).

Information Sharing

- Clearly communicate expectations for students (e.g., consistent attendance) and parents (e.g., enforcing study habits, homework time at home, attending parent-teacher meetings; Pentón Herrera, 2022).
- Create informational resources in multiple languages to cultivate mutual understanding:
  - Videos about school policies and practices (Umansky et al., 2018)
  - Orientation materials covering the following:
    - School procedures (immunizations, homework)
    - Available services (health care, transportation)
    - Specialized programs (e.g., English as a second language [ESL])
    - Graduation expectations and career preparation
    - School norms, including discipline and behavior expectations (Berliner, 2019)

Engagement Activities

- Provide school tours through outreach coordinators:
  - Campus orientation
  - Classroom visits
  - Explanation of school routines and procedures (Umansky et al., 2018)
- Offer family workshops on the following:
  - Extracurricular afterschool activities
  - School-level transitions (including specific differences between middle and high school)
  - Bullying prevention strategies
  - How to navigate conversations with school staff (Lepore, 2015)

Community Connections

What We Know

- Community partnerships foster vital connections between SLIFE, families, schools, and local communities to support needs beyond academic and linguistic development (CAL, 2022).
- Schools can serve as effective brokers by connecting families with outreach coordinators or newcomer specialists who provide resources and services (Umansky et al., 2018).
- Local organizations have successfully provided
  - access to basic needs,
  - support for U.S. transition, and
  - alternative programs for English language learning and educational services.
- Two-way partnerships between schools and local organizations have proven successful in supporting SLIFE families' needs.

What Schools Can Do

Basic Needs Support

- Establish "wraparound supports" through local partnerships (Umansky et al., 2018) to provide the following:
  - School supplies (pencils, folders, textbooks, laptops) for families lacking financial means (Flaitz, 2023)
  - Food access through free farmers markets
  - Medical and dental care through health care buses parked on school campus (Berliner, 2019)
  - Toiletries and clothing
  - Tutoring and mentorship services
- Hire coordinators to facilitate services between organizations and schools (Saulsbury-Molina, 2019).

Transition Support

- Partner with local refugee-centered organizations; multiple districts in studies have successfully
  - connected families with medical services, housing, transportation;
  - assisted with school enrollment; and
  - assigned volunteers from resettlement agencies and religious organizations to support newcomer families (Umansky et al., 2018).
- Host cultural events at schools to promote a welcoming environment and foster belonging (Newcomer et al., 2021).

Educational Programming

- Organize afterschool and summer programs (Umansky et al., 2018), including
  - intensive summer enrichment targeting English vocabulary and communication skills to prepare for the academic year (López et al., 2020; Purinton, 2021);
  - partnerships with cultural organizations to support socio-emotional skills and engagement; and
  - sports programs (e.g., community soccer organization partnerships creating afterschool teams; Bajaj & Suresh, 2018)

Family Support Programs

- Offer English classes for newcomer parents.
- Provide job search and application workshops.
- Create additional parent education opportunities (Calderón & Slakk, 2019).

Progress Monitoring

What We Know

Monitoring English proficiency and academic skills is crucial for ensuring the achievement of educational goals. Different types of assessments serve different purposes in monitoring SLIFE progress:

- **Initial Assessment**: Initial assessments provide baseline data for understanding starting points (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017).
- **Ongoing Classroom Assessment**: Classroom-based progress monitoring through teacher observations, portfolios, performance measures, and regular examinations offers more accurate insights into student growth (Short & Boyson, 2012).
- **Standardized Assessment Challenges:** State-mandated standardized assessments present specific challenges for SLIFE because they are not designed for students with formal education gaps, do not account for low English proficiency, may use unfamiliar formats such as Scantron that SLIFE may not have experience with, and may not accurately reflect SLIFE's actual learning and progress (CAL, 2022; Pentón Herrera, 2022).

What Schools Can Do

- Implement frequent progress monitoring to
  - track goal achievement through frequent checks,
  - adjust instruction based on educational and language gains,
  - use multiple measures to capture progress (CAL, 2022; Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017).
- Foster administration-teacher collaboration:
  - Hold regular meetings to discuss student progress.
  - Coordinate support services (e.g., integrated and dedicated language development).
  - Modify academic pathways as needed based on data (Short & Boyson, 2012).
- Use classroom-based assessment tools such as regular skills assessments, unit examinations and quizzes, portfolio assessments, performance tasks, and report cards (Short & Boyson, 2012).

News Scan Overview: Massachusetts Context During Study

Section Summary: The news scan provided real-time insights into the developments and challenges faced by Massachusetts schools and communities as they adapted to the increasing number of newly arrived students. Key findings include the enrollment surge of approximately 2,000 migrant students, state initiatives to invest in shelter responses, resource challenges, frequent relocations disrupting education continuity, and mixed community reactions. This section underscores the importance of flexible, responsive approaches to SLIFE education and the need for ongoing research to provide timely guidance to educators and policymakers.

Building on the insights from our targeted literature scan, we conducted a news scan to contextualize our findings within the current landscape in Massachusetts. This approach allowed us to capture real-time news reports on the developments and challenges faced by schools and communities as they adapted to the increasing number of newly arrived SLIFE. The aim of the news scan was to provide a more contextualized understanding of the immediate context in which Massachusetts educators are working.

Our News Scan drew from approximately 50 articles stemming from about 25 sources that ranged from news outlets to community and government organizations (see Appendix D). The search strategy involved weekly searches using keywords such as “Massachusetts,” “refugee,” “immigrant,” “family,” “housing,” “shelter,” and “school.” Articles providing detailed

information on the impact on children, students, and schools were prioritized. This news scan revealed several key developments:

- **Enrollment Surge**: Approximately 2,000 migrant students were added to 74 Massachusetts school districts in the 2023–24 academic year (Merrill, 2024b). This rapid increase aligned with the literature's emphasis on the need for flexible and responsive program models (Short & Boyson, 2012), but the scale of the demographic change presents challenges beyond those typically discussed in academic studies.
- **State Initiatives**: The state invested an additional $326 million into its shelter response for homeless and migrant families (Sacharczyk, 2024). This significant investment reflects the literature's call for comprehensive support systems (Umansky et al., 2018), but the news highlights the scale of resources required.
- **Resource Challenges**: Both emergency shelters and schools reported struggling with resource allocation and funding to accommodate increased enrollment (Huffaker et al., 2024). Although the academic literature emphasizes the importance of adequate resources (Pentón Herrera et al., 2022), the news reports reveal the real-world complexities of rapidly scaling up support systems.
- **Frequent Relocations and Shelter Policies**: The implementation of a 5-day limit on stays in overflow shelters led to frequent relocations of migrant families, disrupting students' education continuity (Rios, 2024). This situation underscores the importance of flexible learning approaches and individualized support, as emphasized in the literature (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011), but it also highlights challenges not fully addressed in academic studies.
- **Community Support Initiatives**: Various community organizations stepped up to provide support for migrant families (Huffaker, 2024). This aligns with the literature's emphasis on community partnerships (López et al., 2020), but the news reports do not provide concrete examples of how these partnerships are being forged in real-time.
- **Mixed Community Reactions**: Community reactions to the recent arrival of new migrants have been mixed, with some residents expressing concerns about resource strain and others actively demonstrating solidarity and providing support (Garcia, 2024; Jonas, 2024). This range of responses highlights the importance of community engagement and cultural responsiveness emphasized in the literature, while also revealing tensions not fully explored in academic studies.
- **School Adaptations**: Several districts reported implementing measures such as hiring additional ESL teachers and converting spaces into classrooms to accommodate new students (Truitt, 2024). These adaptations demonstrate the practical application of the flexible and responsive approaches advocated in the literature (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017), while also revealing the logistical challenges of rapid program expansion.

***A Note on News Sources as Data**: Although news coverage provides valuable real-time insights into local developments, we acknowledge the limitations of news sources as data. News articles often focus on specific cases or incidents rather than providing comprehensive data, may reflect particular editorial perspectives or regional priorities, and typically highlight notable or unusual circumstances rather than daily operations. Therefore, we use these sources to complement, not replace, other aspects of this study, primarily to enhance our understanding of the immediate context in which Massachusetts educators are working.*

These findings highlight the complex and rapidly evolving situation facing Massachusetts schools as they support SLIFE. They emphasize the importance of adaptable and responsive approaches to SLIFE education and the necessity for collaboration between schools, communities, and state agencies, as noted in the academic literature. However, the news reports also reveal the severity of the current situation, underscoring the need for ongoing research, policy responses, and resource flexibility to keep pace with changing circumstances and provide timely guidance to educators and policymakers.

Methodology

Section Summary: This section outlines the qualitative approach used to investigate field-based promising practices for SLIFE education across Massachusetts. The study design included a survey of SLIFE CoP members and in-depth interviews with representatives from 16 school districts. The section details the survey administration, interview protocols, and analysis approach, emphasizing the importance of practitioner perspectives and real-world implementation in identifying promising SLIFE education practices.

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate promising practices to support SLIFE across Massachusetts. Our study design had three components:

- A survey of SLIFE CoP members
- In-depth interviews with representatives from 16 Massachusetts school districts
- Continuous dialogue with SLIFE CoP members and record reviews from CoP meetings.

Methodology Summary

Our methodology employed several complementary approaches to gather data about SLIFE practices across Massachusetts. Exhibit 5 summarizes our three primary data collection methods: ongoing dialogue with the SLIFE CoP, a survey of CoP members, and in-depth

interviews with district representatives. Each method contributed unique insights while allowing for triangulation of findings across different sources and contexts.

Exhibit 5. Methods Summary

SLIFE CoP dialogue and record review	Survey administration (*n* = 52)	District interviews (*n* = 16)
Ongoing dialogue with SLIFE CoP members and record reviews of previous CoP meetings related to the six priority topics	**Participants**: 52 CoP members **Timeline**: February to March 2024 (6-week window) **Format**: Online via Fillout.com **Content**: Questions addressed: • District demographics and program types • Implementation of 13 identified promising practices • Preferences for future resource development • Open-ended responses about additional practices	**Participants**: 21 educators across 16 districts **Timeline**: June to August 2024 **Duration**: 60–90 minutes **Format**: Virtual via Zoom **Content**: Questions focused on the six priority topics **Selection criteria included representation of the following**: • Geographic regions across Massachusetts • Urban, suburban, and rural settings • Various levels of SLIFE enrollment • Different program models • Both new and established programs

Survey

Members of the existing SLIFE CoP were invited to participate in a virtual survey administered via Fillout.com. The survey delved into their perspectives regarding promising practices for supporting SLIFE. On average, respondents spent approximately 20 minutes completing the survey. Participating in the survey posed no foreseeable risks beyond those encountered in everyday life.

Survey Details

Survey Administration Date. The survey was open from February 8, 2024, through March 19, 2024, allowing for a 6-week window for participation.

Distribution Methods. The survey link was disseminated via email to members of the CoP. It also was shared during a CoP meeting, a CoP advisory meeting, and at an English learner (EL) network meeting.

Total Number of Respondents. Fifty-two members of the CoP participated in the survey. The total CoP roster comprised approximately 160 individuals, but historical attendance data suggest an active membership of about 50 individuals. It is important to note that this number represents a sample of convenience because participants self-selected to complete the survey

and were drawn from an existing CoP membership rather than the broader population of Massachusetts educators working with SLIFE.

Question Types. The survey encompassed both open- and closed-ended questions. Participants responded to demographic questions related to geographic region, program type, and enrollment numbers for ELs and SLIFE. They evaluated promising practices based on their program's implementation level and assessed which practices would be most beneficial to explore through vignettes or other practitioner-friendly resources.

District Location and Program Types. All regions of the Commonwealth were represented in the survey and in the SLIFE CoP. For survey respondents, the Greater Boston area was the most represented region, with 46% of the respondents indicating that their district is in that area. Central Massachusetts represented 19% of the respondents, indicating a potentially less robust support network in this region. Other regions, such as South Shore/South Coast, North Shore, Western Mass, Metro West, and Cape & Islands, also have varying levels of participation, suggesting a diverse geographic spread of SLIFE support efforts. The geographical distribution of survey respondents generally reflects the population distribution in the state (see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6. Geographical Distribution of Survey Respondents

Region	Percentage	Number of responses
Greater Boston	46%	24
Central Mass	19%	10
South Shore/South Coast	10%	5
North Shore	10%	5
Western Mass	8%	4
MetroWest	6%	3
Cape & Islands	2%	1

In terms of program type, a similarly reflective survey sample was captured. The majority of the respondents (67%) indicated using Sheltered English Instruction (SEI), making it the most prevalent program type. This suggests a widespread approach to integrating SLIFE into mainstream classrooms with language support. Dedicated SLIFE programs follow closely behind, indicating recognition of the unique needs of SLIFE and the importance of tailored support structures. Newcomer Education programs, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and Dual Language (DL)/Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs also make a showing, highlighting a diversity of approaches to SLIFE support. However, responses categorized as "other" suggest

that some participants may have uncertainty regarding how programs are delineated under the Department's guidance.

Exhibit 7. Program Types Currently in Use by Survey Respondents

Program type	Percentage	Number of responses
Sheltered English Instruction	67%	34
Dedicated SLIFE Program	39%	20
Newcomer Education	27%	14
Other	8%	4
Transitional Bilingual Education	6%	3
Dual Language/Two-Way Immersion	6%	3

The survey protocol appears in Appendix C.

Survey Analysis Approach

The researchers adopted a grounded theory-style (Cobb & Jackson, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) approach to analyze the data, a method that emphasizes systematic, iterative analysis to develop well-founded theories. This process began with multiple passes through the collected survey data. To manage the data effectively, the researchers created various versions of data files and developed organizational schemes to categorize the information. As the researchers delved into the data, they sought patterns, themes, and noteworthy insights. Throughout the analysis, the researchers linked their findings to existing literature and prior research on SLIFE. By situating their findings within the broader body of research, the researchers grounded their work in established scholarship while also contributing new perspectives.

Interviews

Following the survey, AIR conducted interviews with 21 representatives from 16 districts across Massachusetts, all members of the SLIFE CoP. The districts were selected to represent diverse contexts:

- Geographic regions
- Urban, suburban, and rural settings
- Various levels of SLIFE enrollment
- Different program models
- New and established programs

Interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom and lasted 60–90 minutes. Each interview was recorded (with permission) and transcribed for analysis.

To gain an understanding of field-based promising practices for SLIFE education, we conducted interviews with at least two or three districts focusing on all six priority topics highlighted in the vignettes (e.g., academic support; see page 8 in this document for the full list). Although we focused each interview on one of the six priority topics, discussions at times also touched on other priority topics. For example, we might have interviewed the staff from one district about academic support, but during those interviews, family support also came up, which is another topic we were researching. We then reviewed all transcripts from all interviews for relevant discussions on all six topics of interest. This approach allowed us to capture a broader and more nuanced perspective on the practices being implemented across different districts.

Analysis Approach

This research project integrated traditional methods of qualitative research (e.g., grounded theory) while also employing the innovative tools available through artificial intelligence (AI). We used several AI tools, such as AIR's Microsoft Copilot, AIR's Audio Transcription App, AIR's R&D, AI for Qualitative Coding, and AIR's Azure Open AI Studio, to supplement our qualitative analysis, which freed our team to focus more on nuanced, complex questions and less on smaller, repetitive tasks such as cleaning transcripts and coding. We experimented and learned from the rapidly emerging AI technologies available to the public and from our AIR colleagues who are developing AI tools for qualitative research.

Key Analysis Steps

- Transcript preparation
- Initial coding
- Theme development
- Cross-case analysis

To ensure rigorous and efficient analysis of our qualitative data on SLIFE education, we employed a hybrid approach combining internal, protected AIR AI tools with human oversight and validation. Specifically, we adapted the Large Language Model (LLM)-Assisted Content Analysis process proposed by Chew et al. (2023) to leverage the capabilities of LLMs while maintaining the nuanced understanding and ethical considerations that human researchers bring to qualitative analysis.

Ethical Use of AI in Analysis

- Protected AIR tools used
- Clear documentation maintained
- Human review at each stage
- Transparent reporting of methods

Ethical Considerations and Transparency

Throughout the AI-assisted analysis process, we maintained a strong commitment to ethical research practices and transparency:

- The original transcripts and coding were preserved, allowing for constant comparison and verification.
- We maintained clear documentation of AI prompts and processes to allow for replication.
- Human researchers thoroughly reviewed all AI-generated content to ensure accuracy and appropriate interpretation.
- We explicitly acknowledged the use of AI in our analysis process, detailing the specific tasks that AI tools performed and the human oversight involved.

By combining the strengths of LLMs with rigorous human oversight, we could efficiently analyze a larger volume of qualitative data than would have otherwise been possible, while maintaining the depth, nuance, and ethical standards essential to qualitative research. This approach allowed us to identify promising practices in SLIFE education across diverse district contexts while ensuring the validity and reliability of our findings.

Transcript Clean-Up

Initial transcript clean-up was conducted using AI, a blend of ChatGPT and AIR's internal, protected version of CoPilot and later AIR's OpenAI Whisper speech recognition model to enhance clarity and readability without altering the substantive content. To maintain transparency and ensure that no critical information was lost, two human researchers independently reviewed each AI-cleaned transcript, comparing it with the original to verify accuracy and completeness.

Preliminary Coding

Transcripts were first manually coded by a team member for four simple codes:

- **Preliminary Key Ideas and Practices for Vignettes**: Text that can inform educators about promising practices and lessons learned from working with SLIFE.
- **Quotable Quotes**: Text that emphasizes key points in a coherent manner.
- **Identified Challenges**: Text that highlights challenges faced from starting, implementing, and engaging in SLIFE programs and/or working with SLIFE.
- **Recurring Themes**: Ideas that were consistently mentioned throughout the transcript.

Two additional research team members then reviewed these preliminary codes to ensure interrater reliability and consistency with the codebook itself.

Codebook Development

We used AIR's LLM tool to support the initial development of our codebook. We used the LLM tool to not only better understand how such technology could benefit our work but also ensure efficiency when conducting analysis. We hypothesized that the LLM tool would save our team time and reduce errors in coding. Using the inductive analysis feature of AIR's LLM, we uploaded a sample of documents and prompted the LLM to identify major themes. This process helped us identify larger themes and summarize documents, providing a foundation for our codebook. We prompted the LLM to provide not only a coding decision but also a reason for that decision. This helped us assess the usability of the model-generated codes and provided insight into the LLM's decision-making process. Two human coders then checked and adjusted the LLM codes for accuracy and focused the direction on specific preselected codes.

Based on these processes, we revised our codebook, providing more context in code descriptions and additional examples to improve the LLM's understanding.

Inductive Codes

The inductive codes refer to DESE preselected codes, corresponding to the six priority topics related to the SLIFE guidance and vignettes.

- Academic support
- Linguistic support
- Social-emotional learning
- Family connections
- Community connections
- Progress monitoring

Initial Coding

For the initial coding phase, we used AIR's protected AI tools to generate descriptive codes based on the cleaned transcripts. We provided the following prompt:

> "You are a qualitative coder who is annotating [document type] about [topic]. To code this [document type], do the following:
>
> - First, read the codebook and the text.
> - Next, decide which code is most applicable and explain your reasoning for the coding decision.
> - Finally, print the most applicable code and your reason for the coding decision."

We instructed the LLM to focus on all reported experiences, opinions, comments, and school/district practices related to SLIFE. Traceability is crucial because it allows us to easily track and verify the origin of each code, thus ensuring that our analysis remained accurate and transparent. To achieve this, we provided the following guidelines:

- Apply codes to sentences or parts of sentences, maintaining the ability to link codes back to specific quotes.
- Create descriptive, self-explanatory, and specific codes rather than short or abstract ones.
- Provide a list of codes with the accompanying text segments to which they were applied.

Human Review and Organization

Following AI-generated initial coding, human researchers conducted a thorough review of the codes. This step served multiple purposes:

- Verify the accuracy of AI-generated codes.
- Identify any anomalies or misinterpretations.
- Combine codes that were too similar to each other.
- Create additional codes as needed.
- Delete irrelevant codes.
- Organize codes into groups before moving into the development of themes.

To enhance traceability, we manually employed color coding, font differentiation, and tagging for each participant's data. This approach allowed us to easily trace codes and quotes back to their original sources throughout the analysis process.

To assess reliability, two human coders verified and tweaked LLM codes as needed. This process allowed us to compare human-human agreement to human-LLM agreement. If the LLM-generated codes were deemed inferior to the human-coded responses, we either adjusted the prompts and codebook to improve the AI's performance or used alternative human approaches for those categories.

Final Coding

For categories when the LLM performed comparably to human coders, we used the LLM to code the full dataset. This significantly reduced the time and cost associated with manual coding while maintaining reliability.

Thematic Analysis

For the development of themes, we again employed a combination of LLM and human analysis. The LLM suggested initial groupings of codes into potential themes. Human researchers then reviewed these groupings, adjusting as necessary to ensure that they accurately reflected the data and research questions.

Human researchers suggested initial groupings of codes into potential themes based on our predefined categories (e.g., challenges, positive factors, coping strategies, positive experiences). Human researchers checked with each other and asked the LLM to suggest additional potential themes, which were again reviewed and refined.

Cross-Transcript Analysis

To analyze specific topics across all transcripts (e.g., community connections), we employed the LLM to extract relevant information from each transcript, even when the topic was not the primary focus of the interview. The LLM was instructed to do the following:

- List all ideas and practices related to the topic for each district.
- Identify trends and insights across districts.
- Highlight commonalities and differences.
- Identify challenges and success stories.
- Extract information about student experiences.
- Compare findings to existing literature.
- Provide specific, concrete, and practical advice for implementation.

Limitations

The study encountered several limitations:

- **Recruitment**: Reliance on the existing CoP for purposeful sampling meant that respondents were primarily those already engaged in SLIFE work with AIR and the Department, thus limiting the pool of potential participants from other districts across the Commonwealth.
- **Incentives**: The absence of incentives for survey completion may have restricted participant numbers.

Study Limitations

- CoP-based recruitment
- No incentives offered
- Student/family voices not included
- Self-reported data
- Fixed survey items

- **Student and Family Voice**: SLIFE and their families were not included in the sample because of budget realities and the limited scope of the proposed work.
- **Fixed Survey Items**: As is true of all surveys, the fixed nature of survey items constrained the ability to gather detailed insights. Surveys do not permit follow-up questions or the exploration of complex issues.
- **Self-Reported Data**: The reliance on self-reported data means that responses may be affected by memory lapses and personal interpretation.

Ethical Considerations and Transparency

Throughout the research process, we maintained a strong commitment to ethical research practices and transparency:

- The original transcripts and coding were preserved, allowing for constant comparison and verification.
- We maintained clear documentation of research processes to allow for replication.
- All data were thoroughly reviewed by human researchers to ensure accuracy and appropriate interpretation.
- We explicitly acknowledged the use of research tools and techniques, detailing specific tasks and oversight involved.

By combining rigorous methodology with careful attention to ethical considerations, we efficiently analyzed a substantial volume of qualitative data while maintaining the depth, nuance, and ethical standards essential to qualitative research.

Insights Into SLIFE Lives and Programs

Section Summary: This section presents a portrait of SLIFE in Massachusetts schools, drawing from interviews with 21 educators across 16 districts and ongoing dialogue with the statewide SLIFE CoP representing approximately 60 districts. Although SLIFE often are characterized primarily by their educational gaps, this section reveals students' remarkable capabilities, rich life experiences, and profound determination to succeed. The section also explores how districts' approaches to SLIFE education have evolved through experience, highlighting the development of program types and adaptations to meet student needs.

Student Lives, Student Strengths

Journey to Massachusetts

Students arrive through diverse routes, using various transportation modes, and often at great emotional cost while also overcoming significant challenges. Districts note distinct patterns in migration experiences.

> One group consists of students who come from nontraditional immigration channels, such as villages in Guatemala or Haiti, and other Latin American countries with disrupted education due to their migration. The other group includes students from refugee camps, primarily from African countries like the Congo and Somalia. Their education has been interrupted either due to the lack of school fees or because they lived in refugee camps. (District B)

These different journeys shape students' educational experiences. From District L: "Brazilian students talk about relocation through flights, while our Spanish-speaking population often talks about making the trek up. This difference in their journey might add to trauma and hint at their lives before they came." In District H, an educator shared: "A student walked to the border in Mexico, lived in a shelter, and was later reunited with family in Massachusetts. Despite missing family and facing challenges, they remain focused on their goal of being a doctor to make their family proud."

Complex Lives and Responsibilities

Many SLIFE balance significant responsibilities with their education.

> They are sending money back home and supporting their families in Guatemala. So not only do we have this SLIFE piece, but they need to work. I have one student who works two different jobs 7 days a week . . . working 60 to 70 hours a week on top of going to school. . . . Often times they are coming here because there is no healthcare system where they're from, and so many of the students will talk about a family member being sick and that they need to send money home, or, sadly enough, some of them have even lost family members. They were sick and passed away. And then there is even a greater need to send money home to the remaining family. (District A)

An educator from District K shared: "Changes in migration patterns mean students often need to enroll in school while working on documentation, which is a significant factor in their enrollment. Some students face challenges balancing school with financial responsibilities, working long hours, and managing debt, which affects their school performance." District H added: "Many of them do not have additional family support . . . or any type of relative . . . the kids [who are of legal age and] don't need legal representation often make decisions on their own . . . I owe my immigration lawyer $8,000. So that's why I have to work."

Educational Persistence and Initiative in Learning

Despite interrupted schooling and often uncommonly challenging journeys, SLIFE demonstrate a remarkable drive to learn:

> A lot of them have a real desire to learn and value education because, for much of their lives, education wasn't an option for them. They see the value in education that some non-SLIFE don't necessarily see. . . . We had a case where a tester noted that a student hadn't been in school for three years but had used an app to self-teach English. Despite being out of school for four years, the student came back with a level 3 in English. (District B)

Past experiences shape students' relationships with education in profound ways. Some carry trauma that affects their learning journey, as another educator in District B recalled: "I had a young girl from Afghanistan that every day for the first two months she kept going, 'School tomorrow? School tomorrow?' And I was like, 'Why are you asking me this? What is going on?' And she said, 'Because in Afghanistan the teacher would tell us if it was safe to come to school.'" Yet these experiences often fuel their determination. As noted in District H, even students facing significant challenges "remain focused on their goal . . . to make their family proud."

> We've also had students from Afghanistan affected by war. The boys from Afghanistan often have some schooling, but the girls have missed out. We also have students from Syria with similar situations where boys have been educated but girls have not. Despite these earlier restrictions, many girls thrive academically once given educational opportunities. (District M)

Some students also work to overcome significant gender-based barriers.

Professional Skills and Maturity

Many SLIFE arrive with significant work experience and professional capabilities. In District B, an educator shared: "Many [SLIFE] bring talents from their experiences outside school. For example, we have a student from Afghanistan who was a barber in his home country." These experiences contribute to notable maturity, which educators note consistently. As an educator in District D reflected:

> It's just wonderful to be able to build upon and introduce new skills, new content, new language. Taking into consideration this great asset that students bring, and what I've noticed throughout my more than 16 years now working with such students, it's maturity beyond their years, and it's just empowering.

This educator further emphasized:

> I always try to reassure the students that while there might be some gaps that they have right now in their education, in their schooling experience, because of that maturity that they possess, they are going to get so far in life, beyond what they have ever imagined. (District D)

> Many students have significant work experience and strong social skills and emotional awareness due to their experiences, such as leaving a war-torn country, being separated from family, and staying in refugee camps. This contributes to a maturity and social-emotional awareness that other students might not have. (District M)

Leadership and Community Building

SLIFE demonstrate strong leadership skills, particularly in supporting peers. In District L, educators witnessed successful peer teaching: "We decided to let the kids teach each other . . . The room came alive. All the kids were talking, focused, and working together." The educator continued: "Our newcomer and SLIFE really love helping one another and get excited when there's a new student. They volunteer to give tours, introduce them to new teachers and students, and help them learn the routines."

SLIFE often serve as language interpreters and cultural brokers for their families and communities. One educator observed: "They're taking on the role of an educator at home, which is why we see their younger siblings grow quicker" (District E).

> It's a very community-focused culture that they're coming from. If you have food that you bring in, you don't just eat it yourself. You share with everyone . . . that's the way it is, like anything you get, you automatically share, and I saw that back in their home village, and we've seen it here as well. (District A)

Linguistic Strengths: Multiple Languages, Storytelling, and Perspective Sharing

Several study participants reflected on their students' extensive linguistic repertoires and ability to share powerful narratives while acquiring English.

> A lot of them are multilingual, which is another strength. Students from Haiti, for instance, may speak Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Portuguese because they lived in Brazil, and now they're learning English. It's impressive!" (District B)

The educators consistently saw students' storytelling abilities as strengths. From District L:

> One of the strengths of our students is that they are definitely storytellers. They always want to share their past experiences with you, especially if the assignment is connected to something that sparks their past experiences or something that happened to them personally.

These stories often reveal profound life experiences. An educator from District L shared:

> One story that really took me back was about a student from Afghanistan. The assignment was to write or tell a story about something that happened to you where you learned a lesson. He talked about learning the lesson not to talk to strangers. He shared how someone in Afghanistan tried to kidnap him by luring him with candy and took him in a van. He said, 'Miss, it was so scary,' but he told the story nonchalantly. It reminded me of the different experiences they come from and how resilient they are. Listening to a 12-year-old talk about such an experience put things into perspective for me.

Through their storytelling, SLIFE bring unique perspectives that enrich classroom discussions and deepen understanding among their peers and teachers.

Impact When Supported

When provided with appropriate support, SLIFE thrive academically and socially. An educator in District A observed: "They're some of the hardest working kids. Selfless . . . there's no sense of entitlement whatsoever. They're so grateful for everything, all the help you bring them, whether it's academic or personal."

This success stems from creating supportive learning environments. As noted in District F: "Students felt like they were cared for, like they had an adult that cared about them in the school, that they could talk to, that they felt like they were part of the classroom community."

District M reported significant academic engagement:

> One hundred percent of high school students [including SLIFE] take an Early College course through [local] State University. Courses include Photography, Entrepreneurship, and Spanish for Heritage speakers. Students take these courses two days per week during their intervention block, ensuring they do not miss core classes. Early College staff at [local university] support students in their classes and with homework, resulting in a 97% pass rate last year.

District A shared: "We had 5 students work with Upward Bound this summer, and went to [local university], lived on campus, and participated in college classes." Similar initiatives across districts provide SLIFE with valuable college experience and credits, supporting their educational and career aspirations.

District N further noted how this comprehensive support leads to student self-advocacy: "As they learned, as their social language improved, they began to know that they wanted to persevere and knew where they were going. For these particular students, they knew where they wanted to end up. They really learned self-advocacy."

Statewide Educator Perspectives on SLIFE Assets

These findings from district interviews were reinforced during a September 2024 CoP meeting, during which educators across Massachusetts identified similar strengths that SLIFE bring to their school communities. Their responses clustered around several key themes that echo and expand on the interview findings.

- **Personal Qualities and Dispositions**: CoP members emphasized SLIFE's strong character traits, including resiliency, determination and desire to succeed, a strong work ethic, kindness and empathy, self-advocacy skills, and a sense of humor.
- **Life Skills and Experiences**: Educators highlighted valuable skills developed through life experiences, such as real-world skills, workplace skills, problem-solving abilities, leadership capabilities, and rich life experiences outside formal education settings.
- **Cultural Strengths**: Members noted cultural assets, including multilingualism, a strong collectivist culture, commitment to family partnerships, a desire for connection, and compassion and mutual aid.
- **Learning Orientation**: CoP participants emphasized the SLIFE approach to learning, noting their strong desire to learn, valuing of education, collaboration skills, energy and enthusiasm, lack of a sense of entitlement, and gratitude for educational opportunities.
- **Family Connection**: Members noted the centrality of family, highlighting strong family connections, a sense of responsibility to family, a commitment to supporting family members, and the ability to balance multiple responsibilities.

Both individual district interviews and statewide educator perspectives reveal SLIFE as resilient, capable learners who enrich their school communities through their experiences, skills, and determination.

Program Types

The study revealed several approaches to SLIFE programming that varied based on district size, resources, and student body characteristics.

Dedicated SLIFE Programs

Some large and medium-sized districts (e.g., A, J, M) developed dedicated SLIFE programs with comprehensive features. These programs typically offer self-contained SLIFE classes that focus on foundational skills while bridging toward high expectations for grade-level content. For example, District M developed specialized curricula with visual supports for content materials, whereas District B implemented flexible scheduling through an 11 a.m.–4 p.m. program to accommodate students who are working. District A created a systematic transition support system to gradually integrate students into mainstream classes. These dedicated programs often feature strong collaboration between SLIFE specialists and SEI-endorsed content teachers.

Integrated Support Models

Other districts took different approaches to integration, based on their specific contexts and resources. Some mid-sized districts, such as District L, created integrated SLIFE pathways within the existing EL education program. Meanwhile, large districts (e.g., E, F), mid-sized districts (e.g., D), and small districts (e.g., O, P) chose to integrate SLIFE supports within their existing programs.

These integrated models share several common features. Many implement co-teaching approaches, as seen in District L's partnerships between ESL and content teachers. Small-group interventions play a crucial role, exemplified by District D's "what I need" blocks. Districts also emphasize data-driven decision making, with District M using MAP assessments (formerly known as Measures of Academic Progress) to inform student grouping and instructional planning. Strategic scheduling helps maximize support staff availability, as demonstrated by District L's creative staffing models that enable collaborative co-teaching. Professional development remains a priority, with District E holding daily grade-level team meetings to analyze student data and District M implementing peer coaching and co-planning sessions. Some districts, such as District J, combine approaches through their REAL [Rigorous English and Academic Learning] program, offering both self-contained and integrated classes to balance foundational skill development with grade-level content access.

As districts gained experience implementing these different program models, their approaches to SLIFE education evolved through continuous learning and adaptation.

Evolution of Practice: Learning From Experience

SLIFE bring significant strengths to their school communities, and districts have learned through experience how to better recognize and build on these assets. The evolution of district practices illustrates this growing understanding of how to effectively support SLIFE.

Exhibit 8. Districts' Evolution of Practice

Shifts in grouping and teaming approaches	Development of progress monitoring	Refinement of assessment practices
District B described moving from mixed-grade interventions to grade-level groupings. *"We previously had mixed-grade interventions but have shifted to grade-level groupings for more targeted support. This allows grade-level teams to use data to determine interventions and target student needs more effectively."*	District L's approach to progress monitoring evolved from individual effort to team-based systems. *"The first year, progress monitoring was the only thing I had set up in place . . ., which I called a SLIFE stat, like a student support group. I advocated for the principal, the director, a guidance counselor, and the nurse to be part of that meeting, where I went down the line in my roster and expressed concerns. The following year, they expanded to progress monitoring in cluster teams, or grade-level teams."*	When District M's vendor assessment tool was discontinued, they developed internal alternatives. *"University of Chicago is discontinuing the program due to funding issues. We're working on developing internal assessments to gather similar data."*

This evolution of practice across districts, characterized by continuous learning and adaptation, led to the identification and refinement of specific approaches in six key areas: academic support, linguistic support, social-emotional support, family connections, community connections, and progress monitoring. The following sections detail the practices that emerged in these areas.

Findings: Key Themes

Our findings are organized according to the six priority topics (Exhibit 9), each further divided into key findings and challenges within the topic (we also summarize these findings by research questions in Appendix A). These findings are based on the interviews; survey open responses from the participating SLIFE educators; and discussions and meeting records from previous SLIFE CoP meetings that captured educators' reflections on SLIFE strengths, needs, and programming. Although the findings are rooted in the specific contexts of the districts and their

SLIFE communities, the topics and shared reflections are generally applicable to any district interested in better supporting the strengths and meeting the needs of SLIFE.

Exhibit 9. Six Priority Areas of SLIFE Education Related to DESE's SLIFE Guidance (2024)

Academic Support

Key Finding 1: Build Clear Academic Pathways Through Integrated Content and Language Instruction

Districts developed various approaches to academic support: structured approaches to integrating content and language, scaffolding strategies to help students reach grade-level content, and employing data to guide instructional scaffolding.

Content and Language Integration. *Districts described systematic approaches to embedding language development within content instruction.*

- District A developed leveled content courses with embedded language support:

  > For instance, we have a biology foundations class for newcomer/SLIFE, since they haven't had experience within the subject area or credits in biology. This gives them the skill set to be able to move into the bio class. We have math classes now at two different levels, so there's room for students to grow.

- District D implemented foundational content classes designed to transition seamlessly into the general education SEI program:

  > REAL classes—Rigorous English and Academic Learning . . . We have REAL literacy, REAL science, and REAL math classes. REAL math class is like a bridge course, designed to acquaint students with the elements of algebra and geometry. Once students progress, they can move to [general education] multilingual classes. Some of our students are taking both REAL math and the [general education SEI] algebra or geometry class.

  Sometimes, SLIFE are simultaneously enrolled in the REAL and general education SEI content classes.

- District E included language objectives across content areas:

  > We ask the teachers to have a core language objective that spans all [content areas]. There's an umbrella objective that all students are expected to achieve at their [English development] level. Then, when they're in small groups, there's a specific language objective for the small group. But you're tweaking and tailoring as you're meeting with the kids one-on-one.

Scaffolding Strategies for Reaching Grade-Level Content. *Districts outlined various strategies to maintain high academic standards while providing essential support.*

- District A highlighted how their math department balances grade-level standards with foundational skills. The math chair helped develop specialized SLIFE math classes that maintain rigor while building basic skills:

  > [The math chair's] biggest fear was to risk watering down the content. [But] they're not by any means. In fact, in many ways [SLIFE] are more mature than your typical high school student. It's just the skills they haven't had. So, it's always balancing the fact that there are basic skills that need to be met.

  The chair focused on applying foundational skills to grade-level work: "But how do you use them in the real world? Sounds like shopping, like building and designing a space using perimeter. Those are the application pieces that make these foundational skills more age appropriate."

- District B implemented a strategic approach that enables SLIFE to access grade-level texts. Even when students are reading several years below grade level, they engage with age-appropriate, high-interest texts through carefully planned supports. As their director explains:

  > In the morning students take their content classes with really planned scaffolds. They are reading grade-level text, which sometimes gets people to be like, 'you're a 9th grader that is reading at a 3rd grade level but is reading *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah.' If we never put grade-level text in front of them, it's an equity issue.

  The district makes this possible through

  - small-group discussions,
  - collaborative learning activities,
  - strategic discourse supports, and
  - visual aids and graphic organizers.

Students engage with grade-level content in morning classes: "Our students have been really successful in those content classes because we talk a lot about planned scaffolds and support. We do a lot around discourse and group work and collaborative learning." This is complemented by targeted afternoon intervention blocks: "In the afternoon we have these intervention blocks, which is really where ESL meets students right at their level. This system ensures students can meaningfully engage with challenging texts while developing foundational skills."

- District D manages cognitive load: "When introducing a new skill, [we] use familiar language and content. When introducing new content, [we] use familiar language and a familiar skill. Always be mindful of cognitive load to avoid overwhelming students."
- District M described strategies to scaffold learning: "When introducing new concepts, we use concrete manipulatives and visual aids extensively before [introducing] abstract concepts."

Use of Data to Scaffold Instruction

- Districts use various assessment-driven scaffolding strategies. For example, District L uses assessment data to create targeted math instruction through
  - small-group instruction based on skill level,
  - concrete manipulatives for foundational concepts,
  - progressive task difficulty, and
  - differentiated instruction for specific skills (e.g., equivalent fractions, fraction operations).

  As their math coach explains:

  > We identified what students needed based on an assessment. Some students needed help with understanding how to make equivalent fractions, others with adding and subtracting, and some with multiplying fractions. We had small groups . . . when students have a foundational understanding of the topic, we use concrete manipulatives. We have a scaffolded set of tasks . . . and it gets progressively harder.

- District B implements structured intervention blocks based on multiple data sources:
  - Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessment data (administered three times per year) to determine student groupings
  - Exit ticket data from content classes to monitor progress
  - Regular grade-level team meetings to discuss individual student needs
  - Assessment data covering letter names, sounds, oral language, reading comprehension, and math skills

These data points inform both the structure and content of their "intervention blocks that run Monday through Thursday from 1:15 to 2:55." During these blocks, all students receive targeted instruction in phonics, shared reading, language development, and math based on their assessed needs. The school reviews data three times per year to adjust intervention groupings and approaches.

- District A uses *Imagine Math*, an adaptive technology platform that provides sequenced mathematics instruction, as a supplemental data-driven support:

  > Students take a placement test and then move through progressive math skill levels at their own pace. And the beauty of it is that if students are struggling with a particular skill, the program tries to give them different ways of working on it, and then, if they're still struggling, *Imagine Math* connects them to a live teacher who can also speak their native language.

Key Finding 2: Connect Academic Content to Students' Lives Through Authentic Learning Experiences

Districts make learning relevant through intentional connections to students' work and life experiences.

Real-World Applications in Science and Math. District A described application of this principle in math and science instruction:

- Science connection to students' authentic work experience:

  > [The teacher] leveraged [students'] experiences and brought those experiences into the learning to connect them to some higher order thinking skills. So she had them looking at cell organelles. She took that analogy of a restaurant because all of them work in a restaurant. She connected the cell parts and their function to a matching restaurant task or job. The students were in groups of 3 so they had to work together. They looked at pictures of both the cells and the restaurant, and they connected them, coming up with analogies about how they connect.

- Math connection to shopping experience:

  > We've created a whole grocery store in their classroom, using donations of used boxes or cartons from the grocery store products that students would be familiar with, with prices on them, and students had to go shopping and use the math skills with decimals.

Connections to Students' Lives. District B selects relevant texts:

> They read *Maus* in 9th grade. That's their favorite book because they can relate to so many things. It's about mice, right? But it's a metaphor. So many of them who lived and fled from the Congo can relate to that.

Key Finding 3: Establish Comprehensive Support Systems for Academic Success and Basic Needs

Districts focus simultaneously on learning and addressing fundamental student needs, including nutrition and transportation solutions to facilitate learning.

Supporting Basic Needs

- District A provides transportation through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds:

  > We bought two 15-passenger vans . . . really helpful for students that are like, 'hey, I have an appointment, but I still want to come to school.' And we'll say, 'Okay, we'll come pick you up in the van.' This has been really helpful for our attendance. Our overall attendance was 95% of students.

- District B's intervention block combines academic support with nutrition: "At the end of intervention, this focus block . . . [includes a] state snack program . . . But it's also a time that they get help with their homework."

Predictable Routines and Environments. District B emphasizes consistency:

> Some of the students have to relearn how to go to school [so we] make it a really predictable environment for them, so that school doesn't feel like another obstacle . . . We need you to come at 7:15 *every* morning. We *always* have breakfast at this time. You *always* have food available, systems like that."

Key Finding 4: Implement Flexible Scheduling and Collaborative Staffing Models

Some districts use flexible, responsive scheduling, and collaborative staffing models.

Flexible Programming Examples and Scheduling

- District A accommodates work schedules. The school has a late start in the morning to allow students who work until late at night to get a few precious hours of sleep; the school day is then extended into the afternoon: "Monday through Thursday we have late days till 3:45, but on Friday students leave at 1:05, so that students can work Fridays starting at 2." Moreover, District A provides afterschool support, currently offering a literacy program and is considering adding a math program.

- District J maintains flexibility through their evening program: "We're trying to find the balance between high expectations and understanding students' lives and stressors. We have multiple on-and-off ramps for students in our evening program." The district implements this flexibility through
  - student contracts that allow for customized attendance expectations;
  - adjusted start times based on work schedules (e.g., starting after 5:30);
  - options for students to return to day programming when circumstances change; and
  - accommodations for students with family responsibilities, such as childcare.

  For example, one administrator described adapting to student needs:

  > We created a contract for students, outlining basic rules and expectations, such as not missing more than 10% of classes. However, we also allow for adjustments. For instance, if a student can't be there before 5:30, we work out a schedule that accommodates them.

- District I offers an afternoon and evening alternative program, designed for students who are overage and undercredited:

  > Some of our students, who are 17, 18, or 19 years old and haven't had schooling in multiple years, have an opportunity to earn a high school diploma through this program. If they're 18 or 19 years old, there's still a place for them.

Collaborative Staffing Approaches

- District A promotes collaborative, shared responsibility between content and language teachers for each class: "We have every class covered with a co-teacher, an ESL licensed teacher."
- District D implements planned collaboration between content and language teachers:

  > Last year I collaborated in biology. The biology teacher would tell me what the upcoming units would be, and I would introduce that unit's concepts and skills in my REAL science class. When she talked about macromolecules, I did a unit on macromolecules with application of authentic projects.

- District I described a systems approach:

  > The education of SLIFE should not be the sole responsibility of one person. There should be systems in place to support both the student and the teacher . . . surrounded by community facilitators, instructional coaches, ESL teachers, assessment specialists, department heads, and curriculum coordinators.

Academic Support in SLIFE Education: Common Implementation Challenges

Districts face several significant challenges in providing appropriate academic support for SLIFE.

Work-School Balance

- District A captures this widespread challenge: "[Some students are] working 40, 50, 60 hours a week, some of them, and sending money back home. I have one student who works two different jobs 7 days a week."
- District J describes complex life circumstances: "One student became a father and was left with the infant when the mother moved away. Now he's a single dad at 18, trying to work full time. His attendance issues are compounded by his work schedule."

Academic Materials and Curriculum Gaps. District A describes the instructional dilemma: "How are we catching them up to grade level if we're not giving them full access to grade-level skills? How do we balance these two out in math?"

Limited Technical-Vocational Pathways. District H advocates for expanded options: "I've advocated for vocational and trade schools for SLIFE. School would be more meaningful if they could graduate with job skills. Every year, students express a desire to learn something that can help them get a better job."

Academic support provides the foundation for SLIFE success, and districts recognize that language development is inextricably linked to academic achievement. The following section explores how districts approach linguistic support through multiple complementary strategies that enhance both language acquisition and content learning.

Linguistic Support

Linguistic support encompasses multiple dimensions: English acquisition, academic language development, content vocabulary, and literacy skills—including home language development when possible.

Key Finding 1: Focus on Language and Literacy Skills

Districts address language and literacy development through multiple complementary approaches, including explicit instruction in foundational skills, targeted writing development, and structured oral language practice. The specific methods vary, but the programs share common elements: explicit skill instruction, use of age-appropriate materials, and opportunities for authentic language use.

Foundational Literacy. Districts recognize that SLIFE often need explicit instruction in foundational reading skills, regardless of age.

- District E focused on phonemic awareness: "I'm talking about the smaller pieces of emerging literacy, like the actual sounds like an apple, a."
- District M considered teacher preparation: "We use *Corrective Reading* as a phonics curriculum, and most of our phonics teachers are Orton-Gillingham trained . . . having those resources and investing in Orton-Gillingham training or Corrective Reading lessons really helps build a strong phonics foundation."
- District J plans to implement daily phonics instruction:

  > We plan to pilot a literacy program focusing on early literacy, as our secondary teachers are not trained as literacy instructors. The program aims to cover all 44 phonemes of the English language in 35 lessons, providing support for teachers and students.

Districts also leverage specific educational technology and programs to support literacy development.

- District A uses Imagine Learning's *Language and Literacy* program as a supplement to their literacy curriculum because it provides individualized instruction with native language support. The district also uses Rosetta Stone to assist with phonemic awareness and production:

  > Imagine Learning's *Language and Literacy* program provides individualized instruction with native language support. Students can build foundational skills privately and at their own pace. The program contrasts English sounds with native language sounds, aiding comprehension. Rosetta Stone is also used to develop foundational language sounds in the students' home languages. This approach helps students develop their native language skills, facilitating easier transfer to English, in line with bilingual education theories."
- District C implements Wilson Language Training's *Just Words* intervention, anecdotally reporting student progress in both English literacy and phonics skills.

Writing Development. Districts balance foundational writing skills with opportunities for more complex expression. They strive to provide structured support while maintaining high expectations.

- District D provides scaffolded academic writing instruction:

  > I always believe that students should be given these [writing] structures and should be asked to produce academic writing from the get-go. Usually, I have SLIFE write a 5-paragraph essay [as part of their regular assignments], and they can do it. There is a lot

of scaffolding that goes on . . . These [writing structures and scaffolds] include transition words, textual evidence explanations, and attempts at introduction or conclusion.

- District C expands beyond basic essay formats**:**

  Students often struggle with writing because they are exposed primarily to the five-paragraph essay structure, but to be successful writers, they need to write in different genres. My strategy is to [have students practice writing in various genres and] infuse classrooms with language, basing learning on texts, and ensuring language is present throughout.

Oral Language Development. Districts emphasize spoken language development through structured opportunities for student discourse. They strive to create supportive environments in which students can practice language skills.

- District C noted that students need additional opportunities for oral language development in English: "Students have expressed a desire for more discussion and opportunities to make meaning of what they're reading. When they don't participate [in class], it's often because they can't access the language or meaning."
- District D structures speaking practice: "We use sentence frames and discussion protocols to support academic conversations. Students practice with a partner before sharing with the whole class."
- District L facilitates peer learning: "We decided to let the kids teach each other. We made different groups and put a student leader in each group. The room came alive. All the kids were talking, focused, and working together."
- District F plans to increase student classroom discourse: "Our focus next year will be on a dialogic approach. We noticed that in our classes, over 50% of the discussion was teacher talk, meaning students were mostly listening."

Data-Driven Differentiation. Districts strive to use ongoing assessment data to inform instruction and adjust student grouping. Their approaches include both formal assessments and regular progress monitoring.

- As students arrive to enroll in school, District I assesses them in several of their home languages: "Avant runs speaking and writing assessments in multiple languages, including Cape Verdean and Haitian Creole. We hope to use this tool to gauge multiple language proficiencies and get a better picture of new students' needs." Assessing students in their home or prior schooling languages helps understand their existing language skills and academic abilities. By evaluating multiple language proficiencies, educators can identify

strengths and areas for improvement in both the students' home languages and English. This type of assessment provides a better picture of new students' strengths and needs, allowing for more tailored instruction and support.

- District E emphasizes a thorough initial assessment:

  > First, get to know your students through data, including diagnostic assessments in their native language for reading, writing, and math skills . . . You first need to identify your SLIFE. Know you have SLIFE, and then you can begin the advocacy work.

- District D implements ongoing progress monitoring: "We collect extensive data on reading abilities to regroup students in their intervention classes . . . We analyze the data from both math and reading tests to monitor progress and adjust interventions for both core content and intervention programming."
- District L implements regular assessment cycles using the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) in English: "It tells you if the student can read or decode words, then they can cold-read. I observe them decoding, their comprehension, and power words."
- District B uses data to address skill gaps in English oral literacy: "These students are really struggling with basic phonics, struggling with letter sounds. Let's meet them right where they are, and . . . build that bridge to help them. . . . We group them [by] looking at the data."

Key Finding 2: Integrate Content Learning and Language Development

Districts create connections between language development and content learning through co-teaching and integrated instruction.

Co-Teaching Models. Team teaching allows districts to address both content and language needs simultaneously.

- District D implements structured collaboration:

  > We have a co-teaching model in our ELA and math classes. In ELA, we have both an ELA and an ESL teacher providing support . . . we use station rotations to provide targeted support for students at different points in their language development, especially those who are new to print or have significant foundational literacy needs.

- District D's REAL program provides integration of content-language instruction. The program incorporates literacy, science, and math while aligning with state assessment requirements. Students progress from SLIFE classes to multilingual [general education SEI] classes based on data: "Once students progress, they can move to multilingual classes. We collect data over time. Students can join the regular [general education SEI] classes offered for MLs [multilingual learners]."

Language Objectives in Content. Districts embed language development goals within content instruction:

- District D coordinates between language and content teachers: "The ESL teacher works with content teachers to develop language objectives and support student language development within content instruction."
- District L integrates language goals across subjects:

  > When we're teaching [math], we have a language objective. There's an umbrella one that all students would be expected to be able to do at their level. Then, when they're in small groups, there's a language objective for the small group.

Key Finding 3: Leverage and Develop Home Language Skills

Districts implement various approaches to leverage students' home languages.

Strategic Home Language Support. Districts recognize and build on students' existing language knowledge as a foundation for learning.

- District K emphasizes bilingual development:

  > Many interventions have a monolingual focus, but we are working with bilingual students or those on the path to bilingualism. For me, bilingual literacy development is crucial . . . The idea is for students to transfer concepts learned in their heritage class to their ELA and ESL classes.

  Heritage classes focus on maintaining and developing proficiency in students' home languages, which supports their overall bilingual literacy development.

- District A is planning to create parallel language instruction opportunities: "Next year we're adding in a native language proficiency class . . . students will be getting the same literature in their Spanish [native language proficiency] class as they will get in this [ELA] class." The district currently supplements instruction with technology that

  > builds in the native language into the instruction since all directions are in their native language . . . it also contrasts sounds from the English language with their native language . . . So it'll say, this is the sound in English, and in here it is in your language. Let's look at these pictures. And these two pictures are words in your language, and this one's in English, and listen for the sound.

- District E uses strategic translation:

  > Translation tools, depending on the age of the students and their proficiency in their first language, have been super helpful to bridge the gap in the beginning. When they're

hearing something or want to write something, saying it in their home language and having access to it in English, and then teaching the kids how to revise, is huge.

- District I implements bilingual support across levels:

  At the middle school level, we have a transitional bilingual education program with native language support to help with first and second language transfer . . . At the high school level, we offer transitional bilingual education, including SLIFE-specific classes in ESL, math, social studies, and science.

Recognition of Complex Language Backgrounds. Districts acknowledge the multitude of linguistic backgrounds and experiences of their students.

- District I describes the many languages of the students:

  There's a complexity in the multiple languages in our students' lives and the difference between social language and academic literacy development . . . The children may have gone to school for their entire educational career and speak Haitian socially but academically speak Spanish or Portuguese . . . Our kids are learning a second language at school and then a third language in the [United States].

- District C recognizes linguistic diversity: "I later discovered that some students' first languages were not Spanish, but indigenous languages like Kaqchikel or K'iche.' I am now considering how to support students who speak these indigenous languages and ensure that learning is accessible."

- District D promotes linguistic equity:

  "Whenever I provided a translation, I tried to switch the orders because I did not want students to internalize that there was a hierarchy of languages . . . Sometimes it was the Haitian Creole. Another time it was the Portuguese.

Linguistic Support in SLIFE Education: Common Implementation Challenges

Districts face ongoing challenges in implementing effective language support. These challenges primarily center on assessment and resources.

Assessment Challenges. Districts struggled with accurate language assessment.

- District C identified assessment needs:

  To better serve SLIFE, we need thorough diagnostic assessments to measure their literacy in their native language. Some students are new to print, some are developing literacy, and others are approaching grade-level literacy. Instruction must be differentiated for these three groups.

- Districts face challenges assessing students whose first language isn't Spanish. As District F explains: "Testing for literacy abilities in Spanish can result in low literacy scores that may not accurately reflect their abilities, as we're not assessing them in their native language." This indicates that even though Spanish language assessments may be available, they may not be suitable for students whose first language is neither Spanish nor English. The lack of assessments in other home or prior schooling languages means that students' true literacy abilities might not be accurately measured, highlighting the need for more diverse language assessments.

Curriculum and Materials Challenges. Districts struggle to find materials that are both age-appropriate and accessible.

- As District F noted: "There's no curriculum that exists that's tied to 9th-grade standards that caters to students with a kindergarten or 1st-grade set of literacy skills." This creates particular challenges in secondary settings.
- District E observed: "Age-appropriate resources are crucial . . . Unfortunately, in older SLIFE classrooms, they have level A Fountas and Pinnell reading books with a cute little bunny, and the student is 15."
- District A added: "If they're doing kindergarten iReady, it's the baby graphics, and the kids know it."

Staffing and Materials Gaps. Districts F and H discussed resource constraints. The unique needs of SLIFE require educators with specialized skills beyond typical ESL training.

- District H emphasized: "Not many teachers are equipped for this. Colleges should offer specific training for teaching SLIFE to better prepare educators for this important work."
- Beyond instructional staff, District F highlights the need for support personnel who understand students' experiences: "It's not just about language but also understanding the cultural and immigration experiences of students."

Just as districts emphasize academic and linguistic development, they also recognize that SLIFE's ability to learn and thrive depends heavily on their social-emotional well-being. Districts have developed various approaches to providing social-emotional support that create the conditions for academic and linguistic growth.

Social Emotional Support

Districts have developed various approaches to providing social-emotional support for SLIFE, including trauma-informed practices, mental health counseling, school climate development, and integration with academic programs.

Key Finding 1: Provide Clinical Mental Health Support Through Partnerships and Trained Staff

Districts described establishing mental health support through external partnerships and dedicated staff.

- Districts F and G partnered with Boston Children's Hospital's Trauma and Community Resilience Center to implement the Four Core Stressors Framework, which addresses the primary stressors faced by refugees and immigrants: trauma, isolation, resettlement, and acculturative stress. Trauma refers to the psychological impact of past experiences, isolation involves the sense of being separated from familiar social networks, resettlement covers the challenges of adapting to a new environment, and acculturative stress pertains to the pressures of adapting to a new culture while maintaining one's own cultural identity. District F noted, "Our counselors are trained in supporting SLIFE who often have experienced all of these stressors." District G explained how they've made this a priority: "This is our third year in partnership with BCH, and we aim to train all our counselors."
- Districts F and G use the STRONG (Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups) curriculum to provide structured social-emotional support: "It helps students understand stress, define feelings, and develop problem-solving skills" (District G).
- District G uses tiered interventions: "Trauma Systems Therapy . . . focuses on running Tier 2 groups or Tier 3 one-on-one sessions."
- Districts established staffing models for mental health support:
  - "School adjustment counselors and multilingual family liaisons" (District G).
  - "Multilingual adjustment counselors [to] help lead morning meetings focusing on topics relevant to newly arrived students" (District I).
  - Counseling staff to communicate with SLIFE in their home languages (District E).
  - District F maintains dedicated counselor positions, advocating to keep them open despite hiring challenges: "We are fortunate to have a superintendent who understands the needs of multilingual learners and supports keeping positions open even if they are hard to fill."

Key Finding 2: Build Social-Emotional Support Through Coordinated Staff Teams

Districts described approaches for coordinating staff support efforts for SLIFE in particular.

- District F implemented coordinated team meetings.

  > Twice-weekly PLC [professional learning community] meetings bring together high school MLE [multilingual education] staff, including ESL teachers, classroom teachers, community members, and counselors. One meeting focuses on instructional best practices, while the other addresses specific student needs like absenteeism or behavioral issues, allowing the team to efficiently coordinate support services.

- District L's grade-level teams meet regularly. "In a 6-day rotation cycle, grade-level and ESL teachers meet to analyze student data and plan differentiated instruction. During these meetings, content teachers, ESL specialists, and support staff review individual student progress and coordinate interventions."
- District L emphasized relationship building through staffing ratios: "Having that small student-teacher ratio is important because we are then able to form strong relationships with the students. And that is the key. Obviously, if they feel safe and trusted, then they can learn."
- District F explained a differentiated division of labor: "Our deans of students at each of our schools deal with discipline issues, and that frees up the counselors to really work on the SEL" of SLIFE.

Key Finding 3: Create Schoolwide Social-Emotional Learning Opportunities

Districts incorporated social-emotional learning into daily programming.

- District F developed a newcomer seminar: "We designed a course called Newcomer Seminar, which is a mandatory course for newcomers and SLIFE, and they get credit. It's a one-semester course, and it goes through what it means to attend an American school." The course helps students develop self-awareness, social skills, and emotional resilience as they navigate their new educational environment.
- District M prioritized emotional safety: "Students need a lot of love, support, care. And then comes the curriculum. There's a lot of joy that we infuse into [our school] because of how much we know our students have worked to even get to this point."
- District E had a similar approach: "The social needs to come first. They need to feel comfortable navigating the classroom before they're willing to take academic risks and use academic language and vocabulary."

- District B described peer support systems:

> We have students that are very kind to new students . . . Our newcomer and SLIFE really love helping one another and get excited when there's a new student. Across the nation we have this huge bullying issue, [a] huge mental health crisis in terms of students not feeling like a sense of belonging . . . And we just don't have that here, because we have this culture of just like everyone has been new at some point.

Key Finding 4: Provide Wraparound Support to Address Basic Needs

Districts emphasized addressing basic needs as fundamental to social-emotional well-being.

- District F focused on multitiered support to deliver "wraparound support for students and their families so they can come to school ready to learn without worries about housing, food, or clothing." They emphasized Maslow's higher order needs in their definition of social-emotional support. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a psychological theory that categorizes human needs into five levels: physiological (basic needs such as food and shelter), safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. According to this theory, basic needs must be met before individuals can focus on higher level psychological and self-fulfillment needs (Maslow, 1943).
- District G described partnerships with agencies that that support emotional well-being: "We provide clothing and food through partnerships and fundraising, and we collaborate with agencies that provide additional support." These agencies provide services such as school-based health centers that provide medical care, including vaccinations.
- District M maintains awareness of cultural competence in support services:

> We had a student who was fasting during Ramadan. She passed out during gym class. The dad came with all of his immigration paperwork. I was like, 'No, you don't need any of this. Let me stay at the hospital with you, because I can just at least sort of help translate between . . . because basically, they're like we need to do an EKG, and I was like, Okay, that's fine. But she's Muslim, and we're in a hallway, so she can't just pull down her shirt. We need to be in a private setting.'" (District M)

- District F shares this philosophy: "It's not just about language but also understanding the cultural and immigration experiences of students."

Social Emotional Support in SLIFE Education: Common Implementation Challenges

Districts identified several ongoing challenges in providing social-emotional support, including staff recruitment, staff emotional burden, and funding constraints.

- Recruiting: "A challenge we face is staffing, particularly finding multilingual counselors. These positions are difficult to fill due to the need for bilingual skills, counseling licenses, and experience with newcomers." (District F)
- Promoting staff well-being: "As school leaders, you have to be mindful that this work is really hard and really exhausting. It's hard to know that these students are going through so much and then carry that with you." (District L)
- Funding: "Long-term mental health care [for all students, including SLIFE] remains a challenge due to [district] funding limitations." (District G)

While school-based social-emotional support is crucial, districts understand that engaging families and/or caretakers is essential for student well-being and success. The following section examines how districts build meaningful connections with SLIFE families through dedicated staff, communication systems, and support services.

Family Connections

Family connections encompass multiple dimensions: direct family engagement, multilingual communication systems, comprehensive family support services, and cultural bridging. Districts have developed varied approaches to family engagement for SLIFE.

Key Finding 1: Implement Structured Approaches to Family Engagement

Districts described approaches to engaging families of SLIFE through dedicated staff, programmatic supports, and family-focused events. These approaches share common elements: bilingual and bicultural staff, communication systems, and opportunities for family participation.

Dedicated Family Support Roles. Districts emphasized the importance of dedicated staff for family engagement.

- District D emphasized family relationships: "Get to know [the students] as learners through interviews and gather information about their families. Building strong relationships with families is crucial, as they often feel unwelcome or intimidated. Create an open-door policy and communicate honestly about student progress and interventions." Dedicated staff members play a key role in facilitating these relationships by conducting interviews, gathering family information, and maintaining open communication channels.

- District I established long-term staffing investment:

  > Prior to COVID and my joining [the district], the district invested in bilingual community relations facilitators for over 25 years. They speak Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, French, Haitian Creole, Thai, Hmong, Laotian, and Chinese. They are incredibly accessible to our families because they were given district cell phones.

Coordinated Districtwide Family Engagement Coordination. Districts established communication structures to enhance family engagement.

- District H advised:

  > First, during registration, [it is important to] ensure that someone explains that the school has native speakers of the home language... [Intake staff should] provide information about key contacts for various situations. Second, follow up with the family one or two months after registration to check on their needs and experiences.

- District K created coordinated systems:

  > Each school has a family liaison, and they all work together with the same focus on supporting families. When there's an activity at one of the elementary schools, all [family support staff and responsible administrators] get the emails . . . It's a districtwide communication effort.

Family Engagement Events. Districts created structured opportunities for family involvement.

- District I developed comprehensive resource events:

  > We created our first annual Bilingual PAC [Parent Advisory Council] Resource Fair. We brought the [public] library, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] registration, neighborhood health services giving COVID shots, and various community organizations. We had our bilingual staff there to interpret and help families navigate these resources. Over 200 people showed up, and we've done it every year since then. Last year we had over 300 people.

- District H has employed various engagement approaches with varying degrees of success: "I've tried offering Saturday classes for SLIFE families to learn English and about U.S. school culture. We also offered presentations with immigration lawyers and clinics for immunizations."

Key Finding 2: Develop Multilingual Communication Systems

Districts established approaches to communicate with families in their home languages, combining technology, translation services, and outreach.

Technology-Enhanced Communication. Districts leveraged technology to improve family connections. For example, District I invested in technology to support communication with multilingual families:

> Two years ago, we set up a multilingual family communication center with a call center that parents can call at any time . . . [Additionally, other] technology has increased access to families across the district. For example, nurses can now send an email to make a call home in the family's language, providing immediate access.

Professional Development for Staff. Districts invested in staff training for family communication. For example, District I described systematic training: "They allocated funds to train school secretaries and clerical paraprofessionals on multilingual family communication, providing stipends for attendance."

Key Finding 3: Develop Family Support Systems

Districts developed holistic approaches to supporting families beyond academic concerns, including addressing fundamental needs.

Basic Needs Support. Districts addressed fundamental family needs through dedicated staff and programs.

- District H noted: "Providing families with community resources is crucial. For instance, they might need help with paying utilities or other daily activities. Offering mini workshops at local libraries could create awareness of the support the school community can provide."
- District I expanded support roles:

  > We leveraged some immigrant grant funds and hired three part-time family advocates . . . to support families in accessing external [supports] such as SNAP benefits, food pantries, medical, and housing systems. During COVID, the district transitioned these part-time roles to full-time using local funds.

Administrative Support: Districts emphasized the importance of leadership investment in family engagement initiatives. For example, District I described leadership commitment: "The superintendent and the executive team support these initiatives through their financial priorities. This shows it's a high priority, supported by personnel allocation and professional development."

Family Engagement in SLIFE Education: Common Implementation Challenges

Districts acknowledged the varied family situations of SLIFE, which present significant challenges to family engagement.

Awareness of Family Circumstances. Districts noted the range of family circumstances. District H emphasized this complexity as follows:

> It's important to keep in mind that many SLIFE are already adults and represent themselves. Many of them do not have additional family support, which could be from a brother, sibling, or any type of relative. It's crucial to differentiate between those who have this support and those who do not.

Work-Related Barriers. Districts recognized economic pressures on families. District H described these challenges as follows:

> Family engagement has always been a challenge. SLIFE families leave their countries due to poverty, war, or in search of better opportunities. When they arrive in the U.S., they are focused on finding jobs and making money to send back home. This makes it difficult for us to make appointments with parents . . . It's not that parents don't want to be involved; life circumstances often get in the way. They may have young children, live far from the school, and face transportation and language barriers.

Structural Barriers. Districts noted multiple practical challenges that impede family engagement. For example, District H noted challenges with alternative programming: "I've tried offering Saturday classes for SLIFE families to learn English and about U.S. school culture, but attendance was low. We also offered presentations with immigration lawyers and clinics for immunizations, which had some initial success but dwindled over time."

Resource and Staffing Needs. Districts emphasized the importance of sustained resource allocation.

- District I described the intensive staffing required: "We have a district lead, a staff member, who organizes with the parents throughout the year. The superintendent made that staff member a full-time employee and gave every single person a district cell phone to promote access."
- District H noted a variety of needs: "[SLIFE family engagement work] requires availability of people, time, and resources, which can be challenging."

Beyond direct family engagement, districts have found that broader community partnerships significantly enhance their ability to support SLIFE and their families/caretakers. The following

section explores how districts leverage community resources and relationships to provide comprehensive support for SLIFE.

Community Connections

Community connections and partnerships in SLIFE education span multiple areas: basic needs, health care, academic enrichment, and career development. Districts developed partnerships with refugee resettlement agencies, healthcare providers, community-based organizations, and local businesses to support SLIFE success.

Key Finding 1: Partner with Resettlement Organizations to Support Transition

Districts B, F, G, and I work with resettlement organizations and community groups to facilitate SLIFE transition to the United States.

Resettlement Support. Districts described partnerships with agencies providing initial support services.

- District B detailed their process as follows:

  > A family arrives, they get through Jewish Family Services. That's the organization we work with the most. They get placed in housing, get food assistance. For the first month they get all their vaccinations done. Each gets a case worker who speaks their home language. Sometimes I will reach out to that caseworker. For example, when a student passed out and I had no way of contacting the father, that caseworker drove to the house, knocked on the door, and brought the father to the hospital.

- District B leverages community volunteers: "A lot of retirees do the driving and transportation. A couple of our students play sports."

Healthcare and Basic Needs Access. Districts B, F, G, and O established partnerships to address health and essential needs.

- District G developed multiple support channels: "School-based health centers help with medical needs, including vaccinations. We provide clothing and food through partnerships and fundraising. These collaborations with agencies ensure we can meet immediate needs while working toward longer term support."
- Districts F and G partnered with Boston Children's Hospital's Trauma and Resilience Center to address social, emotional, and mental health needs through this community partnership.
- District B coordinates urgent care access and basic needs:

  > We developed partnerships to secure waivers for urgent care visits. This helps ensure students can access medical care regardless of insurance status. We need to have a

dinner program on the weekends and send food home with families. We actually developed a community engagement team to help support students who are by themselves or with family.

- District O works toward expanding health services: "We partnered with a bilingual nurse to provide dental checkups for students. While this initiative helps meet immediate health needs, we recognize the need for additional wraparound services in our rural setting where health care access is limited."

Key Finding 2: Create Systems to Coordinate Community Resources

Districts E, I, and K developed specific protocols and staffing to connect SLIFE with community resources.

Resource Coordination. Districts described specific roles for managing community connections.

- District I established long-term community connections:

  Prior to COVID, the district invested in bilingual community relations facilitators for over 25 years. They speak the languages of our communities. . . . Our family advocates support families in accessing external needs such as SNAP benefits, food pantries, medical, and housing systems.

- District K implemented a liaison system: "We host many community organizations . . . These resources, which address housing, food, job insecurities, and clothing needs, are within walking distance. [The organizations] are present at the high school and work with a family liaison who connects these resources with students."

- District E highlighted the impact of community programs:

  Only a fourth of our students progress quickly, but I think the more support they have outside of school, like [local organizations that provide] afterschool programs, and [the involvement of the local immigrant advocacy group that mentors SLIFE], the quicker they move up. The kids that participate in those programs, along with their younger siblings, have moved up way quicker than students without outside support. From our PLCs, we notice the kids that move up quicker are ones who have resources outside of school.

Key Finding 3: Partner With Higher Education Institutions

District B established partnerships with local colleges to expand opportunities for SLIFE.
District B described an evolving partnership:

We've partnered with [the local state university], and the professors actually come to the school. So our students are able to take college classes as dual enrollment during

> our school day . . . with the college professor on site here, instead of us having to figure out how to get them to [the university campus].

Community Partnerships in SLIFE Education: Common Implementation Challenges

Districts encounter several challenges in developing and maintaining community partnerships.

Resource Limitations. Districts noted funding constraints affect partnership sustainability. In District G: "We're always working on securing additional funding. For example, [a local supermarket] provided a grant to build a food pantry in one of our schools. . . . [But] long-term mental health care remains a challenge due to funding limitations."

Geographic Barriers: Rural and suburban districts face location-based challenges in accessing services and in maintaining partnerships with the providers they can access in their region. District O described the difficulty in hiring the staff needed to support SLIFE and other students given their geographic isolation and the nonexistent applicant pool for certain positions: "We have put out for a therapist or bilingual guidance counselor or social worker every year, and nobody's coming because they don't exist out here."

Basic Needs Support: Districts continually work to address fundamental needs. District B described ongoing support needs: "We need to have a dinner program on the weekends. We need to make sure that we can send food home with [SLIFE] if [they] need it."

To ensure these various support systems effectively serve SLIFE, districts implement systematic approaches to tracking student progress. The following section examines how districts monitor SLIFE development across multiple dimensions—from academic achievement to language development to social-emotional growth.

Progress Monitoring

Measuring and monitoring each student's academic progress is essential to determine SLIFE placement and achievement. Progress monitoring lies at the heart of SLIFE programming because students' unique combination of social-emotional development, linguistic skills (in home languages and English), and content knowledge change frequently.

Key Finding 1: Use Frequent Assessments and Develop Tools as Needed

Districts used various assessment tools to identify SLIFE needs and progress, from formative to summative, from vendor-purchased to educator-designed tools.

Use of Support Structures and Assessments to Progress Monitor: Districts L and M used a multitiered system of support to gauge needs and progress on content mastery.

- District M established a benchmarking system to adjust instruction and rigor as needed: "We give the NWEA math assessment three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. We analyze the data from both math and reading tests to monitor progress and adjust interventions for both core content and intervention programming." This benchmarking process helps ensure that instruction aligns with student needs and standards. District M also asks teachers to use exit tickets at the end of every lesson, aligned with lesson objectives and standards.
- District L used assessment data for grouping: "We identified what students needed based on an assessment. We made small groups. Some students needed help with understanding how to make equivalent fractions, others with adding and subtracting with unlike denominators, and some with multiplying fractions." This approach allows for targeted instruction based on specific student needs.

District-Made Assessments. *Districts L and M described developing their own assessments to supplement other available assessments that are not designed for SLIFE or to use in place of assessment tools that are no longer available.*

- District M developed alternatives when vendor tools became unavailable: "As part of our intervention programming, we offer all students a shared reading class and a phonics class." With one of the assessments discontinued by the vendor, District M is "developing internal assessments to gather similar data."
- District L created assessments to meet specific needs: "We also have common assessments that the ESL department is developing to stay in line with other content classes."

Key Finding 2: Develop Tailored Progress Monitoring Approaches

Districts described progress monitoring approaches addressing SLIFE's complex needs, considering past educational experiences, lived experiences, English language development, and graduation pathways.

Holistic Development Monitoring. Districts L and M incorporate students' growth at all levels, not simply academics.

- District M regularly accounts for the whole child: "We're building protocols for grade-level teams to review data weekly and make academic interventions . . . Teachers record data on classwork, participation, homework, and exit tickets . . . to track mastery and identify students needing extra support." The teams also discuss social-emotional well-being,

incorporating both academic and social-emotional aspects of student development into their decision-making processes.

- District L applied the principles of a data wall to their SLIFE classes:

  > We used a skills tracker where we wrote down the skills we were teaching, looked at the quiz or assessment, and color-coded it. We used a numbering system of one to five, one being they don't quite understand the concept yet, and five being they've mastered it.

- District M used multiple data sources when making instructional or placement decisions for SLIFE: "Teachers record data on classwork, participation, homework, and exit tickets . . . to track mastery and identify students needing extra support."

Key Finding 3: Implement Flexible Grouping and Team-Based Monitoring Structures

As districts gained experience with SLIFE and educators developed expertise in meeting SLIFE needs, they implemented flexible grouping and team-based monitoring structures to better support student progress.

Flexible Grouping. *Districts L and M described how they adjusted their educator groups to better meet student needs.*

- District M shifted intervention approaches to better address student needs: "We previously had mixed-grade interventions but have shifted to grade-level groupings for more targeted support. This allows grade-level teams to use data to determine interventions and target student needs more effectively."
- District L uses progress monitoring to inform flexible grouping: The middle school math coach explained their approach: "Based on consistent progress in both daily work and formal assessments, students can move between different levels of math support. When a student demonstrates mastery of foundational concepts in our SLIFE math class, we begin transitioning them into our sheltered content classes with continued progress monitoring. The goal is to provide the right level of challenge while maintaining appropriate support."

Team-Based Monitoring

- District L established a team approach to facilitate communication and support for SLIFE:

  > The first year, progress monitoring was the only thing I had set up in place that I advocated for, which I called a SLIFE stat, like a student support group. I advocated for the principal, the director, a guidance counselor, and the nurse to be part of that meeting, where I went down the line in my roster and expressed concerns.

- District L added educator meetings to facilitate communication: "[Last year we started] progress monitoring in cluster teams, or grade-level teams. I was grateful to meet with the

6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade teams." These meetings bring together the SLIFE teacher, the ESL teacher, and all the content teachers to discuss observational data and academic data. Content teachers (math, social studies, science) provide their observations to discuss each student's needs.

- Regular grade-level meetings and placement decisions: "The grade-level math teacher and I make a recommendation of whether or not the student should be in newcomer math."

Key Finding 4: Document Progress Monitoring

Districts developed systems to document multiple progress measures, with attention to home language assessment and documentation systems.

Documentation Systems

- District B developed monitoring spreadsheets: "I create spreadsheets for all the grade-level teams . . . looking at ACCESS data, MAP data from last June, and we'll take it again in the fall."
- District L uses a digital platform to document common assessment progress:

  > We have common assessments that the ESL department is developing . . . I write it into Ellevation [platform that integrates student performance data with progress monitoring and reporting], which is my way to share it with everybody else. Any teacher can log into Ellevation and see those notes.

- District L now has more structure for SLIFE programming, including criteria for exiting: "If a SLIFE has been in my class for a year, I compare their progress to the criteria. If they check off four of the boxes, they are a candidate to exit."
- District M monitors not only academics and well-being but also attendance and scheduling: "We also monitor attendance [for SLIFE]. We have an attendance team that meets weekly to review dashboards and track chronic absenteeism. We use this data to determine appropriate attendance interventions." Moreover, District M "previously centralized scheduling but are now allowing grade-level teams to manage their own interventions based on their data."

Progress Monitoring in SLIFE Education: Common Implementation Challenges

Districts faced several challenges in implementing progress monitoring systems and developed various approaches to address them.

- Assessment tools: District B encountered sustainability challenges: "[The] University of Chicago is discontinuing the program. We're working on developing internal assessments to gather similar data."

- Distinguishing learning needs: District L described the complexity of identifying learning disabilities: "It's very difficult . . . District E does have a nice checklist that I use for students who speak multiple languages. It's called the L students with disability checklist."
- Data management: District M highlighted the complexity of data management. They explained as follows:

  > When we look at the data from each school and their subpopulations, we consider what percentage of students met their growth targets this past year and then set a goal for the upcoming year. The interim data will act as a dipstick into the goals. Here are the students that didn't meet it last year. Let's see how they're doing towards helping us achieve that goal.

  This statement illustrates several challenges: tracking different subgroups within SLIFE, analyzing both historical and current data, measuring progress toward goals, and the ongoing nature of data collection and analysis.

Interconnections Across Service Areas

These findings reveal how different aspects of SLIFE support often work together in practice. For example, District D's co-teaching model integrates academic support, language development, and progress monitoring. Content and ESL teachers collaborate on upcoming units, develop shared language objectives, and jointly monitor student progress. Similarly, District I's family support system includes a multilingual communication center and family advocates who connect families to comprehensive services to build on the intersection of family engagement, community connections, and social-emotional support. District F's twice-weekly PLC meetings illustrate how academic planning, social-emotional support, and progress monitoring come together as teachers, counselors, and community members discuss student needs. These examples suggest that promising practices often span multiple service areas rather than operating in isolation and are best implemented from a systemic perspective.

Navigating Challenges: District Strategies for Addressing Obstacles

Our analysis revealed that challenges in SLIFE education often stem from intersecting systemic issues. Although districts have developed various responses, the complexity of these challenges means that solutions in one area can surface new challenges in another. For example, when districts create flexible schedules to accommodate students who are working, this can create new challenges for staffing and resource allocation. This interconnected nature of challenges requires districts to constantly balance competing needs and priorities.

Staffing and Resource Challenges

Districts face significant ongoing challenges in securing appropriate staffing:

- The limited availability of qualified bilingual staff remains a pressing issue. As District O noted: "We have put out for a therapist or bilingual guidance counselor or social worker every year, and nobody's coming because they don't exist out here."
- Even though District F advocates to keep counselor positions open despite hiring difficulties, the shortage of qualified candidates continues.
- District I has invested in training existing staff (e.g., school secretaries) in multilingual communication, but this addresses only part of the need.

Work-School Balance Complexities

The tension between work and school creates ongoing challenges that resist simple solutions:

- District A reports students working "40, 50, 60 hours a week," with many sending money to support families in their home countries.
- Some districts have implemented flexible scheduling (such as District A's late start times and District J's evening program), but these adaptations do not fully resolve the fundamental tension between work and academic demands.
- District J describes particularly complex cases, such as a student who became a single father at 18 while trying to work full-time, highlighting how personal circumstances can compound these challenges.

Academic Materials and Assessment Barriers

Districts struggle with fundamental mismatches between available resources and student needs:

- District F articulates a core challenge: "There's no curriculum that exists that's tied to 9th-grade standards that caters to students with a kindergarten or 1st-grade set of literacy skills."
- District B attempts to address these barriers through grade-level texts with planned scaffolds, but the underlying challenge of appropriate materials persists.
- District E highlights the age-appropriateness issue: "In older SLIFE classrooms, they have level A Fountas and Pinnell reading books with a cute little bunny, and the student is 15."
- Despite efforts to create bridge courses (District D) and implement visual supports (District M), the lack of appropriate materials remains a significant barrier.

Geographic and Resource Distribution

Systemic inequities in resource distribution create particular challenges:

- Rural districts (e.g., District O) face compound challenges given their geographic isolation.
- Even though some districts have developed creative solutions (such as District B's university partnership for on-site college classes), access to specialized services remains uneven.
- District K's coordination of family liaisons across schools helps but does not fully address resource gaps.
- Even when partnerships exist (such as District G's school-based health centers), maintaining and coordinating these services presents ongoing challenges.

These findings highlight several key patterns in how challenges manifest and evolve:

- **Cascading Effects.** When districts address one challenge, it often reveals or creates others. For example, District J's flexible scheduling helps students who are working attend school but creates new staffing and supervision needs.
- **Resource Trade-Offs.** Districts must often make difficult choices about resource allocation. As District F demonstrated by keeping counselor positions open despite hiring difficulties, maintaining certain priorities can strain resources in other areas.
- **Context-Specific Complexity.** The same challenge may require different approaches in different settings. District I can invest in multilingual family liaisons, but smaller districts such as District O must find alternative ways to provide language access.
- **Ongoing Evolution.** Districts' responses to challenges continue to evolve as student populations and needs change. What worked initially may need adjustment as circumstances shift, requiring constant monitoring and adaptation.

These patterns suggest that supporting SLIFE requires not just specific solutions to individual challenges, but systematic approaches that can adapt to changing circumstances while acknowledging persistent resource constraints.

Moving Forward: Recommendations for DESE SLIFE Guidance, Resources, and Support

Based on these findings, several key recommendations emerged for updating the Department's guidance, resources, and technical support for SLIFE education:

1. Academic and Linguistic Support

- Create a repository of age-appropriate materials for older SLIFE developing foundational skills.
- Offer training on integrating foundational content and language instruction while developing grade-level rigor.
- Provide guidance on appropriate literacy instruction approaches for adolescent SLIFE.
- Provide access to assessment tools in multiple languages beyond Spanish, particularly for languages common among SLIFE.

2. Social-Emotional Support

- Create training modules on trauma-informed practices specific to SLIFE contexts.
- Facilitate partnerships between districts and mental health organizations that can provide multilingual services or with organizations such as Boston Children's Hospital's Trauma and Resilience Center to provide statewide training.
- Provide guidance on using online therapy and telehealth services, particularly for rural districts with limited access to bilingual mental health providers.
- Address staff secondary trauma through professional development.

3. Family/Caretaker and Community Engagement

- Provide templates and protocols for SLIFE multilingual family communication.
- Create guidance on connecting SLIFE families with social services and community resources.
- Create protocols for supporting unaccompanied minors who may lack traditional family support systems.
- Share examples of successful district-community partnerships that serve SLIFE, particularly for rural districts.
- Share strategies for building cultural broker networks, particularly for emerging language groups.

4. Progress Monitoring

- Share models and protocols for monitoring academic, linguistic, and social-emotional progress.
- Develop guidelines for monitoring SLIFE progress that account for varied educational backgrounds.
- Model data systems for monitoring SLIFE outcomes to inform continuous program improvement.
- Support development of internal assessment tools when vendor products are unavailable.

5. Program Implementation Support

- Document varied successful program models with implementation guidance for different district contexts.
- Provide recommendations for staffing structures and resource allocation strategies to support SLIFE.
- Share strategies for maximizing resources, particularly for smaller districts.
- Create guidance on implementing flexible scheduling and alternative pathways while maintaining program quality.
- Provide guidance on balancing students' immediate needs and goals with long-term educational objectives.

6. Cross-District Collaboration and Regional Partnerships

- Create vetted repositories for districts to share locally developed assessment tools, curriculum materials, and multilingual or translated resources.
- Document examples of successful adaptations across contexts.
- Structure resource-pooling systems for professional learning.
- Coordinate regional training approaches and facilitate cross-district learning communities.
- Guide districts to develop regional approaches and partnerships to maximize impact and overcome resource limitations, particularly to support those with lower SLIFE enrollment.

These recommendations reflect the challenges and solutions identified by educators in the field while acknowledging the diverse contexts of Massachusetts districts. They aim to support both districts with established SLIFE programs and those developing new supports in response to changing demographics.

Conclusion

Section Summary: The conclusion emphasizes the evolving landscape of SLIFE education in Massachusetts and the need for continuous learning from field-based experiences. It underscores the importance of building on existing strengths, addressing identified challenges, and strengthening promising practices to support SLIFE success. The section calls for further exploration of long-term SLIFE outcomes, the impact of various program models, and strategies for sustainable program funding.

The landscape of education for SLIFE in Massachusetts is evolving rapidly, driven by the increasing number of newly arrived students and the diverse challenges they face. This field study has highlighted both the complexities and the opportunities inherent in supporting SLIFE. The findings underscore the critical need for comprehensive, flexible, and responsive educational programs that can adapt to the unique needs of these students.

Building on Existing Strengths

Massachusetts educators have demonstrated remarkable resilience in developing field-based promising practices for SLIFE education. By leveraging the strengths of SLIFE—such as the perseverance, multilingual abilities, and strong work ethic mentioned in the interviews—educators can create supportive and empowering learning environments. The integration of academic, linguistic, and social-emotional supports is essential for fostering SLIFE success.

Addressing Identified Challenges

The study also identified several key challenges, including the need for age-appropriate instructional materials, accurate assessment tools, and comprehensive trauma-informed mental health services. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing commitment and collaboration among educators, administrators, and policymakers. The recommendations provided in this report offer actionable steps for enhancing SLIFE programs, from expanding assessment tools to developing tailored progress monitoring systems.

Future Directions

This study captures current field-recommended promising practices, yet several areas merit further exploration:

- **Long-term monitoring of SLIFE outcomes**: Investigate how various program models influence SLIFE success over an extended period.
- **Impact of various program models**: Evaluate the immediate and contextual effectiveness of different program models in diverse district settings.
- **Effectiveness of professional development approaches**: Assess the impact of ongoing professional development on educator capacity to support SLIFE.
- **Strategies for sustainable program funding**: Identify sustainable funding models to support SLIFE programs in the long term.

The landscape of SLIFE education in Massachusetts continues to evolve as districts respond to changing student populations and needs. This field study demonstrates both the challenges and possibilities in serving SLIFE. Success requires ongoing commitment to comprehensive support systems, flexible implementation, and continuous learning from field-based experiences. By building on existing strengths and addressing identified challenges, Massachusetts educators can continue to develop and refine promising practices that support SLIFE well-being and success.

Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated members of the Massachusetts SLIFE CoP, representing approximately 60 districts across the Commonwealth, whose collaborative spirit, willingness to share their experiences, and commitment to mutual learning have enriched this research and strengthened SLIFE processes throughout Massachusetts.

We also wish to especially thank the following educators, in alphabetical order:

- Antonella D'Eramo, multilingual learner curriculum and instruction specialist, Somerville Public Schools
- Carrie Swift Heck, newcomer and SLIFE teacher, Monument Mountain High School, Berkshire Hills Regional School District; SLIFE CoP advisory member
- Christina Manos, director of English language education, Shrewsbury Public Schools; SLIFE CoP advisory member
- Chrissa Pissios, ESL coordinator, Newburyport Public Schools; SLIFE CoP advisory member

- Elie St. Brice, social worker, Boston Public Schools
- Emily Burdick, assistant principal, Emergence Academy, Springfield Public Schools
- Erin Goldstein, assistant principal, Clark Street Elementary School and New Citizens Elementary, Worcester Public Schools; SLIFE CoP Advisory member
- Genevra Valvo, middle school EL instructional coach, McDevitt and Kennedy Middle Schools, Waltham Public Schools; SLIFE CoP advisory member
- Jeannette Jimenez, principal, UNIDOS Academy, Lawrence Public Schools
- Jill Graham, director of alternative education, Burlington Public Schools
- Kellie Jones, director of bilingual education, Brockton Public Schools
- Kerri Lamprey, director of EL education, Burlington Public Schools
- Lesly Garcia, SLIFE teacher, McDevitt Middle School, Waltham Public Schools
- Linda Flueckiger, coordinator of tiered interventions and support, Waltham Public Schools
- Lynne Medailleu, director of EL education, PK–12 and director of the METAS Academy and Advanced Learning Academy, Marlborough Public Schools
- Marissa Castellana, PhD candidate, Arizona State University
- Martha R. Romero, former New Bedford High School ESL content instructional leader, New Bedford Public Schools; former SLIFE CoP advisory member
- Nicoleta Filimon, English language development teacher, Haverhill High School, Haverhill Public Schools and visiting assistant professor, Salem State University
- Paulina Mitropoulos, director of multilingual learner education, Somerville Public Schools
- Rachael Turkington, middle school math coach, Waltham Public Schools
- Rania Caldwell, director of multilingual learners, Woburn Public Schools
- Scott Lipman, principal, McDevitt Middle School, Waltham Public Schools

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in alphabetical order:

- Allison Balter, director, Office of Language Acquisition
- David Valade, language acquisition support lead, Office of Language Acquisition
- Kendra Winner, research and evaluation coordinator, Office of Planning and Research
- Sibel Hughes, assistant director, Office of Language Acquisition

References

Bajaj, M., & Suresh, S. (2018). The "warm embrace" of a newcomer school for immigrant & refugee youth. *Theory Into Practice, 57*(2), 91–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2018.1425815

Berliner, B. (2019). *Creating new futures for newcomers: Lessons from five schools that serve K-12 immigrants, refugees, and asylees*. Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. https://maec.org/newcomers/

Berry, J. W. (1992). Acculturation and adaptation in a new society. *International Migration*, *30*(s1), 69–85. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1992.tb00776.x

Bustillos, E. (2024, May 22). Groundbreaking in Boston for Haitian cultural center. *Bay State Banner*. https://baystatebanner.com/2024/05/22/groundbreaking-in-boston-for-haitian-cultural-center/

Calderón, M. E., & Slakk, S. (2019). *Success with multicultural newcomers & English learners: Proven practices for school leadership teams*. ASCD.

Cano, M., & Baur, A. (2023). *On the right path: Newcomer student enrollment and course placement promising practices*. Education Northwest. https://thenext100.org/on-the-right-path-newcomer-student-enrollment-and-course-placement-promising-practices/

Casanova, S., & Alvarez, A. (2022). Fostering the resilience and cultural wealth of students with limited or interrupted formal education. In L. J. Pentón Herrera (Ed.), *English and Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education: Global Perspectives on Teacher Preparation and Classroom Practices* (pp. 193–207). Springer International.

Casserly, M. (2023). *Great City Schools step up to meet the needs of refugee children.* Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/35/publication%20docs/CGCS_Welcoming%20Refugees_v4.pdf

Castro-Olivo, S. M. (2014). Promoting social-emotional learning in adolescent Latino ELLs: A study of the culturally adapted Strong Teens program. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *29*(4), 567–577. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000055

Castro-Olivo, S. M., & Merrell, K. W. (2012). Validating cultural adaptations of a school-based social-emotional learning programme for use with Latino immigrant adolescents. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, *5*(2), 78–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/1754730X.2012.689193

Center for Applied Linguistics. (2022). *Understanding and supporting students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) in Massachusetts: Literature review summary*. https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/literature-review-summary.docx

Chang-Bacon, C. K. (2021). Generation interrupted: Rethinking "students with interrupted formal education" (SIFE) in the wake of a pandemic. *Educational Researcher, 50*(3), 187–196. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X21992368

Chew, R., Bollenbacher, J., Wenger, M., Speer, J., & Kim, A. (2023). LLM-assisted content analysis: Using large language models to support deductive coding. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2306.14924*. https://arxiv.org/pdf/2306.14924

Cobb, P., & Jackson, K. (2011). Towards an empirically grounded theory of action for improving the quality of mathematics teaching at scale. *Mathematics Teacher Education and Development, 13*(1), 6–33. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ960944.pdf

Cohan, A., & Honigsfeld, A. (2017). Students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs): Actionable practices. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 8*(1), 166–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/26390043.2017.12067802

Custodio, B. K., & O'Loughlin, J. B. (2017). *Students with interrupted formal education: Bridging where they are and what they need*. Corwin.

d'Abreu, A., Castro-Olivo, S., & Ura, S. K. (2019). Understanding the role of acculturative stress on refugee youth mental health: A systematic review and ecological approach to assessment and intervention. *School Psychology International*, *40*(2), 107–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034318822688

DeCapua, A. (2016). Reaching students with limited or interrupted formal education through culturally responsive teaching. *Language and Linguistics Compass, 10*(5), 225–237. https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12183

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2010). Serving ELLs with limited or interrupted education: Intervention that works. *TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 49–70.

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2011). *Breaking new ground: Teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education in U.S. secondary schools* (Illustrated ed.). University of Michigan Press ELT.

DeCapua, A., Marshall, H. W., & Tang, F. (2020). *Meeting the needs of SLIFE: A guide for educators* (2nd edition). University of Michigan Press ELT.

Ellis, B. H., MacDonald, H. Z., Klunk-Gillis, J., Lincoln, A., Strunin, L., & Cabral, H. J. (2010). Discrimination and mental health among Somali refugee adolescents: The role of acculturation and gender. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *80*(4), 564–575. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01061.x

Flaitz, J. (2023). *Refugee students: What every ESL teacher needs to know*. University of Michigan Press.

Garcia, N. (2024, June 6). Nonprofits and local organizations rally to help migrants in Massachusetts. *GBH News*. https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2024-06-06/nonprofits-and-local-organizations-rally-to-help-migrants-in-massachusetts

Garrison-Fletcher, L., Martohardjono, G., & Chodorow, M. (2022). Impact of home language reading skills' on L2 reading comprehension: a study of newcomer emergent bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *25*(1), 287–300. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2019.1671307

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.

Goodrich, J. M., Lonigan, C. J., & Farver, J. M. (2013). Do early literacy skills in children's first language promote development of skills in their second language? An experimental evaluation of transfer. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*(2), 414–426. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031780

Grapin, S. E. (2023). The complex terrain of equity for multilingual learners in K–12 education. *Educational Researcher*, *53*(3), 167–174. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X231215345

Hos, R., & Kaplan-Wolff, B. (2020). On and off script: A teacher's adaptation of mandated curriculum for refugee newcomers in an era of standardization. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching, 9*(1), 40–54. https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v9n1p40

Huffaker, C. (2024, July 25). *Norfolk schools will enroll migrant students staying at temporary shelter after all, officials say*. Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/25/metro/massachusetts-migrant-children-norfolk/

Huffaker, C., La Roche Pietri, N., & Pan, D. (2024, July 24). Migrant children caught in school limbo under new five-day limits on overflow shelter stays. *Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/24/metro/massachusetts-migrant-children-temporary-shelter-school/

Jonas, A. (2024, March 1). As migrants arrive in Mass., volunteers step up to offer housing. *Boston Globe*. https://www.boston.com/community/community/as-migrants-arrive-in-mass-volunteers-step-up-to-offer-housing/

Lepore, M. (2015). Adventures in America: Easing the transition of refugees in school and community. *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity*, *16*(1), 11–24.

López, R. M., Lee, J. J., & Tung, R. (2020). Implementing a summer enrichment program for secondary newcomer students in a New England community. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 23*(1), 86–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1629629

Malizia, N. (2017). The psychological trauma in children and adolescents: Scientific and sociological profiles. *Sociology Mind*, *7*(01), 11–25. https://doi.org/10.4236/sm.2017.71002

Mantil, A., Papay, J., Ferguson, I., Mbekeani, P., & Murnane, R. (2023). *Rising numbers, unmet needs: Immigrant newcomers in Massachusetts high schools*. Annenberg Institute at Brown University. https://www.annenberginstitute.org/edopportunity/rising-numbers-unmet-needs

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370–396. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2024). *Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE): Guidance for SLIFE identification, services, and support*. https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/guidance.pdf

McNeely, C. A., Sprecher, K., Bates-Fredi, D., Price, O. A., & Allen, C. D. (2020). Identifying essential components of school-linked mental health services for refugee and immigrant children: A comparative case study. *Journal of school health*, *90*(1), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12845

Merrell, K. W. (2010). Linking prevention science and social and emotional learning: The Oregon Resiliency Project. *Psychology in the Schools*, *47*(1), 55–70.

Merrill, K. (2024, May 14a). Adding migrant children to Massachusetts schools a challenge and an opportunity, superintendent says. *CBS Boston*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/peabody-massachusetts-schools-migrants-children-students

Montero, M. K., Newmaster, S., & Ledger, S. (2014). Exploring early reading instructional strategies to advance the print literacy development of adolescent SLIFE. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *58*(1), 59–69. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.318

Neblett, Jr, E. W., Rivas-Drake, D., & Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2012). The promise of racial and ethnic protective factors in promoting ethnic minority youth development. *Child Development Perspectives*, *6*(3), 295–303. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2012.00239.x

Newcomer, S. N., Ardasheva, Y., Morrison, J. A., Ernst-Slavit, G., Morrison, S. J., Carbonneau, K. J., & Lightner, L. K. (2021). "Whoa . . . welcome to America!": Supporting refugee background students' socioemotional well-being, English language development, and content area learning. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *35*(3), 417–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2020.1734697

Pentón Herrera, L. (2022). *Students with limited or interrupted formal education in primary and secondary classrooms in the U.S., Australia, Canada, and the UK*. In Pentón Herrera, L. J. (Ed.), *English and Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education: Global Perspectives on Teacher Preparation and Classroom Practices* (Vol. 54, pp. 25–42). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86963-2_3

Purinton, A. B. (2021). *Enhancing a summer program for newcomers: Expanding on language and literacy instruction for newcomer multilingual learners* (Publication No. 28650765) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Delaware]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. https://www.proquest.com/openview/20c3b3fb16470cbd4e7ae058377483a4/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Rios, S. (2024, August 12). A timeline of the Massachusetts shelter crisis—and Healey's changes to the system. *WBUR*. https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/08/12/massachusetts-shelter-system-changes-timeline-immigration

Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., & Fix, M (with Clewell, B. C.). (2000). *Overlooked and underserved: Immigrant students in U.S. secondary schools*. The Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/62316/310022-Overlooked-and-Underserved-Immigrant-Students-in-U-S-Secondary-Schools.PDF

Sacharczyk, T. (2024, August 14). Massachusetts schools adjust as migrant student numbers rise. *WJAR*. https://turnto10.com/news/crisis-in-the-classroom/massachusetts-schools-adjust-as-migrant-student-numbers-rise-taunton-public-schools-district-multi-lingual-teachers-august-14-2024

Saulsbury-Molina, A. K. (2019). *A case study of the language policy of a local newcomer program* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Short, D. J., & Boyson, B. A. (2012). *Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond*. Center for Applied Linguistics. https://www.cal.org/publications/helping-newcomer-students/

Sirin, S. R., Ryce, P., Gupta, T., & Rogers-Sirin, L. (2013). The role of acculturative stress on mental health symptoms for immigrant adolescents: A longitudinal investigation. *Developmental Psychology*, *49*(4), 736–748. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028398

Sparks, R., Patton, J., Ganschow, L., & Humbach, N. (2009). Long-term crosslinguistic transfer of skills from L1 to L2. *Language Learning*, *59*(1), 203–243. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2009.00504.x

Thibeault, M. A., Mendez, J. L., Nelson-Gray, R. O., & Stein, G. L. (2017). Impact of trauma exposure and acculturative stress on internalizing symptoms for recently arrived migrant-origin youth: Results from a community-based partnership. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *45*(8), 984–998. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21905

Truitt, B. (2024, July 12). 150 new students expected in Massachusetts town as migrant families move into old prison turned shelter. *CBS News*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/norfolk-massachusetts-migrant-families-school-space/

Umansky, I., Hopkins, M., Dabach, D. B., Porter, L., Thompson, K., Pompa, D. (2018). *Understanding and supporting the educational needs of recently arrived immigrant English learner students: Lessons for state and local education agencies*. Council of Chief State School Officers. https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/Understanding%20and%20Supporing%20the%20Educational%20Needs%20of%20RAIELs.pdf

Winlund, A. (2020). Emergent literacy instruction: 'Continua of biliteracy' among newly immigrated adolescents. *Language and Education*, *34*(3), 249–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2019.1701006

Additional Resources

Advocates for Children of New York. (2010). *Students with interrupted formal education: A challenge for the New York City Public Schools*. https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/sife_2010.pdf

Alanez, T. (2023, November 22). *Catholic Charities Boston opens emergency shelter for migrants with state grant funding*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/11/22/metro/catholic-charities-boston-migrant-shelter-grant/

Aleaziz, H., & Kanno-Youngs, Z. (2024, June 3). Biden is expected to sign order letting him seal border with Mexico. *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/03/us/politics/biden-immigration-asylum-order.html

Auslander, L. (2019). *Creating responsive classroom communities: A cross-case study of schools serving students with interrupted schooling.* Lexington Books.

Barba, Y. C., Newcombe, A., Ruiz, R., & Cordero, N. (2019). Building bridges for new immigrant students through asset-based consultation. *Contemporary School Psychology, 23*(1), 31–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-018-00212-1

Barton, A. (2023, February 27). Increase in illegal border crossings into Vermont from Canada: What the numbers show. *Burlington Free Press*. https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/vermont/2023/02/27/u-s-border-patrol-in-vermont-sees-increase-in-illegal-crossing/69932882007/

Browder, C. (2014). *English learners with limited or interrupted formal education: Risk and resilience in educational outcomes.* https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Englishlearners-with-limited-or-interrupted-formalBrowder/b07bfd9ca2f8934327f4a9c0acff8252713c817f

Browder, C. T. (2018). Recently resettled refugee students learning English in US high schools: The impact of students' educational backgrounds. In S. Shapiro, R. Farrelly, & M. J. Curry (Eds.), *Educating refugee-background students* (pp. 17–32). Multilingual Matters & Channel View Publications. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783099986-006

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Culbertson, S., Kaufman, J. H., Kramer, J. W., & Phillips, B. (2021). *Educating newcomers: K–12 public schooling for undocumented and asylum-seeking children in the United States.* RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1326-1.html

Cummins, J. (2001). Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education? *Sprogforum, 7*(19), 15–20. https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=UWPeriIAAAAJ&citation_for_view=UWPeriIAAAAJ:7PzlFSSx8tAC

Davis, E. (2023, October 23). States with the highest shares of foreign-born residents. *US News and World Report.* https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/states-with-the-highest-shares-of-foreign-born-residents

DeCapua, A. (2023). *SLIFE: What every teacher needs to know*. University of Michigan Press ELT.

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2015). Reframing the conversation about students with limited or interrupted formal education: From achievement gap to cultural dissonance. *NASSP Bulletin*, *99*(4), 356–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636515620662

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2023). *Breaking new ground for SLIFE: The mutually adaptive learning paradigm*. University of Michigan Press ELT.

Digby, S. (2019). *Supporting Latino students with interrupted formal education: A guide for teachers*. Columbia University, Institute of Latin American Studies. https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-p7dz-nv89

Donaldson, S. (2024, December 12). Following the asylum-seeker odyssey: A timeline. *City & State New York*. https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2024/04/following-asylum-seeker-odyssey/382850/

Drake, K. (2017). Competing purposes of education: The case of underschooled immigrant students. *Journal of Educational Change*, *18*(3), 337–363. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-017-9302-3

Ebbert, S., Staff, D. F. G., & April 19. (2024, April 19). *How Massachusetts spent nearly $1 billion sheltering homeless families and migrants. The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/19/metro/cost-of-migrant-shelter-in-massachusetts/

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2010). *Making content comprehensible for elementary English learners: The SIOP Model*. Pearson.

Falicov, C. J. (2007). Working with transnational immigrants: Expanding meanings of family, community, and culture. *Family Process*, *46*(2), 157–171. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2007.00201.x

Ferré-Sadurní, L. (2024, May 22). New York begins a new wave of evictions from migrant shelters. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/nyregion/migrant-evictions-shelter-adams.html

Fleming, N. (2013, March 25). Give credits for out-of-school learning, group advises. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/education/give-credits-for-out-of-school-learning-group-advises/2013/03

Flores, E. (2022). Students with interrupted formal education: Empowerment, positionality, and equity in alternative schools. *TESOL Journal*, *13*(1), Article e602. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.602

Flueckiger, L. (2020). An examination of the factors influencing high school graduation rates for students with limited or interrupted formal education [Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts–Boston]. ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. https://scholarworks.umb.edu/doctoral_dissertations/622

Fox, J. C. (2024, May 18). *Woman's death after illegal medical procedure in Somerville raises concerns about underground clinics*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/05/17/metro/everett-woman-death-underground-medical-clinics/

Fry, R. (2005). *The higher dropout rate of foreign-born teens: The role of schooling abroad*. Pew HispanicCenter. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2005/11/01/the-higher-drop-out-rate-of-foreign-born-teens/

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (2006). Introduction to response to intervention: What, why, and how valid is it? *Reading Research Quarterly*, *41*(1), 93–99. https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.41.1.4

Genishi, C., & Alvermann, D. E. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (D. Paris & H. S. Alim, Eds.). Teachers College Press.

Goodman, J. D., Sandoval, E., & Liptak, A. (2024, March 19). Appeals Court puts Texas immigration law on hold again. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/19/us/texas-immigration-supreme-court

Griswold, N. (2024, April 7). *'Every bed we've had has been full': City shelters are housing rising numbers of individual migrants*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/07/metro/migrant-crisis-individuals-city-shelters-boston/

Gross, S. J. (2023, July 20). *Mass. rolls out new program to help immigrants with legal services.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/07/20/metro/mass-rolls-out-new-program-help-immigrants-with-legal-services/

Gross, S. J. (2023, August 8). *With emergency declaration, Healey appeals to federal government, public for help with shelter crisis.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/08/08/metro/maura-healey-emergency-shelter-system-migrants-homeless/

Gross, S. J. (2024, January 2). *Migrants with work permits in Mass. tripled in 2 weeks, Healey administration says.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/02/metro/migrant-crisis-budget-healey-shelter-emergency/

Gross, S. J. (2024, April 1). *How many migrants have arrived in Massachusetts? It's hard to know for sure, but they keep coming.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/01/metro/how-many-migrants-in-massachusetts/

Gross, S. J. (2024, April 18). *Homeless, migrant families being transferred to Lowell shelter as part of state's continued 'consolidation' effort.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/18/metro/lowell-conference-center-migrant-families-ea/

Gross, S. J. (2024, April 22). *'Really meaningful': Some migrants flown to Martha's Vineyard by DeSantis now on path to legal status*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/22/metro/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard-legal-status/

Gross, S. J. (2024, December 19). *In an effort to consolidate resources, state is closing some hotel shelters for migrants by year's end.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/19/metro/mass-migrants-family-shelters/

Hammond, Z. L. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.

Hesson, T., Cooke, K., & Pell, M. B. (2024). An American education: Classrooms reshaped by record migrant arrivals. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/investigations/an-american-education-classrooms-reshaped-by-record-migrant-arrivals-2024-10-05/

Hilliard, J. (2024, March 19). *Across Massachusetts, people are rising up against the arrival of migrants. To some, the backlash seems racist.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/19/metro/migrants-housing-racism-shelters-massachusetts/

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. G. (2010). *Collaboration and co-teaching: Strategies for English learners*. Corwin.

Hos, R. (2016). Caring is not enough: Teachers' enactment of ethical care for adolescent students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) in a newcomer classroom. *Education and Urban Society*, *48*(5), 479–503. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124514536440

Hos, R. (2020). The lives, aspirations, and needs of refugee and immigrant students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) in a secondary newcomer program. *Urban Education*, *55*(7), 1021–1044. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916666932

Hos, R., & Kaplan-Wolff, B. (2020). On and off script: A teacher's adaptation of mandated curriculum for refugee newcomers in an era of standardization. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, *9*, 40–54. https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v9n1p40

Hos, R., Murray-Johnson, K., & Correia, A. (2019). Cultivating capital for high school newcomers: A case study of an urban newcomer classroom. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, *6*(1), 101–116. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/233

How to Support ELL Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs). (n.d.). Colorín Colorado. https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/how-support-ell-students-interrupted-formal-education-sifes#h-who-are-students-with-interrupted-formal-education-sifes-

Homeland Security Today. (2024, April 25). Vermont Border Patrol Logs Record Canadian Crossings in a Month. *HS Today*. https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/vermont-border-patrol-logs-record-canadian-crossings-in-a-month/

Jordan, M. (2024, March 17.). Chicago begins evicting migrants from shelters, citing strain on resources*. The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/17/nation/chicago-begins-evicting-migrants-shelters-citing-strain-resources/

Khaw, M. (2024, March 19). *Everything you need to know about the influx of migrants to Mass. The Boston Globe*. Retrieved March 21, 2024, from https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/19/metro/migrant-crisis-massachusetts/

Kibler, A. K., & Valdés, G. (2016). Conceptualizing language learners: Socioinstitutional mechanisms and their consequences. *The Modern Language Journal*, *100*(S1), 96–116. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12310

Larson, S., & Fujiwara, D. (2024, April 24). *A look at the immigrant population in Massachusetts—and how it compares with the rest of the nation*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/24/metro/new-england-massachusetts-immigrant-population-census-data/

Laughlin, J., & Fernandes, D. (2024, June 6). *In Massachusetts, cultural differences and limited resources can cost migrants their children for a time*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/06/06/metro/dcf-massachusetts-immigrant-migrant-children/?s_campaign=todaysheadlines:newsletter

Lukes, M. (2015). *Latino immigrant youth and interrupted schooling: Dropouts, dreamers, and alternative pathways to college*. Multilingual Matters.

Mancuso, G. P. (2021). Teachers who work with English learners who have had interrupted schooling: A collaborative action research study (Publication No. 28864014) [Doctoral Dissertation, George Mason University]. ProQuest LLC.

Marrero Colón, M. I., & Désir, C. (2022). Best practices in meeting the literacy and postsecondary needs of adolescent students with limited or interrupted formal education. In L. J. Pentón Herrera (Ed.), *English and students with limited or interrupted formal education: Global perspectives on teacher preparation and classroom practices* (pp. 161–189). Springer International. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86963-2_10

McDonald, D. (2024, January 22). *Healey, 8 other governors implore federal leaders to fix immigration system.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/22/metro/healey-8-other-governors-implore-federal-leaders-fix-immigration-system/

McDonald, D. (2024, March 13). *'It was getting impossible to live': In Mattapan, a front line of the humanitarian crisis fueled by Haiti's unrest*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/13/metro/mattapan-massachusetts-humanitarian-crisis-haiti/

McDonald, D. (2024, May 24). *Despite the state's efforts, Logan Airport continues to be a front line in the migrant crisis*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/05/24/metro/boston-logan-airport-migrants/

Menken, K. (2013). Emergent bilingual students in secondary school: Along the academic language and literacy continuum. *Language Teaching*, *46*(4), 438–476. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1020290

Merrill, K. (2024, May 14). *2,000 migrant students added to 74 Massachusetts school districts this academic year.* CBS Boston. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-migrants-students-schools-secretary-of-education/

Mendez, J. B., & Barko-Alva, K. (2023). "Yo era la única rara": School belonging and English-learner students at a southeastern Virginia high school. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *22*(5), 1969–1983. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2022.2077335

Mistler, S., & Miller, K. (2024, February 9). What the immigration bill's spectacular collapse means for Maine. *Maine Public*. https://www.mainepublic.org/politics/2024-02-09/what-the-immigration-bills-spectacular-collapse-means-for-maine

Moller, L. (2024a, February 2). What's behind the migrant surge in Massachusetts? Here's one family's terrifying journey from Haiti to Boston. *CBS Boston*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-new-england-migrant-surge/

Moller, L. (2024b, March 15). What's behind the record number of illegal crossings at the U.S.-Canada border? *CBS Boston*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/northern-border-illegal-crossings-vermont-canada-new-hampshire-new-york-question-everything/

Needham, S. (2003). "This is active learning": Theories of language, learning, and social relations in the transmission of Khmer literacy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *34*(1), 27–49. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3196052

NBC 10 News. (2024, March 3). Gov. McKee, Mayor Smiley discuss contingency for migrant arrivals. *WJAR*. https://turnto10.com/politics/10-news-conference/governor-dan-mckee-providence-mayor-brett-smiley-rhode-island-migrant-policy-contigency-response-sanctuary-state-city-homeless-encampments-tourism-slogan-all-that-march-12-2024

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, *42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world.* Teachers College Press.

Platoff, E., & Griswold, N. (2024, April 25). *Amid migrant crisis, Massachusetts voters support 'right-to-shelter' law—with reservations, new poll shows.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/25/metro/massachusetts-voter-poll-immigration-inflation-dominate/

Potochnick, S. (2018). The academic adaptation of immigrant students with interrupted schooling. *American Educational Research Journal*, *55*(4), 859–892. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26643552

Prevoo, M. J., Malda, M., Mesman, J., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2016). Within-and cross-language relations between oral language proficiency and school outcomes in bilingual children with an immigrant background: A meta-analytical study. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(1), 237–276. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315584685

Sacchetti, S. (2024, May 17). Mass. Senate president optimistic federal funding for migrant crisis is coming. *WCVB*. https://www.wcvb.com/article/mass-senate-president-optimistic-federal-funding-for-migrant-crisis-is-coming/60828282

Salva, C. (November 19, 2024). SLIFE are valuable members of our learning communities. *Seidlitz Education*. https://seidlitzblog.org/author/seidlitzedu/

Salva, C., & Matis, A. (2017). *Boosting achievement*. Canter Press.

Spagat, E. (2024, June 9). *Some nationalities escape Biden's sweeping asylum ban because deportation flights are scarce.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/06/09/nation/some-nationalities-escape-bidens-sweeping-asylum-ban-because-deportation-flights-are-scarce/

Stout, M. (2024, March 25). *Healey to impose one-month limit on overflow shelter stays, mandate that families reapply to stay.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/25/metro/maura-healey-emergency-shelter-migrant-crisis-overflow-sites/

Tamez-Robledo, N. (2024, February 9). Where the need for bilingual teachers has changed over 20 Years. *EdSurge News*. https://www.edsurge.com/news/2024-02-09-where-the-need-for-bilingual-teachers-has-changed-over-20-years

Thompson, A., Ellement, J. R., McDonald, D., Gross, S. J., Kaufman, A., Andersen, T., Correspondent, R. V. G., (2024, April 2). *'At first they were surprised, just like us.' Martha's Vineyard responds to surprise arrival of planeloads of migrants.* The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/09/15/metro/marthas-vineyard-responds-surprise-arrival-planeloads-migrants/

Umansky, I. M., Thompson, K. D., & Díaz, G. (2018). *Improving the opportunities and outcomes of California's students learning English: Findings from school district-university collaborative partnerships*. Policy Analysis for California Education. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED562543

Umansky, I. M., Hopkins, M., & Dabach, D. B. (2020). Ideals and realities: An examination of the factors shaping newcomer programming in six U.S. school districts. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *19*(1), 36–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2020.1712731

Umansky, I. M., Thompson, K. D., Soland, J., & Kibler, A. K. (2022). Understanding newcomer English learner students' English language development: Comparisons and predictors. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *45*(2), 180–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2022.2111618

Vaznis, J. (2024, March 12). *Massachusetts school funding overhaul hits an inflation glitch*. The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/12/metro/massachusetts-school-funding-budget-cuts/

Villegas, L. (2021, May 14). SLIFE lessons: How schools can draw on strategies designed for students with interrupted/limited formal education to help English learners in the aftermath of COVID-19. *New America*. http://newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/slife-lessons/

Walsh, C. E. (1999). *Enabling academic success for secondary students with limited formal schooling: A study of the Haitian Literacy Program at Hyde Park High School in Boston*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED446174

Where refugees in New Hampshire are arriving from. (2024, May 20). *Stacker.* https://stacker.com/new-hampshire/where-refugees-new-hampshire-are-arriving

Whiston, C. (2016). *The impact of a growing ELL student population on Missouri elementary schools* (Publication No. 10169562) [Doctoral dissertation, William Woods University]. http://search.proquest.com/docview/1848287243/abstract/8D70306989444A2APQ/19

WIDA. (2015). *Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)* (Focus Bulletin).

Yu, M., Wang, H., & Xia, G. (2022). The review on the role of ambiguity of tolerance and resilience on students' engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, Article 828894. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.828894

Appendix A. RQ2 Summary: Operationalization of Key Service Areas in SLIFE Education

This section summarizes findings from **RQ2: How do districts operationalize key services for SLIFE education?** Through survey responses from 52 CoP members, interviews with 21 educators across 16 districts, and dialogue with a SLIFE CoP comprised of about 60 school districts, we identified several approaches across six priority areas.

Academic Support

- **Content Language Integration**
  - Foundational content courses (e.g., District A's biology foundations and leveled mathematics classes)
  - Bridge programs (e.g., District D's REAL classes in literacy, science, and mathematics with transition to mainstream)
  - Language objectives (e.g., District E's umbrella language objectives across content areas)
- **Scaffolding Strategies**
  - Strategic text support (e.g., District B's grade-level text access with planned scaffolds for "Born a Crime")
  - Cognitive load management (e.g., District D's system of using familiar language for new skills)
  - Visual and hands-on learning (e.g., District L's fraction instruction with manipulatives)
  - Small-group instruction (e.g., District L's skill-based mathematics groups)
- **Authentic Learning Connections**
  - Work experience connections (e.g., District A's restaurant-cell organelle analogy in biology)
  - Real-world applications (e.g., District A's classroom grocery store for decimal mathematics)
  - Relevant texts (e.g., District B's use of "Maus" with students from conflict regions)
- **Data-Driven Instruction**
  - Assessment-based grouping (e.g., District L's targeted mathematics instruction)
  - Regular monitoring (e.g., District B's exit tickets and grade-level team meetings)
  - Adaptive technology (e.g., District A's Imagine Math with home language support)

- **Flexible Programming**
  - Alternative schedules (e.g., District A's late start/late end schedule Monday–Thursday)
  - Evening options (e.g., District J's evening program and flexible attendance contracts)
  - Work accommodations (e.g., District I's evening academy for working students)
  - Credit pathways (e.g., District A's work-study options)

Linguistic Support

- **Foundational Literacy Development**
  - Explicit phonics instruction (e.g., District E's focus on basic sound patterns)
  - Secondary literacy support (e.g., District J's 35-lesson program covering 44 English phonemes)
  - Evidence-based programs and teacher training (e.g., District M's Orton-Gillingham trained teachers using Corrective Reading)
  - Supplemental educational technology (e.g., District A's Imagine Learning with home language support and Rosetta Stone)
- **Writing Development**
  - Academic writing scaffolds (e.g., District D's transition words and evidence supports for five-paragraph essays)
  - Multiple genres approach (e.g., District C's emphasis on writing beyond basic essay formats)
  - Portfolio development (e.g., District D's student writing collections showing progress)
- **Oral Language Development**
  - Structured discourse (e.g., District D's sentence frames and discussion protocols)
  - Student interaction (e.g., District L's student-led teaching groups)
  - Dialogic teaching (e.g., District F's initiative to reduce teacher talk time to under 50%)
  - Meaning-focused discussion (e.g., District C's emphasis on student comprehension through discussion)
- **Assessment and Data-Driven Instruction**
  - Intake assessments (e.g., District E's diagnostic assessments in reading, writing, mathematics)
  - Homez or prior schooling language assessment (e.g., District I's Avant speaking/writing assessments in multiple languages)
  - Regular progress checks (e.g., District L's IRLA reading level monitoring, District B's phonics instruction groups)
  - Flexible grouping (e.g., District D's data-based intervention groupings)

Social-Emotional Support

- **Clinical Mental Health Support**
  - Evidence-based SEL programs (e.g., Districts F and G's BCH Four Core Stressors Framework)
  - Structured curricula (e.g., Districts F and G's STRONG curriculum for stress management)
  - Tiered interventions (e.g., District G's Tier 2 groups and Tier 3 individual sessions)
  - Multilingual staffing (e.g., District G's bilingual adjustment counselors)
- **Coordinated Staff Support**
  - Regular team meetings (e.g., District F's twice-weekly PLC meetings)
  - Student monitoring (e.g., District L's 6-day rotation cycle for student check-ins)
  - Strategic staffing (e.g., District F's Dean system to free counselors for SEL work)
  - Small group ratios (e.g., District L's emphasis on relationship building)
- **Holistic SEL Programming**
  - Orientation courses (e.g., District F's newcomer seminar)
  - Peer support systems (e.g., District B's student welcome program)
  - Safe environments (e.g., District M's emphasis on love and support before curriculum)
  - Social readiness (e.g., District E's focus on classroom comfort before academic risks)
- **Wrap-Around Support as Foundational to Social-Emotional Well-Being**
  - Basic needs assistance (e.g., District F's support for housing/food/clothing)
  - Health partnerships (e.g., District G's school-based health centers)
  - Cultural competence (e.g., District M's culturally sensitive medical support)
  - Agency collaboration (e.g., District G's partnerships for additional services)
- **Implementation Structures**
  - Dedicated positions (e.g., District F's maintained counselor positions despite hiring challenges)
  - Staff support (e.g., District L's recognition of emotional burden on staff)
  - Resource allocation (e.g., District G's long-term mental health care planning)
  - Cultural understanding (e.g., District F's emphasis on immigration experience knowledge)

Family Connections

- **Dedicated Family Support Staff**
  - Long-term staffing (e.g., District I's 25-year investment in bilingual community facilitators)
  - Multilingual liaisons (e.g., District I's staff speaking eight different languages)
  - Family advocates (e.g., District I's transition from part-time to full-time advocates for external support)
  - Accessibility measures (e.g., District I's provision of cell phones to family support staff)
- **Communication Systems**
  - Multilingual centers (e.g., District I's call center for parent access)
  - Staff training (e.g., District I's professional development for secretaries and clerks)
  - Intake protocols (e.g., District H's registration explanation system)
  - Follow-up systems (e.g., District H's 2-month check-in protocol)
- **Family Engagement Programming**
  - Resource fairs (e.g., District I's annual Bilingual PAC event with more than 300 attendees)
  - Educational offerings (e.g., District H's Saturday English classes)
  - Legal support (e.g., District H's immigration lawyer presentations)
  - Health services (e.g., District I's immunization clinics)
- **Basic Needs Support**
  - Public benefits access (e.g., District I's SNAP registration assistance)
  - Housing support (e.g., District I's family advocate housing assistance)
  - Healthcare coordination (e.g., District I's medical systems navigation)
  - Utility assistance (e.g., District H's help with utility payments)
- **Districtwide Coordination**
  - Cross-school communication (e.g., District K's shared family activity notifications)
  - Leadership support (e.g., District I's superintendent prioritization)
  - Resource allocation (e.g., District I's full-time staff funding)
  - Professional development (e.g., District I's stipends for family communication training)

Community Connections

- **Resettlement Agency Partnerships**
  - Initial transition support (e.g., District B's caseworkers speaking families' home languages)
  - Case management (e.g., District B's work with Jewish Family Services for housing/food/healthcare)
  - Transportation support (e.g., District B's retiree volunteer drivers)
  - Basic needs coordination (e.g., District B's emergency contact system)
- **Healthcare Partnerships**
  - School-based centers (e.g., District G's vaccination and basic health services)
  - Mental health support (e.g., Districts F and G's Boston Children's Hospital partnership)
  - Urgent care access (e.g., District B's medical waiver system)
  - Dental services (e.g., District O's bilingual nurse partnership)
- **Resource Coordination**
  - Long-term facilitators (e.g., District I's 25-year investment in bilingual community relations staff)
  - Family advocates (e.g., District I's support for SNAP, food pantry, medical, housing access)
  - Community liaisons (e.g., District K's on-site organization coordinators)
  - After-school partnerships (e.g., District E's community program connections)
- **Higher Education Partnerships**
  - On-site college courses (e.g., District B's partnership with local state university)
  - Professor visits (e.g., District B's dual enrollment program with on-campus faculty)

Progress Monitoring

- **Assessment Systems**
  - Regular benchmarking (e.g., District M's tri-annual NWEA mathematics assessments for intervention planning)
  - Classroom monitoring (e.g., District M's daily exit tickets aligned with standards and objectives)
  - Language evaluation (e.g., District I's Avant speaking/writing assessments in multiple languages)
  - District-developed tools (e.g., District L's ESL common assessments, District M's internal assessments replacing discontinued tools)
- **Team-Based Monitoring**
  - Daily data meetings (e.g., District M's 30-minute grade-level team reviews)
  - Support teams (e.g., District L's SLIFE stat groups with administrators, nurses, and counselors)
  - Cross-role collaboration (e.g., District L's meetings with ESL teachers and content specialists)
  - Attendance tracking (e.g., District M's weekly team reviews of chronic absenteeism data)
- **Documentation Systems**
  - Digital platforms (e.g., District L's Elevation system accessible to all teachers, District M's Dean's List tracking of classwork)
  - Skills trackers (e.g., District L's 1–5 numbered system with color-coding for mastery levels, District M's tracking of participation, homework, and exit tickets)
  - Progress criteria (e.g., District L's four-component SLIFE exit criteria reviewed by teams)
- **Flexible Grouping**
  - Data-based placement (e.g., District L's targeted mathematics instruction groups)
  - Grade-level interventions (e.g., District M's transition to grade-specific support groups)
  - Ongoing adjustments (e.g., District L's responsive regrouping based on skill development)
  - Collaborative decisions (e.g., District L's team-based recommendations for math placement)

Appendix B. Survey Instrument

Massachusetts SLIFE Research – Survey Consent Form

The Center for English Learners at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) has partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to survey members of the CoP to identify promising practices for supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) at the programmatic level. DESE and AIR are engaged in this work with the goal of improving the educational experiences of SLIFE in Massachusetts. As part of this effort, we are inviting you to fill out a survey. All research is bound by ethics, and we take seriously both your rights as participants as well as our responsibility as researchers to protect those rights. Below we list those rights as required by AIR's Internal Review Board (IRB), which is responsible for the protection of project participants.

- **Purpose**: The survey aims to gain insights from key stakeholders (e.g., administrators and teachers from a variety of district contexts) on the programmatic supports and services students identified as SLIFE receive, including areas that may constitute a "promising practice" for SLIFE. This information will be shared with the field in a practitioner-friendly format and will inform future guidance and support from DESE focusing on SLIFE.
- **Procedures**: If you agree to participate, we will ask you to fill out a survey about your experience and perspective on what constitutes best practices for supporting SLIFE. *The survey will take about 15 minutes* and will be conducted virtually via Google forms.
- **Risks**: There are *no foreseeable risks* to participating in this survey beyond those encountered in everyday life.
- **Benefits**: By participating in the survey, you are helping DESE and the field in general understand the strengths and areas for improvement to better support SLIFE.
- **Participation is Voluntary**: *Your participation in this study is voluntary* as you may choose not to participate or to skip questions you do not wish to answer, without penalty. However, we encourage you to participate.
- **Privacy**: We will keep your *identity and the information you share confidential*. All survey documents will be kept in secure data files to be accessed only by AIR staff.

Contact Information: If you have questions or concerns about the survey, please contact project director Fernanda Marinho Kray at 401-226-7619 or fkray@air.org. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact AIR's IRB at IRB@air.org, toll-free at 1-800-634-0797.

Clicking the survey button below indicates your consent. *Thank you for your cooperation in this very important effort!*

Massachusetts SLIFE Research: Survey Questions

SURVEY PURPOSE:

- To identify what members from the CoP believe are "promising practices" for programs serving students identified as SLIFE.
- To understand the degree to which CoP districts are using these promising practices.
- To identify which promising practices CoP members would like to see further explored through district interviews, vignettes, or other practitioner-friendly resources.

1. **Geographic Region:** In what region of the state is your district located? Select one option.
    a. West
    b. Central
    c. Metro West
    d. Greater Boston
    e. North Shore
    f. South Shore/South Coast
    g. Cape & Islands
2. **Program type:** What program type in your school or district serves SLIFE? Select all that apply.
    a. Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)
    b. Dual Language (DL) / Two Way Immersion (TWI)
    c. Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)
    d. Newcomer program
    e. Dedicated SLIFE program
    f. Another program (fill in): _____
3. **Numbers of enrolled English Learners (ELs):** Does your district have low, medium, or high numbers of enrolled ELs? Select one option.
    a. Low numbers: 1-99 enrolled ELs.
    b. Medium numbers: 100-299 enrolled ELs.
    c. High numbers: 300 or more enrolled ELs.
    d. Not sure.
    e. Numbers of enrolled SLIFE: If you know the numbers of enrolled SLIFE in your district, would you please share? ____

Current use of "promising practices" for SLIFE programming: The SLIFE programmatic "promising practices" listed below were drawn from the existing research and literature. Use the scale to indicate your program's use of each practice.

4. **Program designed specifically for SLIFE.** *For example, this could be a separate site model, a central location which serves as the hub for learning, and/or a fully dedicated SLIFE program.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
5. **Coordinated districtwide programming and support**. *For example, regardless of program model, there is organized and active involvement and attention from administrators and teachers.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
6. **Teachers who are specifically trained to support SLIFE.** *For example, the program hires teachers who have had substantial training and direct experience working with SLIFE.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.

7. **Professional learning specific to SLIFE needs.** *For example, the program makes professional learning offerings such as DeCapua and Marshall's Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm available to staff.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
8. **Built-in structures for collaboration for teachers of SLIFE**. *For example, central schedules are built with attention to when and how SLIFE teachers will collaborate during the school day.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
9. **Team-based collaborative approach.** *For example, there is a team approach to ensuring consistency and transparency as SLIFE transition between different classes and programs. Beyond educators, a team could potentially include family liaisons, counselors, and families.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.

10. **Curriculum materials designed specifically for SLIFE.** *For example, the program uses instructional materials that address foundational literacy and numeracy skills and grade-appropriate content.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
11. **Individualized approaches to instruction.** *For example, the program strives to understand SLIFE's personal and family circumstances and obligations, as well as any structural challenges students may face, in order to provide them with instruction that builds on student's strengths, meets their unique needs, and best advances their personal and educational goals.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
12. **Individualized pathways to graduation and/or post-secondary outcomes**. *For example, through competency-based in-person or virtual learning; extended graduation timelines; and/or a combination of other approaches such as evening schedules and work-study programs.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.

13. **Credit for out-of-school learning experiences.** *For example, through internships, apprenticeships, or work study programs.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
14. **Flexible / extended scheduling.** *For example, after school, on Saturdays, in the summer, or at night.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
15. **Social-emotional support.** *For example, my program supports the socioemotional health of students and families.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.
16. **Wrap-around services.** *For example, my program provides a wide range of support to students and families, such as connecting families with community organizations that address needs related to housing, food and nutrition, clothing, etc.*
    a. I do not find this to be a promising practice for my program.
    b. My program would like to use this practice but is not able to do so (e.g., we lack resources or qualified staff).
    c. My program is currently planning to use this practice.
    d. This practice is partially implemented.
    e. This practice is fully implemented.

17. **Missing promising practices:** *Beyond the items above, what additional practices for programs serving SLIFE should be included in a list of "promising practices"?*
18. **Preference of vignette/resource topics:** *Please rank in order which promising practices you would most like to see illustrated through vignettes or other practitioner-friendly resources. (Rank practices in order).*
    a. Program designed specifically for SLIFE*. For example, this could be a separate site model, a central location which serves as the hub for learning, and/or a fully dedicated SLIFE program.*
    b. Coordinated districtwide programming and support*. For example, regardless of program model, there is organized and active involvement and attention from administrators and teachers.*
    c. Teachers who are specifically trained to support SLIFE*. For example, the program hires teachers who have had substantial training and direct experience working with SLIFE.*
    d. Professional learning specific to SLIFE needs*. For example, the program makes professional learning offerings such as DeCapua and Marshall's Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm available to staff.*
    e. Built-in structures for collaboration for teachers of SLIFE*. For example, central schedules are built with attention to when and how SLIFE teachers will collaborate during the school day.*
    f. Team-based collaborative approach*. For example, there is a team approach to ensuring consistency and transparency as SLIFE transition between different classes and programs. Beyond educators, a team could potentially include family liaisons, counselors, and families.*
    g. Curriculum materials designed specifically for SLIFE*. For example, the program uses instructional materials that address foundational literacy and numeracy skills and grade-appropriate content.*
    h. Individualized approaches to instruction. *For example, the program strives to understand SLIFE's personal and family circumstances and obligations, as well as any structural challenges students may face, in order to provide them with instruction that builds on student's strengths, meets their unique needs, and best advances their personal and educational goals.*
    i. Individualized pathways to graduation and/or post-secondary outcomes*. For example, through competency-based in-person or virtual learning; extended graduation timelines;*

and/or a combination of other approaches such as evening schedules and work-study programs.

j. Credit for out-of-school learning experiences*. For example, through internships, apprenticeships, or work study programs.*

k. Flexible / extended scheduling*. For example, after school, on Saturdays, in the summer, or at night.*

l. Social-emotional support*. For example, my program supports the socioemotional health of students and families.*

m. Wrap-around services*. For example, my program provides a wide range of support to students and families, such as connecting families with community organizations that address needs related to housing, food and nutrition, clothing, etc.*

19. **Other topic for potential vignette/resource:** Are there other promising practices at the programmatic level of SLIFE education you would like to see further explored through district interviews, vignettes, or other practitioner-friendly resources?
20. **Optional**: May we contact you to ask about a specific promising practice you indicated in this survey? If so, please write your name and email address.

Appendix C. Interview Protocols

All of the SLIFE Research Interview protocols were based on a set of standard interview questions, and additional questions particular to that interviewee's program or school and related to one of the six priority topics (Academic Support, Linguistic Support, Socio-Emotional Support, Family Connections, Community Connections, and Progress Monitoring) were added as needed. This protocol represents the standard interview protocol used for each conversation.

SLIFE Research Interview Protocol:

AIR is working in partnership with DESE on a project to identify common principles and promising practices in SLIFE education. As part of this work, we are conducting interviews with educators in various district contexts. We will create vignettes out of these interviews to be shared with the field, with the goal of elevating promising practices in SLIFE education. For today's interview, we will focus on X. As you answer these questions, think of the kinds of details you'd like to learn from a vignette.

- What practical details would you explain to someone who is brand new to developing these practices?
- What have you figured out now that you wish you had known when you first started?

The interview will take about an hour. Your participation is completely voluntary; you do not have to answer all the questions I ask. You can let me know if there are any questions you'd like to skip.

We will summarize the themes that come from this and other interviews and create practitioner-friendly vignettes, and potentially other resources, and develop a short report for DESE.

Our plan is to keep the information you provide anonymous and not connect it to you individually or your school/district at any time. This means we will never use your name or anything else that could identify you or your program. However, in this project, we aim to highlight promising practices in a positive light, recognizing that schools and educators often do not receive recognition for this challenging and complex work. As such, we would like to give participants the option to be identified if they believe this could be beneficial for them and their schools. In a way, this is a recognition of promising work that has been acknowledged in the field, potentially serving as an example or inspiration for others. Would you prefer to keep this anonymous or have you and/or your district's name be recognized?

With your permission, we will record this interview for note-taking purposes only. The recording will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. However, if you want to say anything "off the record," tell me, and we can stop it. Once we have transcribed our notes, the recording will be destroyed. Do I have your permission to record?

Do you have any questions about this study or the purpose of this interview before we start? *[Press record]*

Today is _____

Would you please state your name, role (in relation to SLIFE), and school/district?

Interview Questions

1. **SLIFE Stories**: Can you talk about the strengths you perceive in students identified as SLIFE? And can you share an anecdote about a student – any story of your choice about a student.
2. **Overall SLIFE Program**: Could you briefly outline the overall program or services your district has in place specifically for SLIFE? How does X for SLIFE fit into this broader context?
3. **Implementation Strategies**: Could you describe the specific strategies and approaches your district uses for X with SLIFE? Who is involved in this process, and what roles do they play? Please provide examples of how these strategies are implemented.
4. **Observed Effects**: Based on your experience, what positive effects have you observed as a result of X for SLIFE? Can you share any specific examples?
5. **Challenges and Barriers**: What challenges or barriers have you encountered in your efforts to engage in X for SLIFE? These could be cultural, linguistic, logistical, or any other type of challenge.
6. **Overcoming Challenges**: How have you and your team addressed or mitigated these challenges? What strategies or approaches have been successful in overcoming these barriers?
7. **Integration with District Initiatives**: How does your X approach with SLIFE align with or complement other district-wide initiatives or programs?
   - How are superintendents, principals, directors, and other teachers involved?
8. **Implementation Tips/Triage**: What top three tips would you give to someone who is just starting out, and is perhaps at a smaller district, or a district experiencing an influx of SLIFE for the first time?

9. **Resources and Tools**: Could you share any specific resources, tools, or data that have been helpful in developing and delivering your SLIFE X approach? This could include materials, training programs, communication platforms, or any other relevant resources.
10. **Additional Insights**: Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences, learnings, or recommendations related to X for SLIFE?

STOP RECORDING

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. If after today you think of something else that you'd like to share in relation to this interview, please contact me at [EMAIL].

Appendix D. News Scan References

Betancourt, S. (2023). Boston welcome centers provide support for migrant families. *GBH News*. https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2023-06-23/state-launches-first-welcome-center-in-allston-for-immigrant-and-homeless-families-amid-rising-need

Bouras, J., & Monahan, J. (2024, July 18). A humanitarian crisis: Migrants dropped off at MBTA station with no place to go. *Boston 25 News*. https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/norfolk-county/humanitarian-crisis-migrants-dropped-off-mbta-station-with-no-place-go/GD4GWNRKJJFTBIW3IZZGKTE2HU/

Breslin, R. (2024, August 1). 5-day stay limit, plane tickets to leave: New Mass. emergency shelter rules take effect. *Boston 25 News*. https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/5-day-stay-limit-plane-tickets-leave-new-mass-emergency-shelter-rules-take-effect/JHI42Z6LWNCKBPWNOEPZND7FAU/

Bustillos, E. (2024, May 22). Groundbreaking in Boston for Haitian cultural center. *Bay State Banner*. https://baystatebanner.com/2024/05/22/groundbreaking-in-boston-for-haitian-cultural-center/

Drysdale, S. (2024, June 26). Funds run out for revived food benefit for immigrants. WBUR. https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/06/26/immigrant-snap-benefit-money

Drysdale, S. (2024, June 26). Food run out for revived immigrant food benefit. *WWLP*. https://www.wwlp.com/news/state-politics/food-run-out-for-revived-immigrant-food-benefit/

Drysdale, S. (2024, July 2). Feds extend legal status for Haitian immigrants. *Sentinel and Enterprise*. https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2024/07/02/feds-extend-legal-status-from-haitian-immigrants/

Ebbert, S., & Fernandes, D. (2024, April 19). How Massachusetts spent nearly $1 billion sheltering homeless families and migrants. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/19/metro/cost-of-migrant-shelter-in-massachusetts/

Ebbert, S., & Fernandes, D. (2024, August 13). Healey administration conceals key information about state shelter system even as it triples spending. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/08/13/metro/massachusetts-shelter-system-spending-transparency/

Garcia, N. (2024, June 6). Nonprofits and local organizations rally to help migrants in Massachusetts. *GBH News*. https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2024-06-06/nonprofits-and-local-organizations-rally-to-help-migrants-in-massachusetts

Getahun-Hawkins, H., & Damiano, M. (2024, August 30). As Mass. Shelter system shuts them out, migrant families wander Boston streets at night, seeking a place to sleep. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/29/metro/migrant-families-boston-shelter-system/

Getahun-Hawkins, H., Leita, B. C., Stoico, N., & Damiano, M. (2024, August 3). 57 migrant families at overflow shelters given eviction notices, must leave by Friday. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/08/03/metro/immigrant-healey-eviction-shelter-massachusetts/

Gross, S. J. (2024, April 1). How many migrants have arrived in Massachusetts? It's hard to know for sure, but they keep coming. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/01/metro/how-many-migrants-in-massachusetts/

Gross, S. J. (2024, July 3). Amid buckling shelter system, Healey rolls up the migrant welcome mat. *The Boston Globe.* https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/03/metro/migrant-crisis-healey-shelter-emergency/

Gross, S. J. (2024, August 25). Governor Healey announces sweeping changes to state's emergency shelter system. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/23/metro/healey-shelter-system-limit/

Huffaker, C. (2024, July 25). Norfolk schools will enroll migrant students staying at temporary shelter after all, officials say. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/25/metro/massachusetts-migrant-children-norfolk/

Huffaker, C., La Roche Pietri, N., & Pan, D. (2024, July 24). Migrant children caught in school limbo under new five-day limits on overflow shelter stays. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/24/metro/massachusetts-migrant-children-temporary-shelter-school/

Jonas, A. (2024, March 1). As migrants arrive in Mass., volunteers step up to offer housing. *Boston Globe*. https://www.boston.com/community/community/as-migrants-arrive-in-mass-volunteers-step-up-to-offer-housing/

Jung, C. (2024). Criticism of Saugus school enrollment policies. *WBUR*. https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/08/15/saugus-school-district-enrollment-policy

Kavanaugh, K. (2024, June 5). 25 Investigates: Massachusetts reaches milestone in migrant crisis. *Boston 25 News*. https://www.boston25news.com/news/25-investigates/25-investigates-massachusetts-reaches-milestone-migrant-crisis/JXX6OVV2ZVGWRIVORKWIRLRJUY

Keeping families together. (2024, August 12). U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. https://www.uscis.gov/keepingfamiliestogether

Kmitt, P. (2024, July 9). Migrant families now banned from sleeping overnight at Boston's Logan Airport. *CBS Boston*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/migrant-families-ban-logan-airport-boston-massachusetts/

Lannan, K. (2023, November 29). *Chinatown YMCA offering daytime services for migrant families in Boston*. GBH News. https://www.wgbh.org/news/housing/2023-11-29/chinatown-ymca-offering-daytime-services-for-migrant-families-in-boston

LeBlanc, S. (2023, December 22). At a church rectory in Boston, Haitian migrants place their hopes on hard work and helping hands. *AP News*. https://apnews.com/article/homeless-families-migrants-shelter-boston-massachusetts-ecfd0f6ce13acab2b35306a13e53d857

Mass.gov. (2024, August). *Healey-Driscoll administration announces changes to emergency assistance prioritization, safety-net sites* [Press release]. https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-announces-changes-to-emergency-assistance-prioritization-safety-net-sites

McDonald, D. (2024, August 14). Mass. More than doubles eviction notices to families staying at overflow shelters. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/08/13/metro/quincy-church-tents-removed-migrants/

McDonald, D. (2024, August 15). Mass. State auditor is examining maxed-out emergency shelter system. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/08/14/metro/migrant-shelter-evictions-audit-dizoglio/

Merrill, K. (2024, May 14a). Adding migrant children to Massachusetts schools a challenge and an opportunity, superintendent says. *CBS Boston*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/peabody-massachusetts-schools-migrants-children-students/

Nielo del Rio, G. M. (2024, July 11). Closed state prison reopened as migrant shelter spurs concern about schooling in a Massachusetts town. *The Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/07/11/metro/closed-state-prison-reopened-migrant-shelter-spurs-concern-about-schooling-massachusetts-town/

Palumbo, A.. (2024, August 9). *Mass. migrant families face shelter evictions Friday*. NBC Boston. https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/ma-migrant-families-shelter-evictions/3455099/

Rios, S. (2024, August 12). A timeline of the Massachusetts shelter crisis—and Healey's changes to the system. *WBUR*. https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/08/12/massachusetts-shelter-system-changes-timeline-immigration

Sacharczyk, T. (2024, August 14). Massachusetts schools adjust as migrant student numbers rise. *WJAR*. https://turnto10.com/news/crisis-in-the-classroom/massachusetts-schools-adjust-as-migrant-student-numbers-rise-taunton-public-schools-district-multi-lingual-teachers-august-14-2024

Silva, M. (2024, June 25). Massachusetts emergency assistance director to migrants: "Our shelters are full." *New Bedford Guide*. https://www.newbedfordguide.com/massachusetts-emergency-assistance-director-to-migrants-our-shelters-are-full/2024/06/25

Truitt, B. (2024, June 27). *First migrant families move into emergency shelter at old Massachusetts prison, despite protest*. WBZ News. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/norfolk-residents-protest-migrant-shelter-prison/

Truitt, B. (2024, July 12). 150 new students expected in Massachusetts town as migrant families move into old prison turned shelter. *CBS News*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/norfolk-massachusetts-migrant-families-school-space/

Truitt, B. (2024, July 17). Migrants, homeless families dropped at MBTA stop because Massachusetts emergency shelters are full. *CBS Boston*. https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/migrant-families-sleeping-wollaston-mbta-station/

The White House. (2024, June 18). Fact sheet: President Biden announces new actions to keep families together [Press release]. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/06/18/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-new-actions-to-keep-families-together/

WWLP.com. (2023, March 29). *Immigrants Day: Hundreds gather at Boston State House to advocate for in-state tuition, language access and inclusion*. https://www.wwlp.com/news/massachusetts/immigrants-day-hundreds-gather-at-boston-state-house-to-advocate-for-in-state-tuition-language-access-and-inclusion/

Zamore, A. (2023, November 13). Massachusetts offers work authorization clinics for migrants staying in shelters. *WJAR*. https://turnto10.com/news/local/massachusetts-work-authorization-clinics-for-migrants-staying-in-shelters-us-department-of-homeland-security-masshire-classs-enrollment-nov-13-2023

About the American Institutes for Research®

Established in 1946, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally in the areas of education, health, and the workforce. AIR's work is driven by its mission to generate and use rigorous evidence that contributes to a better, more equitable world. With headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, AIR has offices across the U.S. and abroad. For more information, visit AIR.ORG.

AIR® Headquarters
1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | **AIR.ORG**

Notice of Trademark: "American Institutes for Research" and "AIR" are registered trademarks. All other brand, product, or company names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Copyright © 2024 American Institutes for Research®. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, website display, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the American Institutes for Research. For permission requests, please use the Contact Us form on AIR.ORG.

26500_12/24